

Darien



Today's Weather

81° Clear Sky
Humidity: 62%

Sales Provide Much-Needed Boost

by Greg Canuel07/16/10

<http://www.thedailydarien.com/news/sales-provide-much-needed-boost>

Mobs of bargain-hunters invaded the Post Road Thursday afternoon, taking advantage of the extra day to this year's Annual Sidewalk Sales and Family Fun Days. And local shop owners couldn't be happier. With the recession still forcing people to watch what they spend, stores reveled in the constant stream of customers.

"Retail has been picking up a bit, but it's still nowhere near the '08 levels," said Carol Wilder-Tamme, president of the Darien Chamber of Commerce. That's why she asked the Board of Selectmen to add a third day to this year's sidewalk sales, giving stores an even bigger boost this year.

Jeff Roseman and his son Ben started a branch of their popular Norwalk store, David Harvey Jewelers, in Darien in the fall of 2008. He said that while his business has grown recently as people are returning to work, the sidewalk sales did wonders by simply letting shoppers know that his store is there. "It's just like one customer said, 'I work every day, I don't get a chance to go downtown and shop, and this is a great opportunity to learn all the new businesses,'" Roseman said.

Even businesses without a proper storefront reap the benefits. Wilder-Tamme found space for 24 tables for shops not located on the Post Road, or, as in the case of Jennifer St. Jean, with no building at all. St. Jean runs Itty Bitty Bag, a website selling handmade accessories, out of her Darien home. "Being out in public and letting people see what I actually do helps a lot," she said.

Erica Jensen, owner of Helen Ainson Shoppe, said she has come to depend on the sidewalk sales every year to help with the seasonal changes. The annual event is perfectly timed to help her get rid of her spring and summer clothes to make room for fall and winter lines. "I could never do this without sidewalks sales. We have 300-400 customers a day," she said. "Look outside. You never see this many people in Darien."

