

1995 2000



Michael McCollum

Store manager Theo Wierdsma says Gottschalks first year in Watsonville has been an eventful one.

Gottschalks celebrates first anniversary

By DIANE NOLAND
STAFF WRITER

WATSONVILLE

Gottschalks' store here will celebrate its first anniversary Wednesday, but the newness still hasn't worn off.

"This has been a dynamic year for us," said Theo Wierdsma, store manager. "More and more people have found us. It still happens that people come in and say it's their first time in."

Bringing customers into the store has been a principal undertaking, Wierdsma said. It has required a lot of planning and many special events.

"In most cases, (Gottschalks) stores are in malls," he said. "There is no mall that feeds people in here. We need to drive traffic into the store. A lot goes into that."

In the first year, Wierdsma worked to tailor the merchandising assortment specifically to the area's

customers, expanded the children's, jewelry, and large-sizes departments, held parking lot and sidewalk sales, mattress events, a bridal fair and a chamber of commerce mixer. He said he was busy getting to know the community and listening to his customers.

A lot of time was also spent on training personnel, he said.

"Ninety-five percent of our employees had never been in retail. That keeps you hopping," said

Wierdsma, who himself had worked a dozen years for Emporium Stores prior to managing the Watsonville store. "We were all pretty much new to Gottschalks."

And business has been good — as close as he can figure, he said. Now that the store has a one-year established record, measuring its progress will be

much easier.

"We set goals and calculated what sales should be based on (the building's) square footage, but we can now be more sophisticated in methods of figuring how much business we should be doing. Before, it was a shot in the dark."

Now, it's time to celebrate, he said.

"We wanted to do something special," Wierdsma said. "We didn't want to let the day go by without making note of it."

Each day beginning today through Saturday, every customer who makes a purchase will receive a free gift, one per day, and Estee Lauder cosmetics will provide a private, professional makeup consultation — by appointment. Each customer will also receive a three-piece gift with the consultation. To make an appointment, call 728-0888.

Today, Gottschalks' customers 55 years and older will be singled out for special benefits with 55-Plus

Day, as they are every Tuesday. They will get a 10-percent discount on all credit card purchases, complimentary gift wrap on two purchases, complimentary alterations on first-rate and first-markdown merchandise and free UPS ground delivery of purchases.

Wednesday and Thursday, the store will begin its Labor Day sale and in addition will give each customer a \$10 merchandise certificate for every \$100 worth of merchandise purchased during the sale.

An additional 40 percent off seasonal clearance items, such as clothing and toys, will be given Friday.

Saturday, in addition to a parking lot sale of clearance items with 50 percent discounts, there will be a clown in the children's department from noon to 5 p.m., a petting corral in the parking lot with live animals from the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds and balloons and storytelling for the children.

Prizes of fair tickets in packages of four will be awarded each hour from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

WATSONVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY
17095 Soquel Drive
Watsonville, CA 95003

REFERENCE
WATSONVILLE
REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
August 27, 1996