



It's Crappy Eyewear Week!

By Brenda Fishbaugh



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In 2005, I met Luella Gustafson, owner of several salons in Iowa. She explained that she created a most unusual event to promote eye protection. I've shared Luella's unorthodox idea with many salon operators, and they always applaud her creativity.

First, what is Crappy Eyewear Week? During that week, Luella offers her salon guests the option to turn in their worn out goggles and get 40% off their next eyewear purchase.

She explained, "My tanners didn't realize they need to clean and periodically replace their goggles. When we offer them a big discount to get a new pair, they examine their goggles and see how filthy they really are. We have them toss it into a big fishbowl, which contains some really disgusting goggles, and they get clean, new eyewear!"

I recently decided to check in with Luella. It's been almost ten years, and I wanted see how Crappy Eyewear week had evolved. I learned that Luella is now in management for Classic Tan, with eight locations in Iowa. "I brought Crappy Eyewear Week to all the Classic Tan salons," she explained. "We put fishbowls in all the salons and we promote Crappy Eyewear Week every two months."

Of course, I had to ask, "Why do you call it Crappy Eyewear Week and not Eyewear Awareness Week or something more tasteful?" Luella said, "Crappy Eyewear Week is FUN and we get a giggle out of everyone! We show them the really crappy eyewear in the fishbowl and generate a lot of engagement. A woman recently brought in some goggles that her dog had chewed. Why would you put those near your eyes, with jagged edges and dog slobber on them?" Luella's

collection also includes many goggles ringed in thick mascara, and white goggles that are no longer anywhere near white, some with missing or deeply gouged lenses and broken nose bridges.

During Crappy Eyewear Week, Luella sneaks in educational moments, when she shows her tanners some photos of eye damage from unprotected tanning or shares a brochure designed to inform her salon guests about the importance of eye protection and keeping it clean

Is it time for you to host a Crappy Eyewear Week?

and in good shape. "We also provide a re-sealable baggie with every new pair of goggles," reports

Luella, "because we don't want them to collect contaminants from being carried in a purse or gym bag."

If you suspect that a tanner is "cheating" and carrying around a "just for show" pair of disposable eye protection to show your staff, here's a way to make sure they can only use them once. Mark the date on the backing of the eyewear. If they bring in a pair bearing an old date, you explain that those were to be worn *last time* – now, they are expired and another pair must be purchased. Your tanners quickly learn that an unused pair of disposables is not a "pass" to tan at your salon.

I was impressed to see how Crappy Eyewear Week was still working well for Luella, and has spread to new stores. Is it time for you to host a Crappy Eyewear Week? ■



About the Author:

Tanning industry veteran Brenda Fishbaugh is president of Eye Pro, Inc., makers of disposable eye-

wear. She travels extensively training salons on the effects of UV light on vision.

