

Newsday

November 24, 2017

shop
LOCAL

Saturday, Nov. 25th

Smaller Stores Carry on the Virtues of American Retail Tradition

Started in 2010 by American Express to salute small retailers, Small Business Saturday is held annually on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. This year, Main Street shops again will be rolling out the red carpet for shoppers, encouraging them to "shop small" and experience the benefits of locally owned businesses, many of them run by generations of the same family.

For instance, coffee, tea or espresso and personalized service will be offered to customers who walk through the door at Napoli Marble & Granite Design in Seaford. "Everybody gets what we call

our 'white glove service'," says Marianne Rosner, the business owner.

A Small Business Bonanza

Last year's Small Business Saturday celebration proved to be a bonanza for America's downtowns. Nationwide, a total of \$15.4 billion was spent by an estimated 112 million consumers, a 13 percent increase from the previous year, according to results from the Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, released by the National Federation of Independent Business and American Express.

About 72 percent of U.S. consumers were aware of the day and more shoppers reported visiting local independent businesses on Small Business Saturday than ever before, according to the survey.

On this Small Business Saturday, Main Street will once again have an opportunity to showcase unique merchandise and retail traditions.

"Customer service, that is the

utmost priority," says Anne Marie Garofalo of Anthony's World of Floors in Port Washington, a seller of area rugs, wall-to-wall carpet, hardwood, vinyl and other flooring products. Garofalo, who has owned and operated the family business with her three brothers for the last 17 years, employs over a dozen workers and contributes to local charities. When you shop locally, she says, "the money stays here on Long Island."

However, Small Business Saturday is about "so much more than keeping the money and tax revenues that go into our local economy," said Ivan Sayles, who owns Nawlins Seafood Company and Rachel's Waterside Grill, restaurants on the Nautical Mile in Freeport. "When you go to a small shop, odds are they are going to employ a local resident," said Sayles, president of Freeport Chamber of Commerce and the Nautical Mile Merchants Association. Retail trade businesses employ more than 10 percent of Long Island's 1.4 million workers, according to the Long Island Association.

Main Street's Revival

Small business owners' vision for the future and reverence for the past have helped to revive Long Island's downtown shopping areas. Lessing's, one of the nation's oldest family-owned food service companies, has opened five restaurants to help preserve downtown areas, said Mark Lessing, company vice president. In recent years, the company has transformed well known downtown fixtures into thriving eateries, including The Post Office in Babylon and Library Café in Farmingdale.

"Shopping local during the holiday season keeps small businesses in our communities thriving. It gives back to local people who dedicate their lives to create something special and unique," Lessing said.