ELLWOOD CITY – So high was the interest in the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce’s third Small Business Saturday originating from a Community Plaza filled with live music and a 30-foot blue spruce Christmas tree that event chairwoman Allison Frickanish exhausted her supply of 50 Shop Small canvas totes within 15 minutes.

Those white totes, adorned with Shop Small – words repeated on balloons, lapel pins, stickers and doormats – contained a flier of Ellwood City area businesses participating and offering discounts in observance of an event created in 2010.

Those white totes were quickly slung over the shoulders or swung alongside legs as shoppers scattered from the Community Plaza.

“Pride in Ellwood City,” Frickanish said of

Who bought in? / 2
the response, her voice rising above the jazzy sounds of the nearby “We Don’t Sing” brass band, an Ellwood City quintet whose members played tenor and baritone saxophones, trombones, tuba and drums. “It’s just amazing. It looks like they are filling the bags” with items purchased along Lawrence Avenue. “Seeing people out, listening to the band, it’s just been heartwarming and beautiful.”

Shoppers, Frickanish said, “are getting tired of the big businesses taking over. If you shop locally, your tax dollars stay here, you are building up the town and supporting local people.

“A place where everyone wants to be”

Local people “who are the community,” said Bob Rivers, 29, whose National Grind Coffee & Tea Shop opened at 435 Lawrence Ave. in June. “We have seen so many businesses just in the past six months coming to downtown Ellwood City,” said Kristen Campbell, who with Katie Weisz opened The Sweet Shop at 526 Lawrence Ave. in June. “We’re hoping that it turns into a place where everyone wants to be.”

“This is more than you would have seen before, with people taking a chance,” said Valerie Hemphill, who with husband, John, purchased Heart’s Desire Floral & Gifts at 422 Lawrence Ave. in January. “I think we want to bring this town back to where it is the town you want to come to for shopping and for convenience instead of going out to malls.”

Thirty-year-old Ashley Jubach was “terrified” when she opened Revive Yoga and Beauty in July at 201 Fifth St.

“Every one of these places has amazing things to offer,” Jubach said. “And I think it is just the experience you get when you visit them. Everyone is so kind.

And we’ve all become friends in opening these businesses. It is an overall sense of community, friendship and support. “We want people to come here and we want people to feel welcome.”

“An air of excitement and a momentum building”

Small Business Saturday gives shoppers a chance to explore their own town, “when maybe they aren’t intentional about doing that at times,” said Caroline Golmic, 30, who with husband Scott opened Sweet Caroline’s ice cream shop at 507 Lawrence Ave. in May. “There is an air of excitement and a momentum building.”
Pining for an E.C. Christmas

Ten adorn 30-foot Christmas tree with 5,000 lights, 300 ornaments

By William V. Foley
For The Chamber

ELLWOOD CITY — Members of the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce and others on Nov. 24 adorned a 30-foot blue spruce Christmas tree in the Community Plaza with 5,000 lights and 300 ornaments in preparation for “Let There Be Lights” weekend.

Raymond Santillo, the chamber’s executive director; Caroline Golmic, chamber president; and Jillian Court, chamber executive assistant; worked to decorate the tree donated by INMETCO, as did Ron Freehauf, of Ohioville; Russell Barge, of Wampum; Anthony Mazzant, of New Castle; Ellwood City residents Jen Eller, Ashley Smith and Ashley Ju- bach; and Shelley Collins, of Lynchburg, Va.

Top, a number of the 300 ornaments await placement on the Christmas tree in Ellwood City’s Community Plaza on Nov. 24. Above, Jillian Court, executive assistant, Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce, works on a limb. Far left, Jen Eller, of Ellwood City, helps thread an electric cord through the blue spruce. Left, Caroline Golmic, president, Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce, sorts ornaments.
Pining for an E.C. Christmas

Caroline Golmic, foreground, president of the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce, draws laugh as she addresses a bare spot within the limbs of a 30-foot blue spruce Christmas tree in Ellwood City's Community Plaza on Nov. 24.

