

# Area businesses have mixed expectations for Christmas season sales this year

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Another problem, according to Zayetz, may simply be the style of his store. Zayetz described it as a mom and pop type store. It's not as flashy as your big chain toy stores or department stores.

Some might think that the recent closure of the Ames department store in Boyertown would help a store like Alec's. Ames, which closed last month, was the area's only department store. Even so, Zayetz believes the competition is still too immense.

"It's hard for me to compete with big-name stores," said Zayetz. "People, especially newcomers to the area, just head down the road to King of Prussia or Reading."

Across the street from Smart Alec's, expectations are much higher at the Hollenbach Home Center. At Rt. 100 and County Line Road, Hollenbach's is very visible from Rt. 100.

Inside, Hollenbach's has already begun preparing for the holiday season. Various crafts, such as fake Christmas trees, candles, and stuffed Santas and snow-

men are located near the front of the store.

Hollenbach's may be one of the few local businesses that could actually benefit from a sluggish economy.

"Since people aren't out spending money, they're spending more time at home," said co-owner Becky Schlegel. "People come here for items they need to make their homes more decorative and more comfortable."

Schlegel says they actually have more inventory this year than they did a year ago.

"Good economy or bad," said Schlegel, "people still want to enjoy and celebrate the holidays. They still want to be festive."

According to Schlegel, Hollenbach's will be running sales on certain lines and products. "Sales will be held, just as they are all year," said Schlegel. "Our philosophy does not change over the holidays."

Zimmers Pets of Gilbertsville is also looking forward to the Christmas season. Similar to Hollenbach's perspective, Kevin Zimmer believes he sells a product that is always in demand.

"People will always have and want pets," said Zimmers employee Lisa Thompson. "As long as they have pets, they will always need to buy pet toys and supplies."

At the moment, Zimmers is not in preparation for the Christmas season. That tends to begin after Thanksgiving.

"People buying Christmas gifts usually wait until the week before Christmas," said employee Sherry Bartman. "Especially if they're buying pets."

Bartman said that puppies are always big sellers around Christmas, while hamsters are a popular item with children.

Just down the road, Bill Ott, owner of Modellbahn Ott Hobbies Inc. said he is not as optimistic as he had been past Christmas seasons. Although September is typically a quiet month, Ott said things have been slow.

"Especially after 9/11," said Ott, "business has been down. I don't know why, but other local merchants have said the same thing. Of course the economy may also be a factor."

Few customers were shopping

as he talked, but Ott was busy the whole time taking calls from customers. One of the products Ott deals with is a rare line of model trains from Germany called Marklin trains. Many customers come to him because Marklin parts are hard to find.

In addition to phone and mail orders, Ott also has a website, [www.modellbahnot.com](http://www.modellbahnot.com), through which customers can order items.

In addition to selling trains, remote control cars, and other hobbies, Ott also services everything he sells.

With winter approaching, local drug stores are likely to be busy. Jane Mellott, co-owner of Bause's Super Drug Store in Boyertown, does not predict any big changes this holiday season.

"But more people will likely become sick," said Mellott, "so that will bring in customers."

Another item that may attract customers is the addition of the Salvation Army Giving Tree.

Formerly located at Ames, the tree resides at Bause's this year. Through the Giving Tree, the Salvation Army provides local children with gifts for the holi-

days. To catch the eye of the consumer, Bause's has also distributed 8,000 coupon books throughout the area.

Out in Oley, Wilma Leininger, owner of Oley Valley Hardware, expects things to run smoothly this season.

In Oley for 11 years, Leininger says she has regular customers, and businesses in Oley have always been loyal.

Leininger is not worried about her business, but she does hope that people are smarter with their money.

"People should be cautious of what they're spending and not spend beyond their means," said Leininger. "Some people still tend to be paying for the year before at this time."

According to Leininger, small items, such as hammers and other small tools are popular stocking-stuffers. People also shop at Oley Valley Hardware for hard to find items, such as radiator keys, chair tips, and vacuum bags.

Please send your comments to: [editor@berksmontnews.com](mailto:editor@berksmontnews.com)

# Governor lifts drought emergency

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status. Schweiker first declared a drought emergency on February 12, for 24 counties in south central and eastern Pennsylvania. He extended the emergency for 20 counties on May 8, extended the emergency for 14 counties on August 9, and then added five counties to drought emergency status on September 5 after a long dry spell.

"While our rainfall for the past few weeks has been excellent, we'll need several more months of above average rainfall to return all of our counties to normal status," Schweiker said.

# YMCA to host aquatic special olympics event

The Boyertown Area YMCA is again hosting the Aquatic Special Olympics program.

This free program is in its eighth year, and is held at the Blanche Reigner Boyer Natatorium of the YMCA. Participants meet Wednesday evenings from 6:45 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Keith Schoenly, a member of Boyertown Kiwanis, is the director of the Aquatic Special Olympics program. Several members of the Boyertown Kiwanis volunteer as coaches to assist participants.

