

NEWSLETTER



Stephanie
Huffman,
PDA Member

Celebrating Pendleton's Collaborative Spirit

Downtown Pendleton holds a special place in my heart. In the middle of the pandemic, my husband Josh and I decided to buy a house. For several months we traveled throughout Oregon and Washington, looking for a house and community to call our own.

It was love at first sight with our house, but what of Pendleton itself? We explored the town to find out. Walking downtown is a trusty way to learn about a city. Strolling over the Main Street Bridge we were quickly charmed. So many examples of a thriving town met us—river views, an art center with gallery space and gift shop, brick buildings seemingly from classic Westerns, bronze statues highlighting local figures, multiple restaurants and even a historical museum. After exploring the rest of town we found ourselves drawn back downtown. Sipping our first cups of Great Pacific coffee, we were glad to have made Pendleton our new home.

Several years later I'm once again standing on the Main Street Bridge. This time I've just finished the final test of the Legends of Pendleton: Figures, Myths, and the Spirit of Resilience. Multiple organizations collaborated to create this free audio walking tour: Pendleton Urban Renewal, Historic Preservation Commission, Heritage Station Museum, Umatilla Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, Travel Pendleton, Eastern Oregon Visitors Association, and of course the Pendleton Downtown Association. The tour is both entertaining and educational. It fills me with such joy knowing that I was a part of a project that highlights my home in such a positive light.

I'm writing this letter after working on another collaborative project—the Beacon of the Sentinels. This is an Arts Commission public art memorial created to honor veterans. Today veterans, a City Council member, City staff, gardeners, and knitters all lent helping hands. Together we painted the concrete border walls a light bronze to compliment the rusted steel statue in the center of the memorial. With so many hands pitching in, our work went quickly, and the day was filled with laughter, stories, and camaraderie. Experiences like these remind me how much our town can accomplish when we roll up our sleeves together.

This past May another collaboration brought the Pendleton Street Fair back after decades of hiatus. Originating in 1907, the PSF was an annual Main Street affair. Sidewalk sales, parades, theater shows, musical acts and even bucking horses were on display. Stakeholders include the Historic Preservation Commission, Heritage Station Museum, Umatilla County Historical Society and the PDA. Despite early rain and some cancellations, we revived the fair. Thanks to the Pendleton Underground live tours and the Kiwanis, fair guests were treated to historical protestors and cotton candy. City Council and Historic Preservation Commission members staffed the info booths, handing out candy and listening to the public's feedback. Main Street businesses and local vendors welcomed fair guests with open doors. The community showed up for fun. Their feedback? Good for a start but we want more.

We hear you: The theme of Pendleton Street Fair 2026 will be *More games, More vendors, More fun!*

Though each project is unique, each shows that Pendleton shines brightest when neighbors, organizations, and leaders come together to celebrate our history and build our future. I look forward to future collaborations that uplift our community.

Stephanie Huffman ~ Pendleton Arts Commission Chair



Downtown
Alerts



Marla June's Clothing Company returns to Pendleton!

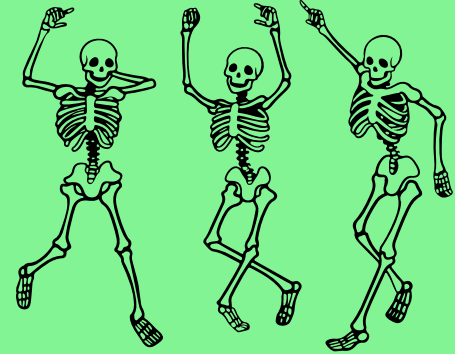
Recently re-opened after a 20-year absence, Marla June's returns to the same location at 217 Southeast Court Street, offering a stunning variety of brand-name fashion items including clothing, handbags, jewellery and way more.

[Visit them online](#) or stop in to welcome them back to the neighborhood.

MJCC is open Wednesday through Saturday, 11:00 to 4:00.



