

TGIF FOR A SHOPPER'S DELIGHT



ELIZABETH SNYDER, KENOSHA NEWS

The new Coopers Uptown shop, 2401 60th St., features shopping bags to warm the hearts of bag ladies (and men) everywhere.

KABA vice president departs

Wessling Grosz to work with similar Nevada group

FOR THE KENOSHA NEWS

Heather Wessling Grosz, vice president at the Kenosha Area Business Alliance, announced she will be leaving her position on Jan. 2. She will be taking a new position as senior vice president of corporate attraction with the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada.



Wessling Grosz

Jens Emerson, chair of the KABA board of directors, said the board appreciated Wessling Grosz's contributions to the organization and area community. With KABA President Todd Battle also recently announcing his departure, the top leadership of the group will be very different next year.

"While it's not ideal to lose two such important members of our staff, we have a strong team in place and are looking forward to bringing in exciting new leadership that will lead Kenosha County's economic development efforts going forward."

Wessling Grosz has a 22-year history as an economic development professional, serving as president of the Wisconsin Economic Development Association, the state's network for economic development professionals, also serving on multiple non-profit organizations for more than 15 years.

In 2013, she relocated her family from the Town of Rome, Wisconsin to take a position at KABA. Previously, she served in various economic development roles throughout Wisconsin, Minnesota, and New Jersey.

Wessling Grosz said it had been an honor to serve the county and state over the last two decades.

"My passion and willingness to serve is both professional and personal for me. I've enjoyed the people that I've worked with, from the new corporate citizens

Please see **WESSLING**, Page B2

It's in the bag! Seek the real thing

Coopers Uptown continues beloved tradition

My name is Elizabeth, and I'm a bag lady. In fact, I come from a long line of bag ladies, having learned the fine art of coveting shopping bags from my mother and grandmother while toting purchases around a Marshall Field's department store.



ELIZABETH SNYDER

Forget those plastic abominations they try to pass off as "shopping bags" these days. We're talking about sturdy bags emblazoned with a store's logo, meant to be lovingly folded and reused for several years.

Those bags, a staple of shopping for decades, still reside in closets around the world.

That's why I immediately went behind the sales counter when I visited the new Coopers Uptown store shortly before it



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Maggie Marcoe creates a forest of decorated trees inside her Somers home.

opened to the public in October. As I pulled out different shopping bags and placed them on the counter, Vicki Seebeck, general manager of the store, knew exactly what I was doing.

"Oh, you like our shopping bags?" she asked, her eyes twinkling as only a fellow bag lover's eyes glow when they encounter a well-constructed bag.

Coopers Uptown bags are, indeed, a welcome throwback to the gold-standard shopping bag era. They are fashioned from a heavy paper, with thick handles

meant to stand up to the heaviest of purchases.

Seebeck happily joined me in reminiscing about all the shopping bags we have loved and cared for over the years.

Even better than coming home with a sturdy shopping bag was coming home with the bag AND a department store gift box. And not those flimsy gift boxes whose sides fold in and which collapse after a few uses. We're talking about heavy-duty boxes that will surely outlive me.

In our family, you might still get a gift wrapped in a signature red Marshall Field's Christmas box, 16 years after the iconic Chicago department store ceased to exist. But you are not going to take that box home. It's a treasured family heirloom meant to be passed down through the generations.

Thanks, Coopers, for recognizing that a good shopping bag is often more important than what's inside it — and will likely be with you long after you've used up that fancy soap or have eaten all those chocolates.

Coopers Uptown also brought back another great tradition when it opened in the former Jack Andrea gift shop building at 2401 60th St.

Like Andrea's, Coopers Uptown has free gift wrap. Every day, all year long.

Free gift wrap and a good shopping bag? Excuse me while I wipe away these tears of joy.

An indoor forest

We've had a lot of fun the past few weeks showcasing the

Please see **SNYDER**, Page B2

LIGHTING UP CHRISTMAS



JOE STATES PHOTOS, KENOSHA NEWS

Bristol resident John Davidson, a local historian, demonstrates the original method of illuminating a Christmas tree, a tradition that dates back several hundred years. Davidson, 90, has a collection of several vintage Christmas tree decorations, including a full set of candles and a working box of Mazda lamps, which were a fixture of Christmas trees in the late 1920s.



John Davidson's collection of vintage Christmas light decorations, including candles and Mazda lamps. Anyone lighting candles on a tree had to be especially careful, and they typically were prepared with a bucket of water in case of a fire.

Vehicles damaged in fire Wednesday

KENOSHA NEWS STAFF

At least 20 cars were burned or damaged during a fire early Wednesday morning at A-1 Auto & Marine, 10528 Sheridan Road in Pleasant Prairie. Multiple fire agencies from Kenosha County and across the state border assisting.

On Wednesday at 12:19 a.m., Pleasant Prairie Fire & Rescue and Police Departments responded to A-1 Auto & Marine for a report of a garage fire.

