

## Opinion/Editorial

### Raise your hand if you've started back-to-school shopping

It might be summer outside, but inside area retailers are getting ready for the back-to-school shopping season. Check out any major retailer and already you'll find aisle upon aisle of back-to-school supplies.

Back-to-school shopping is big business, and retailers are looking for bigger and better ways to pull in customers in this sluggish economy. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Americans spent \$7.2 billion at family clothing stores in August 2009.

I believe this year consumers aren't quite ready to part with their hard-earned dollars so easily. I know I'm not.

However, back-to-school shopping is an annual tradition and one my kids look forward to because new supplies and clothes can symbolize new beginnings.

Back-to-school time is an expensive annual tradition. Yet, with some planning, there are plenty of ways to be a smart shopper and save.

But that doesn't mean you can't shop smart and be a little frugal in your spending this year.

Here are some back-to-school shopping tips from Forbes.com:

- Go online. Check out stores' websites and



#### Small Town Girl

By Jen Shuster  
Guardian Publisher

compare prices before you get in the car to drive to several stores. You also may be able to find some good online deals that the brick and mortar shop won't offer.

- Start early. While we may groan to see those back-to-school bargains in stores while summer is in its prime, there are some good deals to be had right now.

- Make a list and stick to it. Most stores have area school supply lists, or you can download them off a district's website. The list also will help you determine the difference between a child's want and a genuine need.

- Take inventory. Have your kids try on their

fall clothes to see what fits, what doesn't fit or what just needs to be replaced. Donate any gently used clothing to Goodwill or hand it down to a younger sibling or other family members.

- Set a budget. Not only does this benefit parents but it also can be used to teach younger children about money and finance. Using cash while budgeting also is good practice because you can actually see where your money goes. If you pull out the credit or debit card, you may spend more because you really don't see the impact until the monthly statement comes.

Teaching your children about the cost of items for school is a good introduction to money management, a skill they will need, and use, for the rest of their lives.

Shop smart this back to school season and when the school bell rings, you and your student(s) will feel good about their purchases and will have learned something before the first class is seated.

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### Rep. Byrum volunteers for cancer research study

*The following is an editorial written by State Representative Barb Byrum (D-Onondaga). If you have questions about this commentary, please contact Rep. Byrum's office by calling (517) 373-0587.*

We have all been touched by cancer in one way or another.

I look forward to the day when cancer is no longer a mystery. I look forward to the day, when we know exactly what causes each form of cancer and what we can do to prevent it. I believe we must continue investing in research for a cancer-free tomorrow.

That is why I signed up to participate in a research study by the American Cancer Society to better understand ways to prevent cancer. The Cancer Prevention Study-3 (CPS-3) was de-



#### Coffee Break

By Barb Byrum  
State Representative

signed to better understand the genetic, environmental and lifestyle factors that cause or prevent cancer, with the goal of ultimately eliminating cancer as a major health concern.

For more information, please visit [www.seeuthere.com/cps3enroll/lansing](http://www.seeuthere.com/cps3enroll/lansing) or call 877/217-4138.

The American Cancer Society follow-up studies first started in the 1950s and have played a major role in cancer prevention in various national and international efforts. Some key findings from previous studies include:

- The first to show the link between cigarette smoking and lung cancer
- The first to show the significant impact of obesity on risk on dying from cancer
- The first to show the link between aspirin use and lower risk of colon cancer
- The demonstrated impact of physical activity, diet, hormone use, other medications and vitamins, and various other factors in relation to cancer risk

- The substantial impact of air pollution on heart and lung conditions, which motivated the Environmental Protection Agency to propose more stringent limits on air pollution.

### 'There is a blindness that glasses won't help called spiritual blindness'

The next time you are in a group of people, notice how many of them are wearing glasses. More than half of those not wearing glasses have contact lenses, have had corrective surgery or are just 'blindly' living in denial. It is rare to find someone with perfect vision. I think that is odd. How can something as vital to our daily lives be so universally flawed, yet the stats are in, the proof is there, just look around.

I have worn glasses for as long as I can remember. Then, when I was around 18, I got contact lenses. It was a new thing back then, and not common at all. I can still remember the doctor putting a piece of curved glass in my eye, the size of a dime. Instantly my eyes burned, tears flowed and I didn't know if I could stand it, but when I opened my eyes wide enough to let the light in ... I could see. I started shouting, "I can see, I



#### From this side

By Terry French  
Pastor  
New Life Fellowship

can see". It was the most amazing experience.

I am grateful to be able to see. I'm grateful to be able to read a book, drive a car and see the sparkle in my wife's eyes. Without my glasses I would be blind.

There is a blindness that my glasses won't help called spiritual blindness. When you read the

Bible and you don't understand it, or when you can't see what God is doing in your life, it is evidence of Spiritual blindness. That is pretty normal. You need the Holy Spirit to open your spiritually blinded eyes. Take a lesson from some blind men of the Bible. They came to Jesus. They asked him to open their blinded eyes, and they came home seeing. It was just that simple. Try it and you'll see.

You're gonna love your NEW LIFE!

*Terry French is the pastor at New Life Fellowship in Leslie. He writes a weekly editorial for The Leslie Weekly Guardian. He can be reached by e-mail at [pastortrf@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pastortrf@sbcglobal.net).*