

Last minute shoppers grab gifts

By **ROBERT CROZIER** Staff writer | Posted: Thursday, December 24, 2015 10:00 am

BELOIT — Surprising no one, downtown Beloit retailers are experiencing more shopping in the days leading up to Christmas than usual.

Vickie Hansen of Beloit was picking up some flavored popcorn at the Flying Pig sweets shop Wednesday afternoon. She already had a two small bags of popcorn in her hands — red velvet and s'mores — and was hunting for a third.

“I do all my shopping in Beloit,” she said, adding that she likes to keep her business local.

She had previously picked up a few books for her husband in the neighboring Turtle Creek Bookstore. They were gifts for her husband. All the shopping for her children and grandchildren was done long ago, she said.

Flying Pig owner Lisa Dodd said all sorts of people come in right before Christmas, although a greater percentage of them are shopping for gifts instead of getting coffee or a snack for themselves than usual.

“It’s been really busy,” she said. “Really, this whole month. But the last couple of weeks have been busier than normal.”

Across the street, Jason and Dana Stadler were shopping at The Villager Gallery and Frameworks. Jason said they came to town because they love the new Zen Sushi and Grill, but they stayed for the boutiques. Dana said they were trying to find gifts for people they know who are hard to shop for, such as her mother.

“We thought we’d try to cover some last minute gifts in downtown Beloit,” he said. “Some of the stores down here have some unique finds.”

He was holding a small decorative vase he said was for Dana’s aunt, who is also hard to shop for. And they picked up stocking stuffers for their kids from the Northwoods Premium Confections.

According to The Villager Gallery and Frameworks owner Betsy Schmiechen, the Christmas



Perusing some last minute gifts

Justin Stadler of Stoughton does some last minute shopping at The Villager Gallery and Frameworks Wednesday afternoon. He and his wife came into town to eat at the Zen Sushi and Grill, which they love, and stayed for the shopping.

shoppers are affecting the whole downtown.

“It’s been pretty busy,” she said. “Downtown’s been pretty busy.”

Tin Dog Records owner Richie Harkrider said he had some customers in Wednesday buying gift cards, but not as many as he had seen earlier in the week. He still plans to be open Christmas Eve until 2 p.m.

The hot item at Tin Dog Records this year was the portable record player, which at \$100 is a good choice for people who are just getting into vinyl, Harkrider said. He had 10 players at the beginning of the season but, as of early Wednesday evening, had only one left.

“It’s a hot item for younger kids who are just getting into vinyl,” he said. “The vinyls are selling really well.”