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LOCAL LEGACY



A MUG CALLED HOME

COURTESY

The mug features Bondurant's iconic images, all drawn by artist Ashley Ann, including musher Alix Crittenden and her team of sled dogs, the town's recently updated population sign, spurs and skijoring, the historic St. Hubert the Hunter Episcopal Church, a pronghorn antelope and more. The mugs were commissioned by Jen Accurso, who co-owns Branding Iron Coffee & Empanadas in Bondurant with her husband Matt. They'll be available in limited drops at local markets this holiday season.

Chance encounter with hand-drawn mug sparked artistic collaboration celebrating Bondurant's landmarks, heritage and hometown character

CALI O'HARE
Pinedale Roundup via Wyoming News Exchange

Jen Accurso was visiting a friend more than one thousand miles away from the coffee shop she co-owns with her husband in Bondurant when a mug with hand-drawn images of Huntley, Illinois kept distracting her from the conversation.

"I just thought it was the cutest thing, and I bought the one from Illinois to bring back here," she said.

Accurso "had no idea how it worked," but she knew she wanted to connect with the artist behind the mug to try to commission something similar for her community in Bondurant.

"I'm like, 'Why not? The worst thing she says is no.'"

But the landmark artist behind the mugs, Ashley Ann, said "yes," and gladly.

Ann and her family spent years in a remote northern community in Canada that gave her "a special appreciation for small, out-of-the- way places with a strong sense of home," so Accurso's invitation to create a mug for Bondurant "was especially meaningful," Ann told the Roundup.

"She told me about her cute community and this empanada shop that she has, and it was just a really cool connection," Ann said.

Ann had stumbled into mug-making while living in a First Nation Community in remote Canada.

Please see **MUG**, Page A2



Community landmark artist Ashley Ann, left, and Branding Iron co-owner Jen Accurso, right, pose together. The pair connected after Accurso saw Ann's artwork in a coffee shop in Illinois and commissioned her to create a mug for the Bondurant community.

COURTESY

STEADFAST SERVICE

30 years, one job, a lifetime of pride



ASHLEE JACOBSEN, POWELL TRIBUNE

Clint Bennion recently celebrated 30 years at Blair's Super Market. He is still happy with his job, which remains the same: mainly stocking shelves and running the box baler.

Clint Bennion finds purpose in the familiar faces and everyday moments at Blair's

ASHLEE JACOBSEN
Powell Tribune via Wyoming News Exchange

When then 19-year-old Clint Bennion graduated from Powell High School in 1996, he knew it was time to find a job. After looking around for a few months, he landed a job at Blair's Market and a job at First National Bank and Trust as a coin wrapper.

In the beginning, Bennion worked at Blair's for just two hours a day. His hours later increased to five a day when he was laid off at the bank after it invested in an automatic coin machine. Still continuing his job at Blair's, he also began working as a newspaper carrier. Bennion kept his job delivering newspapers for 12 years, only leaving when Blair's offered him more hours.

"Back then, I just wanted a job so I could get my independence," Bennion said. "You know, move out of my mom and dad's house and start my own life. I didn't really know what I'd end up with, but I was willing to do anything for it."

Now 49, Bennion has stayed with Blair's Super Market, gathering 30 years of experience there. Three decades is a long time to be anywhere, but for Bennion it's been time well spent.

Please see **BENNION**, Page A2



COURTESY

Clint Bennion started his job at Blair's in 1996 at the age of 19 after graduating from Powell High School, initially working limited hours and later taking on more.