Anyone interested in assisting as a volunteer coach, or in becoming a participant, may contact Rick Moatz, YMCA Aquatic Director, at the Boyertown Area YMCA at 610-369-9622.

# Christmas spending may be down this year, say shoppers

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spend more than women this year. Those married will spend more than unmarried, they reported.

At the Wal-Mart department store in Exeter, shoppers braved cold winds outside to find some deals inside.

Joyce Rohrbach of Exeter said she is looking forward to the holiday season. She plans to spend between six and seven hundred dollars this year.

With a son and a daughter, Rohrbach is trying to spend equally on each child.

"I spend around \$200 on each child," said Rohrbach. "I also try to donate just as much toward charity and help those less fortunate."

Jennifer Hassler of Antietam said she is being more aware of prices this year.

"We're trying to focus more on what we need and less on recreational items," said Hassler.

Hassler said her small family also makes the holidays less expensive.

"I buy two or three gifts for my husband, my child, and my parents," said Hassler. "We don't buy for the extended family, so that helps too."

Wal-Mart employee and customer Melissa Herb of Reading says sales have actually been up compared to last year, despite the conditions.

"The store's already promoting the Christmas season," said Herb. "People are planning ahead. Our layaway is packed."

Other than K-Mart closing just down the road, Herb does not see any particular reason why sales are up.

"There's no one big item this year, no Tickle Me Elmos," said Herb.

At Redner's Warehouse Market in Boyertown, Kelli Miller of Boyertown said she is always a big spender for the holidays.

"I just love to spoil my two kids," said Miller.

Lauri Reinhart of Pottstown is being a little more cautious.

"I was laid off by Partners Press Printing in Oaks," said Reinhart, accompanied by 14-month old daughter, Daisy.

"I won't be spending too big this year."

Reinhart will begin her shopping this weekend at Granite Run Toys R Us with friends from Maryland.

Lynn Czap of Boyertown anticipates big spending this Christmas. Along with gifts for her four kids, Czap is also paying for a furnace.

Czap plans to spend the same amount on all her kids, but says, that's not what really what Christmas is about.

"Christmas is really about family and the birth of Christ," said Czap.

Please send any comments to: [editor@berksmontnews.com](mailto:editor@berksmontnews.com)

# Four teens involved in Pike

Four teenagers escaped injury about 8:20 p.m. Oct. 30 when the driver lost control and the car slid down an embankment in Pike Township

State Police at Reading report that Ryan Hohl, 18, of 212 Koch Road, Boyertown was driving a 1999 Chevrolet Cavalier west on Hill Church Road.

When he attempted to make a right turn, he apparently lost control and the car slid down an

embankment and the left front hit a tree.

Police said damage was moderate and there were no injuries.

The occupants were identified as James Yohn, 19, of Pottstown, Albert Williams, 19, no address, and Gerald Keiffer, 17, of Temple. No charges are pending.

Got info? send it to: [editor@berksmontnews.com](mailto:editor@berksmontnews.com)

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### KEYSTONE ROCK BANDS

Sat., Nov. 16 in the Silver Wing from 6-10 p.m.

Charlie Adams will be here on Friday, November 22 in Center Court from 7-9 p.m. for Book Selling and Signing.



Santa is coming to Zern's  
Nov. 29th 1-3 p.m. & 6-9 p.m.

### Holiday Hours

Nov. 29	Black Friday	10 a.m.-10 p.m.
Nov. 30	Santa Claus Arrives	10 a.m.-10 p.m.
Dec. 6	Saturday	10 a.m.-10 p.m.
Dec. 7	Friday	10 a.m.-10 p.m.
Dec. 13	Saturday	10 a.m.-10 p.m.
Dec. 14	Friday	10 a.m.-10 p.m.
Dec. 20	Saturday	10 a.m.-10 p.m.
Dec. 21	Friday	10 a.m.-10 p.m.
Dec. 22	Saturday	10 a.m.-10 p.m.
Dec. 23	Sunday	10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Dec. 24	Monday	10 a.m.-7 p.m.
Dec. 24	Tuesday	10 a.m.-4 p.m.

### CLOVER FARMS MEATS

Stand #210

- Loin Chops Pork Chops.....\$1.89 lb.
- 100% All Beef Chuck Patties.....\$1.89 lb.
- Diet & Watson Hot & Spicy Ham.....\$2.49 lb.
- Hatfield Cooked Salami.....\$1.99 lb.

### FRANK HOGGIN'S NURSERY AUCTION

Frank Hoggin's Nursery is now sponsoring an in-season auction. For various trees, shrubs and plants it will be held every Fri. and Sat. until Nov. The bidding will begin at 6:00 p.m. till 10:00 p.m. Be early and be ready to be impressed by both our selection and competitive prices!

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Stand #234, Door #10

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Located in the East wing near Door 11

- Angel Soft Toilet Paper 4 pk.....90¢
- Ocean Spray Jellied Cranberry Sauce 16 oz.....50¢
- Christmas Wrap 50 Sq. Ft. ....\$1.25
- Pepperidge Farm Stuffing 16 oz.....\$1.00

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