Top, Raymond Santillo, executive director of the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce, applies a plastic tie to a limb. Plaza on Nov. 24. Above left, Caroline Golmic, third from left, takes a cellphone picture of the tree. Near right, Anthony Mazzant, receives a spool of lights. Far right, Mazzant and Ron Freehauf wind the tree with a string of lights.
ELLWOOD CITY – Crowds packed Ellwood City’s Lawrence Avenue for “Let There Be Lights” weekend on Dec. 1 and Dec. 2.

Light Up Night on Lawrence Avenue on Dec. 1 featured music and entertainment by DJs Mike Smith and Mitchell Valvano, free horse and carriage rides, live reindeer, dance performances by Studio P, Dance Expressions and Diamond Dance, the lighting of a 30-foot tall blue spruce Christmas tree in the Community Plaza and fireworks.

A free showing of “A Christmas Story” in the Lincoln High School auditorium followed the events on Lawrence Avenue.

An estimated 1,300 visitors attended a Christmas parade on Lawrence Avenue on Dec. 2, followed by the opening of Christmas in the Park in Ewing Park, where children had their photograph taken with Santa.

WesBanco, INMETCO, Venezie Sporting Goods, Nalco, Ellwood City Forge, Eric Ryan Corp., Wampum Underground, Lawrence County Tourism sponsored “Let There Be Lights.”
ELLWOOD CITY’S “LET THERE BE LIGHTS” WEEKEND | DEC. 1
PHOTOS BY DAWN WEHMAN | PHOTOSINTHEFIELD.COM

The Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce

“Small Town, Big Living”
Wave after wave of visitors!
Wave after wave of visitors!
DON’T MISS THESE EVENTS!

- **Christmas in the Park**
  Take a winter wonderland drive through Ewing Park’s lighted Christmas display from 6-9 p.m. through Dec. 27!

- **Christmas cookie blitz**
  Too busy to bake? Visit Katy’s Baked Goods through Dec. 23 to stock up for your family festivities and satisfy sweet tooths for lady locks, peanut butter balls, pizzelles and more.

- **Sen. John Heinz Traveling World War II display**
  Brush up on the era that forever changed Ellwood City! Visit the Ellwood City Historical Society’s presentation of the Sen. John Heinz History Center’s traveling World War II display from noon to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays; from noon to 6 p.m. Fridays and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays!
Small biz’s big day!

Pascal and Christine Confer – he a native of Rebersburg, Centre County, and she, of Chicago, and the parents of a high school senior and fourth-grader, moved to Ellwood City from Miami three years ago – said they were “just talking about Small Business Saturday” at the National Grind.

“We have lived a lot of places, and not all places are as friendly and supportive as people are here,” Christine said. “People in the town are very supportive of one another. And it trickles down to this. I would come here every day that it would help to keep something like this open because they give back to the community and it’s a great place to hang out.”

Confer, who works for an energy drink company and was transferred to Pittsburgh, said he and his family have moved nine times.

Ellwood City has become his favorite, he said.

“It’s the people,” Pascal said.

Said Christine: “Many other places, people are very closed off. They are not as welcoming and inviting. Everybody here has been over the top. Just awesome.”

Said Pascal, comparing Ellwood City to his former hometowns in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New York, Maryland and Florida: “If we ranked them, this would be No. 1.”

“A lot of different places are opening up”

Exactly what Raymond Santillo, executive director of the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce, wants to hear.

“That is so heartwarming,” he said. “I am a guy who has lived in Ellwood City all my life, and that makes me so proud of what we are doing.”

Harmony residents Hollie Meckler and her daughter, Luna Kotwica, 9, left Sweet Caroline’s on Small Business Saturday with root beer float in hand, and walked along Lawrence Avenue toward National Grind.

“This is really important for the community, to come out and support the small businesses and encourage others to do so as well,” Meckler said. “This is a very nice location now to come and shop. I like that a lot of different places are opening up. Here, everyone seems to know one another, and everyone is kind to one another.”

And much like Ellwood City’s future, Luna said her root beer float from Sweet Caroline’s was “great.”