Last year's winners:
Sam and Molly of Unity Collectibles
and
Reggie of Heritage Station Museum



Skeleton Decorating Contest

Looking to spook up your business for the Halloween season?

Join the annual downtown Skeleton Decorating Contest!

The PDA will provide the skeleton; you provide the decorations and display space.

Photos of skeletons will be posted on the PDA's social media pages and website.

Voting will take place in October.

Trophies will be awarded to the People's Choice Award and Social Media Star.

Winners will be announced on Halloween.

For entry form and official rules please visit the [PDA website](#).



Eastern Oregon Visitor Association Audio Tour now live!

Legends of Pendleton: Figures, Myths, and the Spirit of Resilience

Explore Pendleton's rich history with a free immersive downtown walking tour!
Hear about local myths and legend, including:

Chinese New Year celebrations, basement speakeasies, an African American
paratrooper battalion, benevolent brothel owners, Native American rodeo champs &
More. Download the free tour at [VoiceMap](https://www.voicemap.com)! In association with:



Have a historic home in Pendleton?

Share your home's story! The [Historic Preservation Commission](#) and [Vernacular Architecture Forum](#), are teaming up to showcase Pendleton's historic houses in May 2026.



Contact hpc@pendletonor.gov or 541-966-0239 for more information



History Mystery



Multiple readers guessed celebrated local painter Tom Simonton was the man featured in the September newsletter (featured above). This month's *History Mystery* comes with a prize - the first reader who can identify the house, seen here falling into the Umatilla river, wins a free Heritage Museum membership! (Hint the house still stands today.)



To enter, email the [HPC](#) or call 541-969-0239 with your guess.

History Mystery courtesy of Pendleton's [Historical Preservation Commission](#) (HPC) and the [Umatilla County Historical Society](#) (UCHS)



Photo courtesy of [Oregon Historical Society](#)

Q&A with Jesselee Leachman of The Zom-B13 Zombie Response Team



The Zom-B13 Zombie Response Team first made its debut at the Pendleton Dress-Up parade in 2016. Since then, the team has suited up, shown up and live-streamed a plethora of parades, including Dress-Up, Pendleton Pride, and the Christmas Light Parade, making them both a major Pendleton booster and a driving force in preparing Pendletonians for potential undead outbreaks. Newsletter editor (and lifelong zombie flick aficionado) Josh Brown sat down with Jesselee over coffee at Hamley Cafe to discuss Pendleton, zombies and the important work being carried out by his team.

What are the origins of the Pendleton Zombie Outbreak Response Team?

We started in 2016. I had a black car and wanted to do something interesting, so I slapped a Zombie Outreach Response Team logo on the car. The car began turning heads, and before long we were participating in local parades as the Zombie Outbreak Mobile Battalion.

Most folks don't know about the work your team does outside of attending parades and festivals. Could you speak to this a bit?

Sure! In 2021 we started a program called Back to Ghouls in the parking lot next to the Round-Up gift shop, where we gave away around 25 backpacks filled with school supplies. The next year we gave away 250 school supply filled backpacks, and in 2023 we had our biggest event ever, working alongside BACA (Bikers Against Child Abuse) where they provided Safety IDs for children, and a Beauty College out of the Tri-Cities who donated time to provide free haircuts to students in need while we gave away over 500 backpacks filled with school supplies.

What about Zombie Claus?

The original intention with Zombie Claus was to create a Christmas event where we could help a randomly chosen family with their Christmas wish list by covering nearly all expenses by requesting their wish list of needs and wants, in our own unique zombie way. I reached out to a few businesses and they rejected the idea. It was only when I reached out to Josh and Jenifer at Unity Collectables that the idea came to life the way I'd envisioned it.



Zom-B13 has participated in many events since 2016. What's the general reaction to your presence?

Almost entirely positive, but we've had a few detractors as well. There was someone who wasn't happy with the Zombie Uncle Sam, or Uncle Zam as he's known, in the July 4th parade. I believe they said that we were "troubled people who should be monitored" and one had once said they would run for city council just so they could force our group out of city events.

