

OPINION ? I support Local

By **Michelle Janzen**

Last week while recommending Prim Pickins and touting how well I think they make their products, in a question on one of the local online buy and sells I was told by someone, and I quote, "Grow up and stop slamming other small businesses?" It is pretty sad that you always have negative things to say about all other businesses!?

First off, I have to say that I hate when someone reads a tone into a question or answer online that doesn't exist.

Secondly, I have to say that if you think someone's post is about you, truth is, it probably isn't, but you probably see yourself in it. Suggestion: Don't get upset with the mirror, fix the reflection.

As someone who owned and operated a small retail business in the town of Shelburne for six-and-a-half years, I am the first person to understand how hard it is to make a living and the struggles that entrepreneurs face.

I am passionate about our local community and am continually trying to help get the word out through my articles about different business in town and the products and services they offer in hopes of helping them attract new customers.

It is my option that when you shop locally you keep local business.

I can't tell you how many businesses I saw come and go while my downtown retail location was operating. By shopping locally, you keep your community and environment healthy, prosperous and vibrant, thus, reducing the number of empty shops, you currently see in the downtown core.

In fact, several studies have shown that when you buy from an independent, locally-owned business, rather than a nationally-owned business, significantly more of your money is used to make purchases from other local businesses, service providers, and farms which, in turn, continues to strengthen the economic base of the community.

Did you know that on average not-for-profit organizations receive 250% more support from smaller business owners than they do from large businesses. So, every raffle draw or prize that can be found at most events in and around Shelburne benefit from these small businesses.

Where we shop, where we eat and have fun all makes our community home. Our one-of-a-kind businesses are an integral part of the distinctive character of Shelburne. With local businesses being mostly owned by people who live in this community, making them less likely to leave, they tend to be more invested in the community's future and let's not forget that they also provide jobs to residents.

With these small businesses, each selecting products based not on a national sales plan but on their own interests and the needs of their local customers guarantees a much broader range of product choices.

I am a HUGE supporter of local businesses and use them for the majority of my personal purchases and gift buying. Very rarely will you catch me shopping online or traveling to big shopping mall for these purchases. Why would I when I can get everything I need right here.

I close by saying firstly I am glad the person took down their post which was the furthest thing from the truth and secondly, support independent, self-funded businesses, musicians, bands, instructors, writers, photographers, designers, recording studios, artists, attend shows, buy albums, buy merchandise, schedule recording time, take music lessons, buy homemade art, purchase photos, read

unpublished writing, tell friends and most of all spread the word to support local!