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This is Dianne Daniels for Brookings Harbor Voices.

Recently, I encountered a dilemma. My vet recommended a joint product for my aging (12-year old) "puppy". I mentioned my dog was struggling a bit to jump into and out of the car. I purchased some from said vet and it appears to have made a positive difference. But it's pricey.

Out of curiosity, I checked the price at several pet-oriented websites. It can be ordered from them online at half the cost. Thus, the dilemma: to support a local business or save money. I decided to purchase from my vet: I want her to be able to stay in business here.

While I'm fortunate to not to live paycheck to paycheck, I'm not rich either. Can I afford to support "buy local"? That's a question I find myself asking quite a bit here. Small businesses can't always offer stuff at warehouse or big chain store prices.

I do try to support local shops whenever possible. And for small businesses, I always pay by check or cash, to save them the credit/debit card transaction fee. It's less convenient but makes a difference to a mom and pop operation.

Buying local isn't always cheap, but it's vital to maintain the sense of community that makes life special here. I've seen enough small shops and boutiques fold in the 19 years since I retired here. And remember, we don't have a big enough population to attract big chain stores. So, if the small guys close, we are left with few choices but to shop out of town or online.

Do I shop online, at "big city malls", and at big box stores elsewhere? Yes, but I try to purchase things I can't buy locally. I, for one, am willing and able, to put my money on small businesses in town where everybody knows your name.

Thank you for listening. And have a nice day shopping on the Wild Rivers Coast.