How do you deal with the negative feedback?

Mostly I just ignore it. We have way more supporters who'll stick up for us and let people know how much we do for the community. If people want to be negative, hey, it's a free country. We know that we're doing good in the community. We're not looking for rewards or accolades, we just want to serve the community. We do it because it's the right thing to do.



Q&A with Jesselee Leachman (Continued)



I first became aware of your group after passing a car with the Zom-B13 logo parked by the river. It was the first year we'd moved here, and my immediate reaction was thank god there are fellow weirdos in this town!

We're OK with being called weird. Actually, we embrace the word. Everyone on the team is a volunteer, and one of the main requirements for membership is being a good person. We absolutely want people to know that we are a safe, supportive group for everybody.

Zom-B13 had quite a strong presence at the Pendleton Pride parade. Could you speak to the team's support for the LGBTQ+ community?

Zom-B13's support for the LGBTQ+ community is unwavering - we're always trying to learn about how to be better allies, to support and protect our most vulnerable community members. When we showed up at the pride parade (we've done three so far) it's like we're in a battle tank in our ZombieFinder - our way of demonstrating support for the LGBTQ+ community.

A lot of my friends in the LGBTQ+ community are really into The Walking Dead and zombie horror in general.

Oh, the feeling is mutual. Zombies don't care if a person is straight, gay, bi, whatever. To a zombie, everyone is *equally delicious*.

What does Zom-B13 have planned for Halloween? What other events are you planning for the coming months and years?

Halloween is our busiest time of the year - we'll be doing the Echo Corn Maze, AKA Field Of Screams again this year. We started doing that four years ago and have been invited back ever since. This year we'll be "zombie-ing up" and participating inside of the maze once again. The Haunted Corn Maze is really the only event of the year when we let loose and deliberately try to scare people.

Yeah, I totally noticed that you guys aren't really trying to scare people.

No, outside of Halloween we tend to tone it down while still having fun. Of course, we'll also be participating in the 1st annual Halloween Parade in Pendleton on Saturday the 25th.

Final question: In the event of a zombie outbreak what are your suggestions for spots to hold out and make a last stand? Arts Center? City Hall? Walmart?

First survey the location. Medication, first aid and water are crucial for survival in any undead emergency. But for security, definitely the prison, as long as it hasn't been breached. It already has weapons and plenty of motivated volunteers, which are crucial in a zombie outbreak.

Sure, the prison worked out for Rick Grimes & company on The Walking Dead!

(Laughs) Yeah, for season three at least.

Interested in being part of Pendleton's first-ever Halloween Parade alongside the combined zombie-fighting might of both the Pendleton and Milton Freewater Zom-B13 Zombie Response Teams? (Other participants include People Helping People & Let 'er Uber.) Join the Halloween Parade
[Click here to reserve your space!](#)

[Click here to get Zom-B13 swag](#)

Most sale proceeds go towards either the Zombie Claus project or Back to GhouL.

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

Running All Month



The Heritage Station Museum is currently accepting donations of candy to give to trick-or-treaters during the 2025 Heritage Haunt. Drop off candy between now and Halloween at the front desk of the museum, located at 108 SW Frazer Ave.



Autumn is upon us, but you still have three more Fridays to visit the Pendleton Farmers Market, which runs every Friday from 4-7 until October 17!

Pendleton Library

Ongoing events for kids and caregivers through October, including Read Ride Run every Tuesday@9am and Story Time every Thursday@10:15. They also have several one-off events this month, including Knitting at the Library, Book Clubs & the Pendleton Gaming League.

Check out their website for full details.



Sanctuary: A Weekly Social Gathering Every Sunday ~ 2pm-4pm



Unity Collectables: A no pressure, no structure, come as you are gathering. Bring your snacks (or even better - support the shop and get your snacks there!), a craft or book, find a cozy spot and have some time together.

Please note: Unity Collectables is a store, so if you bring your kids make sure they're well behaved - the 'you break it, you buy it' rule applies.

