Holiday shoppers making merchants merry

Suburban merchants are catching the jolly-holly attitude.
Sales are ringing in at better-than-expected levels for the first few days of the holiday shopping season. Consumer forecasters attribute the rosh to the relatively late Thanksgiving, creating five fewer shopping days, record low Michi-

gan unemployment, and a positive out-look for next year's economy. But local mails are doing their part to attract shoppers with songs, oye-catch-ing displays and celebrations that acknowledge the area's cultural and

ethnic diversity.

Southfield shoppers at Tel-Twelve
Mall and Northland are already filling
the parking lots as they enjoy family

programs, valet parking and a myriad of gift ideas for a festive holiday.
At Tel-Twelve Mall, marketing director Jennifer Fox said merchants are welcoming an optimistic crowd.
"We're definitely seeing high volumes of traffic, and we're seeing lots of shopping bags, which means that people are buying, not just browsing. It's a little early, but merchants report stronger

sales than for this same period last year," Fox said. Visitors to the mail include area school groups, invited to see the "Holi-Visitors to the mall include area school groups, invited to see the "Holi-days Around the World," a multicultura-al holiday display featuring 47 entian-ted figures. Wearing traditional cos-tumers from seven continents, the fig-ures represent holiday activities in Africa, Australia, Antarctica, Asia, Europo, Mexico, North America and South American. In Australia, for instance Fox said, Christmas is cele-brated in summer with special soccer

games and a carnival.

Tel-Twelve will host an "Old Fashioned Christmas" on Dec. 7, with complimentary hot cocoa, cookies and a sing along. On Dec. 14, the mall presents, "A Kwanza Colebration."

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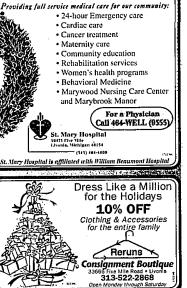
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