The initial caller advised that a detached garage was on fire. Pleasant Prairie Police officers arrived and found that numerous vehicles and another building were also on fire. Pleasant Prairie Fire & Rescue requesting additional resources.

Fire & Rescue units arrived on location and observed that a residence had also been damaged. In addition, the department observed more than 20 cars burning or damaged. Crews confirmed that no one was located inside any of the affected structures and began defensive fire operations.

Due to the cold weather conditions and the nature of the fire, the incident commander

Please see **FIRE**, Page B2

In Loving Memory Of
Marilyn Bose



Mother, it's been one year since you passed. We still think about you every day, and always will. We miss your smiles and laughter. Merry Christmas in Heaven. We all love you so much and miss you!! Rest in peace. Love Always, From your Husband Gilbert and your children, Donna, Barb, Tony, Cindy.



THE LIGHT SHINES!
Tonight
The 1866
Kenosha
(Southport)
Lighthouse
Shines

December 23, 2022

In Loving Memory of
Alexander Jay Chopp



Happy 30th Birthday, Alexander. You will forever be our Peter Pan. Always on our minds. Forever in our hearts. We love you infinity and beyond. Love, Mom, Dad, Sara & Jake

Holiday procrastinators are back in force

ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Last year, Lucila Gomez and her husband started their holiday shopping around Thanksgiving and wrapped it up a week before Christmas, spending \$750 on tablets and clothing for their three children and relatives.

This year? Gomez is waiting until she gets her annual bonus on Friday to get started — and she's limiting her spending to \$200, sticking to World Cup themed jerseys for her 10-year-old twins and a 6-year-old.

"Last year, we were confident. We were like, 'Get them whatever they want,'" said the 49-year-old Buckeye, Arizona resident, an hourly worker in the billing department of a health company. "This year, we're waiting until we both get paid. We want to go into the New Year not owing anything."

Last minute holiday shoppers are back in force — and inflation is partly to blame.

For the first two years of the pandemic, many were buying earlier in the season, afraid of not getting what they wanted because of shortages of products or delays in deliveries. They also had more money to spend thanks to government stimulus checks and child care credits.

But this year, supply chain snags have eased and shoppers aren't as worried about availability as they are about higher prices on everything from rent to food, causing them to postpone their buying until the last minute.

Gomez, for instance, said that even though she and her husband, an electrician, each got a raise, it still wasn't enough to offset their rising expenses. In fact, she said her family moved in with her parents after their monthly rent jumped from \$1,500 to \$2,000 earlier this year. She'd hoped to save for a house, but mortgage rates keep going up.

Last-minute shopping is also being encouraged by a quirk in this year's calendar, according to Brian Field, global leader of Sensormatic Solutions, which tracks store traffic. With Christmas falling on Sunday, consumers have all week to shop.

Retailers are relying on the last minute spending rush to help meet their



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shoppers carry shopping bags Dec. 19 down Fifth Avenue in New York. After a two-year hiatus, holiday procrastinators are back this year during a holiday season when retailers need them even more.

holiday sales goals after a weaker-than-expected November.

Americans cut back sharply on retail spending last month as the holiday shopping season began with high prices and rising interest rates taking their toll on households, particularly lower-income families.

Retail sales fell 0.6% from October to November after a sharp 1.3% rise the previous month, the government said last week. Sales fell at furniture, electronics, and home and garden stores.

Americans' spending has been intact ever since inflation first spiked almost 18 months ago, but the ability of shoppers to keep spending in a period of high inflation may be beginning to ease. Inflation has retreated from the four-decade high it reached this summer but remains elevated, enough to sap the spending power of consumers.

Still, overall holiday sales should be decent, though holiday sales growth is expected to dramatically slow down from a year ago.

The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, is slated to release the actual results for the combined November and December period next month. The group ex-

pects holiday sales growth will slow to a range of 6% to 8%, compared with the blistering 13.5% growth of a year ago.

The last stretch of the holiday season is critical.

On average, the top 10 busiest shopping days in the U.S. — which includes Wednesday, Thursday, Friday of this week and Monday of next week — account for roughly 40% of all holiday retail traffic, according to Sensormatic. However, retailers might expect even larger numbers this year as high gas prices force consumers to consolidate their shopping trips and everyone converges over the next few days, Sensormatic said.

For those holding out for bigger discounts right before Christmas, they may be disappointed. Retailers in general have maintained the same discounts they've been offering since Black Friday. There could be some deals, however, in areas like home and furniture, according to DataWeave, which tracks prices for hundreds of thousands of items across roughly three dozen retailers, including Walmart, Target and Amazon.

DataWeave's recent data shows the average prices for furniture were discounted

23% during the second week of December, compared with 12.8% during Black Friday week. In home furnishings, average price cuts were 17.2% compared with 11.2% for Black Friday week. Krish Thyagarajan, president and chief operating officer at DataWeave, believes that discounts for electronics are ticking up from Black Friday levels in the last few days before Christmas, but price cuts for clothing should remain a little over 20%, more generous than the average 16% discount last year around this time.