Sherrie Wolf Exhibit: From (from the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation collection, this exhibits runs through October 31st in the East Oregonian Gallery. Wolf's paintings are BIG, masterful, and full of art history Easter eggs. Additional engagement activities offer visitors opportunities to learn about art history and techniques.



By My Hand: Holding Power: New exhibit in collaboration with Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts. Open call for both beginning and experienced weavers who work in any style to enter up to two miniature baskets. The exhibit will be displayed at the PCA from November 13 – December 31, 2025. Entry deadline: Tuesday, October 21, 2025. Click here for more information.

Fall Classes have started! Visit in person or online for a full roster, including free drop in classes every Saturday.

Party for the Arts: This annual fundraiser take place on Saturday, November 8, 2025 from 5:30pm to 8:00pm. Advanced tickets \$50 person, \$60 at the door. Reserve your spot online or call (541) 278- 9201.



www.pendletondowntown.org



Community Happenings

Single serving events

Thursday, 10/2 ~ 5:30pm ~ Community Room, City Hall ~ Pendleton Downtown

Association Quarterly Member Meeting

Want to increase community engagement and help our historic downtown thrive? [Click here](#) to learn about joining the PDA! Energy Trust of Oregon will give a short presentation about energy incentives.

Friday, 10/3 ~ 7pm – 9pm ~ Great Pacific ~ Leo Moon

Brian Adrian Koch (of Blitzen Trapper and Dead Lee fame) brings his haunting tunes and harmonica spattered psalms to GP for a solo acoustic performance.

Wednesday, 10/8 ~ 5:30pm ~ Cerebella Winery ~ Book Reading

Join Pendleton Underground Tours at Cerebella Winery for an evening of history, stories, and wine celebrating the release of Stella a Madam's Private Journey by author Vic Kucera.

Wednesday, 10/8 ~ 5:30pm ~ Heritage Station ~ Social Media Marketing

Part one of a free two-part session led by Ellie McBride, owner of Calibrated Concepts. Designed for business owners, marketers, and anyone looking to simplify their approach to social media.

Thursday, 10/9 ~ 4pm-6pm ~ Pendleton Library ~ Young Chef Academy

Kids ages 11 and up are invited to stir up something spicy, savory, and seriously fun. Learn how to craft a hearty chili recipe from scratch. [Click here to register](#) or call 541-966-0391 for more info.

Saturday, 10/11 ~ 2pm-9pm ~ Happy Canyon ~ Pendleton Oktoberfest

Enjoy amazing drinks (including beer and cider, German and domestic), food, music, activities and more. Tickets are only available for purchase at the gate - check out Oktoberfestpendleton.org for more details.

Saturday, 10/11 ~ 9am to Noon ~ Roy Raley Park ~ Can and Bottle Drive

Cans and bottles cluttering up your garage? Come to Roy Raley Park and let the Pendleton Lion's Club take them off your hands to raise funds for community members in need.

Tuesday, 10/14 ~ 1pm-2pm ~ 125 SE Court Ave ~ PDA Outreach Committee Meeting

Are you passionate about the growth and success of downtown Pendleton? The PDA Outreach Committee is looking for enthusiastic individuals like you to help us build a stronger, more vibrant community!

