



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Shop Local, Support Our Communities This Holiday Season

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

With decorations up and festive music dominating the airwaves, it's no secret, the holiday season is in full swing. The same goes for the gift giving season. According to the National Retail Federation, the average American shopper will spend \$737 this Christmas. That translates to a total of \$602 billion spent nationwide during the 2013 holiday shopping season.

One of the best ways to find unique and meaningful gifts for your loved ones is by shopping local. When you shop from independent retailers, you support your neighbors and the local economy. It's estimated

that for every dollar spent at a locally-owned business, 45 cents is reinvested locally.

From fresh food and drink to handmade crafts, the offerings in our region for local gifts are endless. One of my favorite options? Artwork that captures the beauty of Central and Northern New York.

In an effort to highlight local talent, I have worked with local arts organizations to feature nearly two dozen artists through my “Senator Patty Ritchie Celebrates Local Artists” program. Artists selected for this program have their artwork displayed at my district office locations in Oswego, Watertown and Ogdensburg.

Artists currently on display include:

St. Lawrence County: Ogdensburg artist and photographer Dave Bracy takes his inspiration from everyday scenes on the Oswegatchie and St. Lawrence Rivers. An employee of the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center, Dave spends a lot of his time studying landscapes and fishing on the two rivers near his home. Dave’s work can be viewed at my St. Lawrence County office, located at 330 Ford Street in Ogdensburg.

Jefferson County: Mary Randazzo is a renowned historical landmark artist inspired by the natural history and beauty of the Thousand Islands. A resident of Clayton, Mary is a self-trained artist who uses photos and on site sketches to paint the natural surroundings of her home. Mary’s work can be viewed at my Jefferson County office, located at 317 Washington Street in Watertown.

Oswego County: Phyllis DiSalvo of Palermo began watercolor painting in 2008. She continues to grow as an artist by learning new techniques using different types of media. Phyllis’s work can be viewed at my Oswego office, located at 46 East Bridge Street in Oswego.

For more information on these artists, as well as past participants, [click here](#). Artists interested in being featured in the program can contact (315) 782-3418.

During the holiday season, it’s easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle. As you continue to shop for gifts for friends and family don’t forget to support our economy by buying local.