## Shopping Local It's Not Just for the Holidays.

By Laura Weis

When the holidays approach, retailers, business associations, media outlets and municipalities all seem to unite around the common theme—Shop Local. This messaging benefits businesses and hometowns, reminding consumers of the value of shopping local as they gear up to shop for the holidays.

A "shop local first" culture can provide value to the community far beyond any one shopper. For every \$100 spent, \$73 stays in the community helping the local economy. Plus, it can reduce the environmental impact, create and retain new jobs, and improve both infrastructure and in-person customer service. A win, win, win.

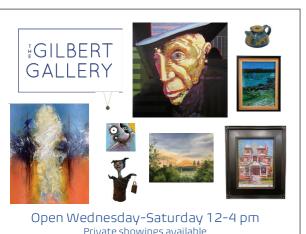
The Champaign County Chamber of Commerce helps to facilitate business growth and improve the quality of life in the county. We cannot only encourage "shop local" during the holidays, and instead, we must help local businesses thrive by using our wallets *all year long*. Many one-of-a-kind restaurants and retailers enrich our community, and they are the very fabric that makes Champaign County unique.

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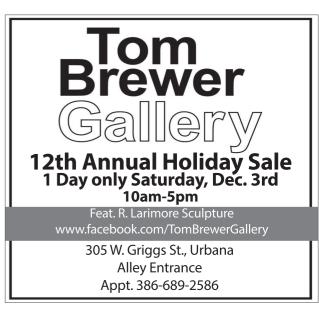


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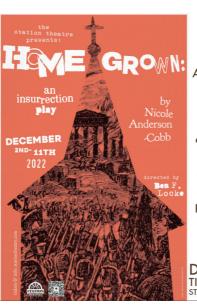
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