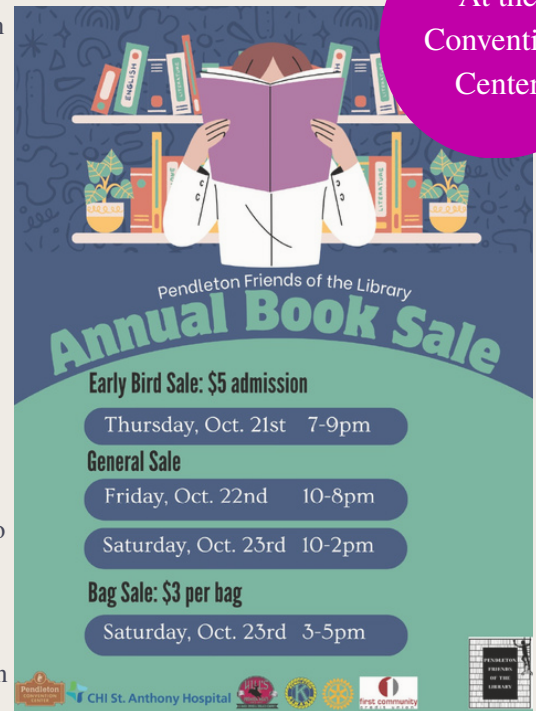


Thursday, 10/16 @ 6pm ~ Brett's Books ~ Author Book Reading & Signing

Join local authors Joshua Brown and Stephanie Huffman as they read selections from Formosa Moon, their dual-voiced cultural exploration around Taiwan. Formosa Moon follows the couple as they seek cultural exploration on a deeper level, abandoning themselves to Taiwan's quirky people, convoluted history and boundless eccentricity.

Friday, 10/17 ~ 7pm – 9pm ~ Great Pacific ~ David Henry

David Henry and his band bring elements of country, folk, rock, and soul to every one of their passionate, ambitious performances.



At the
Convention
Center

Saturday, 10/18 ~ 10am-2pm ~ 2025 Fall Festival ~ Roy Raley Park

This year, the annual Halloween Carnival has transformed into the Fall Festival -- with even more to enjoy, including food vendors, trick-or-treating, a costume contest, a book giveaway, Carnival games and activities for all ages, and even a toddler zone. Interested in joining the fun? Call 541-966-0228 to see how you can help!



Saturday, Oct 19 ~ 6pm – 8pm ~ Great Pacific ~ Night Heron

Night Heron crafts intimate soundscapes that exist in the space between whispers and dreams, creating music that invites listeners to lean in closer, finding universal meaning in life's most intimate moments.

Wednesday, 10/22 ~ 5:30pm ~ Heritage Station ~ Social Media Marketing

Second part of a two-part seminar led by Ellie McBride, owner of Calibrated Concepts. Designed for business owners, marketers, and anyone looking to simplify their approach to social media.

Saturday, 10/25 ~ noon-whenever ~ Unity Collectibles ~ DJ Day

The last Saturday of the month is always DJ Day at Unity, with music provided by a rotating cast of DeeJays. Stop in before, after (or both) the Halloween Parade!

Friday, 10/31 ~ 5:30-10pm ~ Pendleton Underground Tours ~ 21+ Underground Tour

Join the expert guides at Pendleton Underground Tours for a 21+ haunted Underground Tour that's equal parts chilling and fun. The hour-long tours take off on the hour from 6 - 8 pm, cost \$40 per person and include cocktails and free entry to the underground Shamrock pub. 21+, reserve in advance at 541-276-0730



Volunteer & Community Opportunities



The Pendleton Street Fair will return May 16, 2026. Volunteers are needed to make a limited collection of sheep for the event. Help increase Aura's Flock to promote the fair. Email hpc@pendletonor.gov for the pattern.



Pendleton Artisan Network wants to know how they can help you grow your artisan business. Tell them how via their [survey](#).

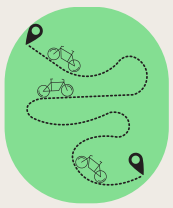
The Arts Commission would like to thank the following volunteers for helping to paint the walls around the Beacon of the Sentinels sculpture:

Charles Denight, Florence Dezeix, Stephanie Huffman, Marilyn Lohmann, Randall Magahay, and Linda Neuman, Marge Normington-Jones, and Gary Ward.

Want to help honor our veterans? The next Beacon Paint Party is **Saturday, October 18 from 1pm-4pm.**

Contact pac@pendletonor.gov or 541-966-0239 for more details.





Let's Go Travel...(to La Grande)



Joshua Brown ~ Editor-in-chief

Good neighbors are good to have, and in Pendleton's case we're lucky to have a number of cities worth visiting well within driving distance. As a former travel writer, I find myself asking questions like why is this place worth visiting when exploring a place. As the editor of a newsletter promoting downtown Pendleton, I feel an added responsibility to use my column to answer the question what can we learn from our neighbors?

