

BUSINESS TICKER

Charity bid for lunch with Buffett stands at \$455,100

A bidder has offered \$455,100 (U.S.) to eat lunch with Warren Buffett, the most ever bid to dine with the billionaire investor, in an on-line charity auction on **eBay Inc.**

Since 2000, Mr. Buffett, the 75-year-old chairman of **Berkshire Hathaway Inc.**, has annually donated lunches for up to eight people to benefit the Glide Foundation, a San Francisco non-profit that helps the poor, hungry and homeless.

Bidding began Thursday night and will end June 29. This year's winner will dine at a Manhattan steakhouse, Smith & Wollensky.

As of noon yesterday, according to eBay's website, the high bid came from "fastisslow." That topped a \$455,000 bid from Mohnish Pabrai, an Irvine, Calif., investor who has bid unsuccessfully for the lunch for years.

"I owe a tremendous debt to Warren," said Mr. Pabrai, who oversees \$300-million at Pabrai Investment Funds, including \$30-million in Berkshire. But he added: "I'm surprised at how fast the bidding has gone up."

Mr. Pabrai is teaming on his bid with his friend Guy Spier, a New York hedge fund manager who runs the Aquamarine Fund.

Last year's lunch raised \$351,100 from an anonymous bidder. The 2004 winner, Singapore's Jason Choo, bid \$202,100 and later boosted his donation to \$250,000. In 2003, David Einhorn, who runs the Greenlight Capital LLC hedge fund, bid \$250,100 to win. Reuters

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