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News

BROWNSTOWN TWP: Storeowners are hopeful for return of wooden mascot

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By Jackie Harrison-Martin

BROWNSTOWN TWP. — An all-points bulletin has been put out for a special kind of bear.

The wooden bear needs to be returned to its home outside Bearclaw Coffee Co., 24146 Sibley Road, said Jim Smith, franchise co-owner.

Although Smith made light of the coffee shop's wooden mascot that has been missing since Nov. 2, he and his wife, Laura, are quite serious about getting it back.

A police report was filed that day alerting authorities to the theft of the hand-carved bear, but Smith said on Friday morning that it still has not been located.

The Smiths thought someone might have taken it as a joke, but at this point no one is laughing.

Laura Smith said the bear represents much more to the store than just being a mascot.

She said the bear is the work of a former customer, Frank Albert. They have lost track of Frank, who not only carved the bear that stood in front of the coffeehouse but also hand-carved smaller items for children and gave them away.

"He knew we were struggling new business owners, and he gave him to us for a song just so he would have a new home and people could admire his work," Laura Smith said.

"They did, and he was ours to proudly say that a local man carved him. I do not know what happened to Mr. Albert, but (we) always appreciated his kindness."

The shop has been in business for about 2 1/2 years, and the carved bear has become a staple at the business and a customer favorite.

Jim Smith said that although the bear is very nice, it is not worth anything to anyone except them.

"It's probably in somebody's basement or garage," he said. "We just love it and we'd like to get it back."

He said if he could talk to the person or people who took the bear, he would relay this message:

"We can forget about the whole thing if you just bring back our bear. There will be no charges, no questions asked. You can put the bear somewhere and I'll go pick it up."

Anyone with information on the whereabouts of the bear can call police at 1-734-675-1300.

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