I'll start with the second question:

Our two cities share a few features, including similar "downtown-adjacent" shopping options (Walmart, Safeway, and Grocery Outlet). We both have highly walkable downtown areas boasting a plethora of stores, restaurants and other attractions serving locals and tempting drivers on I-84 to pull off the highway, stretch their legs and (hopefully) spend some money before continuing on their journeys.

For my money - and I'm probably biased here - I feel like Pendleton has the edge over our nearest eastern neighbor in two important areas: Historical preservation, which Pendleton does well, and drinking venues. Because let's be honest - from craft beer to wine, whiskey to gin, no city in Eastern Oregon serves spirits as well as Pendleton.



Still, there are two areas in which *I humbly submit to readers* that PDT might emulate LG.

The first of these I alluded to in July's newsletter, where I suggested that an old-school Main Street pharmacy might do well in our town. While I'd mentioned Hermiston's own main street pharmacy (complete with lunch counter and comic rack for those looking for that *Norman Rockwell* experience), La Grande also boasts a beloved downtown pharmacy. While the Red Cross Drug Store lacks a lunch-counter, it does have an old-school candy store to go along with its fully-functioning pharmacy.



The second La Grande venue I'd love to see manifested in Pendleton are its variety of downtown grocery options. While Pendleton is lucky to have Moe Mart (probably the only place within a hundred miles to get Durian taffy), more than a few fellow Pendletonian's have mentioned that they travel to either La Grande's Nature's Pantry or Andy's Market in College Place to buy goods in those markets' bulk bins.

Would a mid-sized market featuring health food options and bulk bins be a welcome addition to Pendleton's downtown? How about an old-fashioned Main Street drugstore? In my opinion both businesses wouldn't merely survive - they'd thrive. (And parking issues aside, both might fit very nicely on the east side of Main Street between Court Street and the River, AKA Wicked Kitty Block.)



Let's Go Travel... (Cont'd)

...As for the first question, well, geothermal hot springs are a geological feature that you either have or you don't, and unless the crew currently setting off dynamite in the quarry over on Westgate happen to uncover a hitherto unknown fault line, it's unlikely that Pendleton will ever have a place like Hot Lake Lodge (a few miles east of La Grande).

I discovered the hot springs a few years back, and with a recent addition of several pools of geothermally heated water and a cold plunge pool the place has only gotten better. The hotel is gorgeously renovated, and while I've not yet had the pleasure of spending the night I'm absolutely looking forward to doing so in the future - not just because spending the night will allow me to stargaze while soaking, and not just because they have an excellent gastropub featuring a selection of adult beverages best enjoyed at least a dozen hours before operating a motor vehicle.

My other reason for wanting to spend the night at the lodge (which also fits perfectly with the Halloween theme of this issue) involves my lifelong fascination with the supernatural. More than a few folks sensitive to this sort of thing have reported seeing (or otherwise sensing) ghostly apparitions while overnighting at the lodge. While this may not be a selling point for some, for others (yours truly included) it's travel writer catnip.

What do you think, dear reader - would a mid-size grocery store and/or old-school drugstore thrive on Main Street? Do the ghosts of Pendleton's illustrious past still roam downtown? Got ideas for future Let's Go columns?

Drop us a line at newsletter@pendletondowntown.org!

*Hot Lake Lodge & Mascot Rocky,
(not to scale)*



PENDLETON
DOWNTOWN
ASSOCIATION

Know of a downtown business that would be a perfect fit for the PDA? Share this newsletter with them!



P.O. Box 1912 ~ 451-215-8254 / [Join us online!](#)



*One of several gorgeous night shots of Pendleton posted on FB during Round-Up by Jim Roberts with the following caption:
Taken this evening from SE Goodwin Ave & SE 6th St. Use is granted under the following license: CC BY-NC-SA 4.0
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International*