

Ice cream was hard, but not at box office

By BARBARA ARNOLDUSSEN

While the only apparent similarity between ice cream and the month of January is cold, area ice cream stores report continued, but lower, sales.

As store owner Barney Auton put it, "A newspaper article about January ice cream sales is going to be a real short story."

Nonetheless, Auton was dishing up a chocolate sundae at the Northland Mall Dairy and Nut House, amidst warnings of last week's blizzard.

Christmas shoppers are big ice cream eaters, despite the first bites of winter cold, making December his best month, Auton said.

January is his worst month.

"The difference between the two months is like that between Michigan winters and summers and daylight and dark," he said.

But Auton doesn't close the store and spend the month in Florida.

"We sell ice cream even when its zero," he said, "if the roads are passable and it's not snowy or windy."

"Ice cream is basically an impulse item. The mall is warm and people can take their coats off. Then there's the tendency to fantasize different weather conditions."

"With the music playing in the back-

ground, plants around and the spring clothes out, you could imagine warm weather."

The mall's warmth provided a different response from Odette Makr, manager of Bresler's 33 Flavors shop in Northland.

"It's 10 below in the storage freezer and 10 above in the dipping freezer. But the mall is so warm, I sweat while dipping ice cream," she said.

JANUARY'S ALSO a slow month for the Bresler's store. The daily average during the month of 300-400 customers a day will not change dramatically until Easter, she said.

Farrell's Ice Cream Parlour used last week's blizzard closing to take inventory.

"In January, we use about 53 gallons of ice cream per week," estimated assistant manager Amy Rutter. Manager Richard Trexler said only half of the Southfield Road restaurant's business is ice cream sales.

"Possibly our food is better than our ice cream," he joked.

The nearby business district provides a heavy lunch time business, he added.

The January ice cream buyer is someone seeking an afternoon snack, Trexler said, since his ice cream sales pick up after two in the afternoon.



Ice cream sales may have been down, but not ice on windows. Ken Hannah spent quite a few minutes scraping. Hannah, in the publishing business in Southfield, was the last one to leave work

Thursday afternoon, at 4 p.m. Naturally, he was the last to leave, he's the boss. (Staff photo by Gary Friedman)

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