

## Supervisor Brian Kulpa's December 2022 Column

The holidays are fast approaching, and if you still need to grab some gifts I have a few suggestions that you can find right here in Town. We are fortunate to have so many local business owners who have invested in our community and I encourage you all to please support them. It is always good to remember that shopping local supports not only our friends and neighbors, but our local economy as well.



Amherst has several business districts that are popular year-round with a variety of specialty shops to choose from. You don't have to go far to find quality chocolates, organic beauty products, a variety of specialty toys, games and comics, unique home goods, and handcrafted jewelry. And much more. We also have shops that feature locally made foods and beverages, and plenty of Buffalo themed gifts. All these local stores are truly worth a visit to find something distinct that searching Google just can't accomplish.

The best part of shopping in the Town is the dining options to choose from after you are done and ready to relax. The excellent restaurants make the Town's business districts a destination. Remember these great dining options for a night out and/or your catering needs for holiday gatherings.

Another great "shop local" gift idea is the Shop 716 eGift Card through the Amherst Chamber of Commerce and Erie County. The program supports our local restaurants, retailers, and attractions. Purchase an eGift Card for your own holiday shopping or for a gift. The card can be used at a variety of participating, local businesses. Visit <https://amherst.org/shop716> to keep your hard-earned money, right here where you live.

The gift of an experience is also a great idea and Amherst has many options for culturally rich experiences. Consider a membership to the Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village (BNHV), which includes unlimited free museum admission and discounted admission to special events. For more information, visit <https://bnhv.org/memberships>. Or, consider treating someone to one of the town's local theatre company's shows, including MusicalFare Theatre and O'Connell & Company.

The Town hosted its own shop local event on Dec. 11 with the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Outdoor Holiday Market. First organized in 2020, we started the market at the height of COVID to provide local businesses a safe option to welcome holiday shoppers. It was great to see so many local and unique businesses participating in this fun community event. Previously held at BNHV, this year we moved the event to the Northtown Center in coordination with the Buffalo Beauts, our hometown professional hockey team. Amherst is proud and excited to host the Beauts' home rink.

I understand the appeal of the ease of online shopping, so remember that many local businesses adjusted during COVID to offer online shopping and contactless pickup, and many of those services remain in place. Local restaurants also extended delivery and pickup options.

Whatever holiday or occasion you are shopping for, I want to wish you a very happy and healthy celebration. Remember to be safe, especially as inclement weather has found its way to our community. Wishing you all the best in 2023!