

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY 2023 ••••• 'SUPPORT LOCAL EVERYTHING'

Pignatora offers inspirations on canvas

BY JOSHUA MALONI

GM/Managing Editor
What can't technology do? Technology can warm our car seats from afar, send dinner to the door, or bring the latest popcorn flick right into our living rooms.

With a touch of a button, we can order vacuum cleaners, crockpots and blenders; pay bills that once had to be mailed; and connect with cross-country classmates for an online chat.

It's fast. It's convenient. It's ... super-impersonal ... cold ... and kinda boring, if you think about it.

It's the complete opposite of what you'll find at Lewiston's Inspirations on Canvas.

In fact, owner/artist Kathy Pignatora said, "I truly believe that I paint something for someone."

Not palettes and boxes of the same old, generic thing everyone else has lying around the house.

"This is actually very spiritual for me, because I'll get an image and I'll paint it and not really know why," Pignatora said. "And then, sometimes it's the next day. Sometimes it's six months from now. Maybe it's a year from now. But when that person comes in, and that painting belongs to them, they know it immediately."

It's that kind of personal touch - that level of uniqueness - that Pignatora prides herself on, and how she operates her almost 7-year-old store.

She said her original art "should be unique and for that person, or what's the point? I always say to them, 'It's nothing you have to have. You have to want it. And imagine it not being here tomorrow when you come in. It's not here. How does that make you feel?'"

"One time, there was a retired cop, and he was from here. He was a transplant down in Florida, and he was back up here for the



Inspirations on Canvas original products. • Owner/artist Kathy Pignatora is shown hand-painting a wine bottle. A new product in her store, the glass container comes with a light and is a distinctive addition to any room.

summer. ... It was probably my first summer or second summer. And it was this gentleman; he was just standing there; and he was looking at this big beach scene that I had done. And I'm like, 'Welcome,' and 'Look and enjoy it' - like, no pressure here. He was just looking and looking, so finally I said to him, 'Are you OK? Is there anything I can help you with?' And he goes, 'This piece - it looks like the beach I live on down in Florida.' And I said, 'Well, for me, this is the beach it means. This is what it was for me.' And he goes, 'I really like it.' "He goes, 'Now you have to understand, I'm a retired cop. I don't care about art' (laughs). He was like a snowbird; he was

here for the summer and then going back. I said, 'Well, how would you feel if it wasn't here tomorrow?' He goes, 'I'd get very sad about that.' He goes, 'I actually get a little misty about that.' He was sort of a salty old cop, and he literally got misty. He goes, 'I don't feel this way about art.' "He bought it. And he wanted it for here, because he had his place here, and it reminded him of the beach that he lives at down in Florida. And then he bought one of my little Niagara Falls paintings to bring, so he had each home at either place."

Pignatora said, "You can't live off of art; you can't eat it. It's not something you have to have. It's really something you just desire, and it makes you feel a certain way - hopefully good."

At Inspirations on Canvas, Pignatora said the answer is always "Yes." Yes, she can put her art on a pillow, or a blanket, or a jacket. "I'm individualizing what people can get," she said. "Like, anyone could go to Target and you get what they get. But here,



"And when I say it's fun to shop small, it is fun. ... You can come by 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock in the morning, grab a cup of coffee at one of our great coffee places here. ... And just have fun with family or friends, and really put in some thoughtful shopping for your loved ones this year."

Inspirations on Canvas

449 Center St., Lewiston

I'm offering, 'What is it you're looking for?' And trying to change that market a little bit, to make your shopping experience here just more to fit your needs, or your loved ones' needs, or something more individual like that."

Throughout the Thanksgiving weekend, Pignatora will offer a 10% discount on any non-commissioned product. Customers also can enjoy hot chocolate and enter to win prizes.

"As always, I offer an array of prices," she said. "Even in my art, to the gift items. I mean, I have things from \$5 on up. So, I do try - and I always have tried - to give lots of options for people, in gift items, but also in price point."

She added, "What I'm hearing people say is they don't want to just give anything; they want to give thoughtful things. When you're giving handmade items, or just items that have sort of symbolism to it, that's really what people, I think, are looking for. So, I've really tried to offer quite a variety of things like that."

Pignatora acknowledged, "We all use the internet. We all are on Amazon, all that stuff. I get it. If you can just carve out some of your budget. It's been a tough year for small business, particularly from what I know and just my neighbors here - we've had challenges, weather-related. Also smoke. Lots of rain this summer. We've definitely had some weather challenges. We felt it. And so, we're really, really hoping you guys will remember us."

"I think we are, especially with the coming to the Village of Lewiston, what is so special about it is the charm. And I think that we are part of the charm."

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Popular Niagara Sausage Company Meat & Deli is growing

BY PATRICK J. BRADLEY

Senior Contributing Writer
Great things often come in small packages. For local small businesses, greatness depends on providing quality products along with knowledgeable and friendly service.

It's a formula that's worked for more than a decade at Niagara Sausage Company Meat & Deli in the Town of Niagara.

Bryan Lozinsky, a Lewiston resident, and Norm Schneider of Getzville took a leap of faith in 2013 when they leased a small, single-story building at 5611 Lockport Road, just west of Military Road.

The pair had been working together as meat cutters at area supermarkets while making sausage in Schneider's basement to give to family members and friends. As word spread, they began selling their sausage, too.

They soon outgrew their home-based business and were looking for a suitable place to expand their business when they spotted the Lockport Road building. It had previously been occupied by an appliance sales and repair business and would need some work. But it had potential.

"We just saw that it was for rent - the perfect size for what we were looking for," Lozinsky said.

When it was ready, they opened the doors at their new location and began building what is now a large and growing base of satisfied customers.

"Thirteen years ago, we were working for other people," Lozinsky said. "When you own your own business, you're able to show what you can do when not following other's game plans."



The Niagara Sausage Co. Meat & Deli owners Bryan Lozinsky and Norm Schneider.

They've obviously done a great deal. The business now serves hundreds of customers a week. Saturdays are always busy, as are days leading up to Buffalo Bills home games, when area football fans stock up for tailgate parties.

Those customers are buying a lot more than several varieties of specialty sausage. Steaks, roasts, chicken, fish, cold cuts and other items are available daily. Meat purchases

are cut to order. The deli is managed by longtime employee Jaclyn Morris, who said the store's ability to get products delivered six days a week ensures their offerings are always fresh.



The Niagara Sausage Co. Meat & Deli

5611 Lockport Road, Niagara Falls

Morris and co-worker Shanna Olszewski take pride in making their customers feel welcome and providing outstanding service. "We get to know the customers well," Morris said. "We see a lot of regulars. Sometimes we'll know what they're going to order before they even tell us."

The Niagara Sausage Co. is a firm believer in supporting other local businesses and offers products from Wardynski's, Sahlen's, Schneider's Seafood, Boulevard Produce and, of course, the Buffalo Coffee Roast-

ery in Sanborn.

Lozinsky said Black Friday and Small Business Saturday, which will take place Nov. 24-25, will mark the beginning of a busy holiday season at The Niagara Sausage Co. Meat & Deli. Prime rib roast will be on sale and premium Smith's Premium ham will be among the big sellers, he said.

An ad featuring the store's weekly specials can be found on its Facebook page.

The Niagara Sausage Co. Meat & Deli is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday, Wednesday through Saturday; and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday.

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