

**National Small Business Weekend**  
**The First Friday, Saturday and Sunday of Every Month**  
**is Growing and Aims to Keep Business Local**  
 By Tom Waring, Staff Writer, Northeast Times



Photo by: MARIA POUCHNIKOVA / TIMES PHOTO

Mayfair Business Association members in Northeast Philadelphia gather at Frankford and Cottman avenues to discuss National Small Business Weekend.

Michael Blichasz wants people to think before spending their money. Blichasz, who established National Small Business Weekend, wants consumers to patronize small

businesses on the first weekend of every month in every state across the country. The way he sees it, the campaign's success would keep area residents employed and boost the local economy.

Federal government statistics show that American small businesses — defined as companies of 500 or fewer workers — employ about 60 million people.

Shopping at these stores, Blichasz said, will give consumers a look at their products and services, and he hopes the businesses will try to entice more customers by offering sales, specials and deals.

"Don't forget your local communities," he said. "Go out of your way to help them stay afloat. Without them, neighborhoods would not have vibrancy."

As part of the initiative, Blichasz would like to see small businesses offer more American-made products and for customers to purchase those items.

More people would shop along commercial corridors, he believes, if parking were more convenient. He recommends the Philadelphia Parking Authority offer free parking on the first Saturday of the month.

Blichasz, who serves as president of the Polish American Cultural Center, promotes his ideas on a weekly show on WWDB (860 AM) and at [nationalsmallbusinessweekend.com](http://nationalsmallbusinessweekend.com)

Some local business associations are receptive to his ideas.

The Frankford Business and Professional Association and the Frankford Community Development Corporation want to attract new businesses to Frankford Avenue and side streets. They are also on board with Small Business Saturday, an American Express-sponsored initiative to encourage consumers to patronize local shops on the weekend.

"The more money spent in Frankford, the more jobs created within Frankford," said Michelle Feldman, secretary of the business association and former CDC commercial corridor manager.

Sally Danciu has been in the flower business for 36 years. Sally's Flowers, at 7944 Oxford Ave., is an institution in Fox Chase.

The businesswoman patronizes local restaurants, gift shops, dry cleaners and other stores, and she's active with the Rockledge-Fox Chase Business Association, the Greater Northeast Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and a local Rotary club because, "That's what small business people do."

"It makes good business sense to support local merchants," she said.

Lou Iatarola served four years as president of the Tacony Business Association, and his father of the same name headed the group in the 1990s. Today, the business association is looking to reorganize, though the Tacony Community Development Corporation is active in various ways.

An appraiser and Realtor who promotes Tacony's historical significance, Iatarola likes what he hears about National Small Business Weekend.

"It's exactly what we need, a broader movement to get the public to shop locally," he said. "Too many people hop in their cars and don't realize what's in their own backyard."

Mike "Scoats" Scotese is co-owner of the Hop Angel Brauhaus in Fox Chase and owner of the Grey Lodge Pub in Mayfair. He also serves as president of the Mayfair Business Association.

Earlier this spring, Scotese and some fellow Mayfair merchants had an introductory meeting with Blichasz at the neighborhood's best-known intersection, Frankford and Cottman avenues. The bar/restaurant owner said he and other small business owners try to give back to the community.

"We're the businesses most likely to support neighborhood fundraisers," he said. "The money spent in the neighborhood stays in the neighborhood. We have a lot less overhead. We don't have CEOs making 40 million dollars."

Mark Gilbert helps run four family-owned supermarkets, including the Holiday Thriftway in Frankford and Mayfair Shop n Bag. He's treasurer of the Frankford Business and Professional Association and active with the Mayfair Business Association. His stores support neighborhood activities, and he hopes local folks reward the company with their business.

continued next column

"We support the community and have competitive pricing and quality products," he said.

Antionette Montgomery, owner of Torresdale Flower Shop, 7332 Frankford Ave., said customers of local businesses get to know the employees, managers and owners.

Bill Becker, owner of Headquarters, 7213 Frankford Ave., said the goods he sells are "home-grown stuff" and the classes offered feature local artists and students.

Lisa Greco, owner of Bellalisa Hair Studio, 3530 Cottman Ave., said her shop has the feel of Cheers, where everybody knows your name. Greco, who shops at local hardware stores rather than their giant competitors, thinks small businesses offer friendly customer service and a family atmosphere. As a Mayfair Business Association board member, she hopes to see a variety of new businesses open to serve the community.

"We want to keep the neighborhood alive," she said. ••

**NationalSmallBusinessWeekend.com**

**Polish American Cultural Center Museum**

308 Walnut Street • Philadelphia, PA 19106 • (215) 922-1700

**Memorial Gifts Are Appreciated**

**Memorial gifts in honor of relatives and friends** help continue the mission and programs provided at the Polish American Cultural Center Museum Exhibit Hall, 308 Walnut Street in Historic Philadelphia. The Museum promotes public awareness of Polish history and heritage and welcomes tourists from across the United States and around the world who visit the Exhibit Hall during their tour of Historic Philadelphia.

**Kindly use the form below to make your donation.** Every donor will receive a donation acknowledgement letter along with a Memorial Acknowledgement Card which can be sent to the family of the deceased. **We would also appreciate having you list the Polish American Cultural Center as a suggested charity in obituary notices.** For additional information, contact the Center Monday through Friday between 9 A.M. and 5 P.M. (215) 922-1700.

**Memorial Donation Registration Form**

The below donation for the Polish American Cultural Center is in memory of:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Deceased** \_\_\_\_\_

**Donated by:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Donation enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: **Polish American Cultural Center**  
 308 Walnut Street  
 Philadelphia, PA 19106

Kindly return this entire form with your donation.

**Donations are tax deductible.**

Donations will be acknowledged in writing and memorial names and donors will be listed in the next edition of the Polish American News.

**You can print out Donation Registration forms at:**  
[PolishAmericanCenter.org/Memorial.pdf](http://PolishAmericanCenter.org/Memorial.pdf)

**In recognition of donations to the**  
**Polish American Cultural Center**  
**Museum Exhibit Hall**  
**in Memory of**

Wladyslawa Kozlowski

John A. Melnick

Kazimiera Wieczorek



**PTYSIO** 2706 E. Allegheny Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19134

**We Offer Catering**  
 Doughnuts, Pastries,  
 and Home-Cooked Meals  
 Eat in or Take-Away

**Ciasta**  
 Obiady domowe  
 na wynos i na miejscu  
 Zapraszamy

tel: (215) 634-6160 • tel: (215) 954-3257