Inflation or not, there will always be the perennial procrastinators like Evelyn T. Peregrin, who last year used COVID-19 as an excuse to delay her holiday buying since several relatives had the virus so she didn't have to buy or deliver gifts until after Christmas.

Now it's her travel expenses of about \$700 that are eating into her budget. The 28-year-old moved to Puerto Rico from New Jersey with her husband earlier this year, forcing her to scale back her holiday spending to about \$150 from last year's \$250.

"I will order probably a few things online and then end up having to go to a store last minute," she said.

Wessling

From B1

just moving in, to the Kenosha businesses and residents that have been here for decades," Wessling Grosz said. "I see great things happening for Kenosha County now and into the future."

During her tenure at KABA, Wessling Grosz played a significant role in numerous development projects, including the strategy to establish the Salem Business Park and redevelopment efforts to rebuild portions of the Uptown neighborhood after the riots on 22nd Ave—working with the various local and state partners to advance the project.

Wessling Grosz and her husband Adam will relocate to the Lake Tahoe/Reno, Nevada, region for her new role.

"I will miss the Kenosha community greatly but look forward to a new chapter in a beautiful area of the country," Wessling Grosz said.

Battle said Wessling Grosz had contributed greatly to the county's economic development success since she joined KABA in 2013.

"Heather has been an incredibly important member of our team over the past decade," said the outgoing KABA president. "She will be missed as an economic development professional and as a caring and passionate advocate for this community."

Fire

From B1

requested We Energies Gas & Electric Divisions to the scene to secure utilities.

Assisting Wisconsin fire agencies included Bristol, Kenosha, Paris, Salem Lakes,

Somers, and Wind Lake. Responding Illinois departments included Beach Park, Grayslake, Newport, Winthrop Harbor, and Zion.

Some of these units backfilled and assisted in responding to normal call volume during the incident.

The Racine Fire Bells re-

sponded to provide emergency service support to responders on scene. During the incident only one civilian reported a minor injury and was treated at the scene and released. No injuries were reported by any responding personnel.

The scene is being investi-

gated by the Kenosha County Fire Investigation Task Force, which the Pleasant Prairie Fire & Rescue and Police Departments are a part of. The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with additional information should contact the Pleasant Prairie Police Department at 262-694-7353.

Snyder

From B1

bright — and sometimes outrageous — outdoor decorations shining brightly in our area this season, but we can't see what's inside these festive homes.

Unless you share a photo. Maggie Marcoe did just that, sending an image of her many indoor Christmas trees.

"We normally have four trees, but last year I told my family I was thinking of doing more and one of them would be a pink tree," she said. "They thought I was crazy for wanting a pink tree."

She and her son were inspired to go big "after going to Milaeger's last year," she said of the Racine store famous for its holiday decor. "My son loved their tree displays and couldn't get enough of them. After some thought, I said I could do more trees in the sun-room, take the furniture out and make it work."

She started working on



ELIZABETH SNYDER, KENOSHA NEWS

Those iconic red Marshall Field's Christmas boxes can still be found at my home, several years after the Chicago department store ceased to exist.

the project at the end of September, starting with that pink-themed tree.

The project involved many trips to stores for ornaments and ribbon for the pink tree and her green-and-gold tree, too. ("It's not a Packers tree," she said.) She also does a

blue tree, "which I've had for many years." In addition to buying decorations, she also crafts items, including tree toppers and tree skirts.

What else? "My husband wanted a red tree, so I started shopping for that tree, too." All in all, she had fin-

ished her extensive indoor forest — all with different themes/colors — by Thanksgiving.

And why does Marcoe do all this work?

"It's for my son, and it really is pretty to look at," she said, adding she is "already planning one more

for next year."

Red Kettle update

The Salvation Army's annual Red Kettle campaign has just two days to go.

This season, our local Salvation Army is hoping to raise \$350,000, with \$100,000 coming from contributions to those Red Kettles.

As of Tuesday, the collected funds totaled \$60,000, or 60% of the kettle goal.

"With the storm coming, it's going to be difficult to meet our goal," said David Hamilton, the auxiliary captain at Kenosha's Salvation Army.

As you wrap up that holiday gift list, remember there's still time to donate at one of the 19 local Red Kettle sites, and you can always send money to the Salvation Army, 3116 75th St., or donate online at sakenosha.org.

Helping our neighbors is one of the best gifts you'll give this season.

For the birds

While shopping at the new Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop in Pleasant Prairie, I learned about a fun holiday tradition in Scandinavia.

Apparently — though no one mentioned this when we were there in September — people in Scandinavia feed the birds on Christmas Day to ensure good luck throughout the coming year.

As I left the shop, they handed me a packet of bird seed "to spread on your doorstep Christmas morning for New Year's good luck!"

I like good luck as much as the next guy, so I will definitely get scattering.

That's a long way of wishing all of you a very merry Christmas and much good luck in 2023. Oh, and if you visit my home on Dec. 25, step carefully around the bird seed.

Have a comment? Email Liz at esnnyder@kenoshanews.com or call her at 262-656-6271.