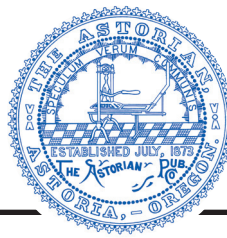


# OPINION



# the Astorian

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## OUR VIEW

# Local shopping is a gift

**R**ecent statistics from a poll by Business Insider indicate that more shoppers were expected to buy gifts during Cyber Monday than they did on Black Friday or Small Business Saturday, the two biggest holiday sales days for brick-and-mortar stores.

That news is not surprising. The back room of the Astoria post office is stacked high with boxes bearing an Amazon smile, an astounding display of the amount of merchandise that is bought online from outside of our area and delivered locally to Clatsop County residents.

Although online shopping is part of the new normal for retail businesses, as we are in the throes of the holiday gift-buying season that started in earnest Thanksgiving week, it is good to be reminded that local shopping is a gift that keeps giving to the North Coast.

Local stores keep their profits here. Those businesses contribute to local schools, charities and community events. Many retailers sell locally-made products that support area artisans, manufacturers, farmers, fishers and craftspeople, who in turn buy homes, pay taxes and contribute to the health of our local economy. (Full disclosure: Local stores buy advertising that help keep newspapers publishing — a benefit to the employees of The Astorian, who also buy



Bebeto Matthews/AP Photo

The physical rush of Black Friday and the armchair browsing of Cyber Monday are increasingly blending into one big holiday shopping event.

homes, pay taxes, make donations and purchase items here.)

You might think that shopping inside a store at Christmastime is a nostalgic idea embraced only by those who remember holidays before the internet.

Surprisingly, according to a survey released in July by Shopkick, 55% of Gen Z respondents plan to do their holiday shopping

in physical stores. They view holiday shopping as an opportunity to spend time with family and friends, even more so than older shoppers.

We think that Gen Z is onto something. Put down your phone and venture out to local stores during this gift-giving season.

Spend time with family and friends. Indulge your senses in fir

boughs, tree lights and Christmas carols at your favorite shopping spots. Share a meal and a cup of cheer with a friend.

When you unplug and shop our local retailers, find a fundraiser or bazaar with unique gifts or give to a local charity, your dollars will be reinvested in Clatsop County.

That's a gift that gives back to us all.

## SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

# Can artists make a living?

**S**EASIDE — David Ambrose is chairman of the Clatsop County Arts Council. Don Frank is vice chairman.

The two were among representatives of the arts group to host the Clatsop County 2019 Arts Summit, "The Business of Art: Artists Teaching Arts" at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center this month.

We talked to them about what it takes for an artist to make their work profitable.

**Q: What's going on in the county in terms of artists?**

**Ambrose:** How many words do you want?

**Q: Three-hundred-fifty?**

**Ambrose:** I can do that. We've got a really creative county. There are a lot of creative people who are struggling to take their creativity and making it part of their making a living. We're trying to focus on bringing people here who have worked out ways to do that and share those strategies who want to learn about how to make their creativity work for them and make more of a living at it.

**Q: How did you choose the presenters today?**

**Ambrose:** We don't have a menu of resources, we tried to rely on who we could think — between the nine of us on the council — who would fit the needs of learning about copyright laws. We've got a presenter who makes her living doing house concerts. She just got back from Europe doing house concerts, the nuts and

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bolts of how you do that, how you market yourself on the internet. Things of that nature.

**Q: These are real-world solutions?**

**Ambrose:** You don't get to hear it from somebody who's got a PowerPoint. You get to hear it from somebody who's actually doing it.

**Q: Are you a visual artist?**

**Ambrose:** And musician. I play stand up bass.

**Q: Can you make a living at it?**

**Ambrose:** No.

**Q: Is that a goal? To make a living? Or to have fun and make some extra bucks?**

**Ambrose:** We'll find a little more about that from our community here.

One of the other things we wanted to do was to get musicians together with visual artists, with theater people.

**Q: Don, what is your role with the arts council?**

**Frank:** David is the chair of the council, I'm vice chair.

**Q: What is your lesson for young artists wanting to make money and not being taken advantage of?**

**Frank:** That's life, isn't it?

**Q: Does everybody have to learn the hard way?**

**Frank:** That's a good question. No. Some things do need to be learned the hard way, of course, but this summit is trying to help jump-start that for people. Learn from others. Specifically artists teaching artists, people who have done it, who have been there, have done it the hard way.

**Q: When should an artist work without pay?**

**Frank:** One thing I think is vital is volunteerism. That's key to the community.

But as far as artists giving their work away, there are situations when I might donate something for sure, but a person has to put value on their work. And that's what this is.

**Q: Is it better not to take a gig if it**

**doesn't pay or a minimal paying gig?**

**Frank:** It depends on where you are in your career. Or the purpose of it, for sure.

**Q: There's no hard-and-fast rule?**

**Frank:** I don't think so.

**Ambrose:** The one burning question I'd like to get answered is how do you say "no" when someone says, "Give us that piece of artwork for an auction or event."

I've seen that happen. Someone gives a piece of work to the organization and it sells for \$10. It's a real blow to the artist. How do you put some limits on that so you're not taking advantage of them?

**Frank:** People might say, "Will you play our bar mitzvah?" They're a friend, or they say, "We'll give you credit." Neither of those buys groceries.

If you open up a conversation with them, you can explain, "This is how we do this."

R.J. Marx is the South County reporter for The Astorian and the editor of the Seaside Signal.