



Local artist lends artwork to latest Ballreich potato chip flavor



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TIFFIN — Ballreich Snack Food Company has been operating out of Tiffin for nearly 103 years.

For its latest potato chip flavor, the company invited the community to weigh in. They recently voted online for their favorite flavor and their favorite design pitched by a local artist for the corresponding potato chip bag, in a contest organized by Destination Seneca County.

Christian Klauke, the vice president of sales and marketing at Ballreich, said the vote came down to a selection of a barbecue flavor.

“They ended up picking a sweet barbeque. Some people refer to it as a smoky, sweet mesquite,” Klauke said. “What Seneca County ended up doing is going ahead and calling it Seneca Sweet BBQ, and that was the flavor that was chosen.”

As for the art, former Seneca County teacher and current full-time artist **Linda Shetzer** won the hearts of voters with her collage design, which depicts many of the county's most notable landmark buildings. Shetzer said she worked with members of the Ballreich company and Destination Seneca County.

"The main image in the middle [of the bag] is their Ballreich building that's been there for a long time," she said. "We kind of played around with it with both the Ballreich representative from the company and **Marisa Stephens**, who is with Destination Seneca County, and we worked to put it all together."

Stephens also helped organize the contest. She's the stakeholder relations and marketing manager for Destination Seneca County.

"It was a team effort between Destination Seneca County, Tiffin Municipal Arts Commission, and the Fostoria Community Arts Council," she said. "We had 17 designs submitted, which we were super happy about, and then we had around 800 votes from the community."

Shetzer only recently started her work as a full-time artist, and she said the pieces just seemed to fall into place when she found the contest. She had been teaching for 21 years before she left in the spring of 2022, when she found herself painting buildings to start her art career.

"I had done a couple things and shortly after that I found out about this contest and I was like, 'Well, I already kind of have some things going there,'" Shetzer said. "It was sights of Seneca County and I was like, 'OK, I've done a couple of things within Seneca County. I am going to take and do images of other places and kind of merge them together to create the bag.'"

For Ballreich, Klauke said, Shetzer's design captured what people have grown to know and love about Seneca County.

"She does watercolors and is an artist and that just spoke to everybody on the way that bag design works with different watercolors. It's a real nice blend of the culture and the sights in Seneca County," he said.

The Seneca Sweet BBQ chips are now available to purchase online at [ballreich.com](https://www.ballreich.com) and will be sold at JAM's Monthly Markets in Tiffin and other local retailers soon.

Going forward, Shetzer is thrilled to be developing her style even further and she is particularly excited to start on new projects.

“I’ve been exploring a variety of mediums, working with acrylics, watercolor,” Shetzer said. “I do a variety and I think this year trying a variety of mediums is kind of helping me to establish what I like the feel of. Watercolor is a place right now that I’m really enjoying but that’s not necessarily what I’m going to stick to.”

As she closes out her work on the Ballreich bag design, Shetzer said she is excited for the attention this project is bringing to the area. To her, Tiffin and Seneca County are special and offer that one-of-a-kind hometown feel.

“Tiffin is such a welcoming community and they really take pride in their town. In recent years, the town has really been growing and they support each other,” Shetzer said. “There’s a little quote I have on the back [of the bag], ‘From great food, shopping, entertainment, education, and hometown feel, Seneca County has it all! When you take a bite of Seneca County, you always come back for more.’”

■ The Toledo Museum of Art announced a rare exhibition featuring four Caravaggio paintings on Monday. *The Brilliance of Caravaggio: Four Paintings in Focus* is set to open on Jan. 20, 2024 and close on April 14, 2024.

This exhibition marks the first time in over a decade that the four impressive pieces are on display together in the United States, and only the second showing of Caravaggio’s work at the Toledo Museum of Art.

For more information, visit toledomuseum.org.

■ One of the oldest women’s art organizations in the country is hosting a spring exhibition at Owens Community College’s Walter E. Terhune Gallery through March 31. The Athena Art Society was founded in 1903.

The self-juried show features works from new members, **Susan Dhaenens** of Sherwood, Ohio, and **Anastasia Wagner** of Sylvania. Mediums include oil, photography, collage, sculpture, acrylic, and colored pencil. The exhibit opened on Jan. 23, and is available to view during gallery hours.

Owens Community College is at 30335 Oregon Rd., Perrysburg. For more information about the Athena Art Society and its spring show, visit athenaartsociety.org.

■ A local artist and founder of SLEW LLC., **Brandon Slewion**, hosts a solo show at the Maumee branch of the Toledo Lucas County Public Library through March 3. The exhibition, titled *Pivot*, is a temporary feature for Black History Month and an expansion of a 2022 Juneteenth exhibit at the Kent branch of the library system.

Slewion’s work consists of abstract portraits, utilizing spray paint and acrylic paint to intertwine the pieces with a spirited figure that he uses to represent one’s willingness to change.

The Maumee branch is at 502 River Rd., Maumee. The exhibit is available to view during regular hours, which are 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

■ Come to the dark side and get crafty at the Sylvania branch of the Toledo Lucas County Public Library. A *Star Wars* fan art program is scheduled between 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Thursday.

All supplies are provided to create a masterpiece of your favorite *Star Wars* characters, and teen participants go home with their very own, one-of-a-kind mural-style poster.

The Sylvania branch is located at 6749 Monroe St., Sylvania. For more events and information, visit toledolibrary.org.



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