

# News Clips Report

## Black Friday: Early shoppers score great deals Hammond Daily Star

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Jessie Huguet should be on the road to Disney World by now, though chances are she's still sleeping off a long day of Black Friday shopping.

Her husband thought she shouldn't go through all the trouble of getting in line for that new washer and dryer, considering she'd already been up since 6 a.m. Thursday, after only four hours of sleep from picking him up at the airport, she said.

"That's OK, though," Huguet said, as she sat enjoying the view from her third-in-line position outside Sears at 1 a.m. Friday. "I'll get some rest tonight, and I can always sleep on the way to Disney World while he drives."

Huguet's brother-in-law also didn't understand all the fuss. He told her there was no way he'd sit outside all night to save \$5, she said.

She just smiled.

"I'm not saving \$5, I told him. I'm saving about \$700," Huguet said. "And he said, for that kind of money, he'd be sitting right here with me if he needed some appliances too."

With deals that great, Huguet certainly wasn't alone in the wee dark hours of Friday morning.

The sidewalks and parking lots at **Hammond Square** were filling up long before the stores were set to open, with people from across Tangipahoa and Livingston parishes and beyond.

The weather, a few showers aside, was almost as good as the deals.

Shoppers like Mignon Kinchen of Albany, who had bundled up in overcoats and blankets and wrapped their cold fingers around cups of hot chocolate last year, were stashing coats below folding chairs and enjoying the warmer shorts-and-flipflops weather early Friday morning.

"The weather's been good, and everyone's been nice," Huguet said. "We tell people which deals we're after so they can decide whether they want to wait, and we talk and get to know each other. We've got a good little family here."

Family tradition

Families, whether by blood or simply by association, turned out in droves for the shopping frenzy.

Beverly Perilloux said Black Friday is a long-standing tradition for her and her sisters.

She and sister Holly Phillips, originally from Ponchatoula, traveled home for Thanksgiving from Houston and Atlanta respectively to visit their mother and continue the tradition.

"We're here for the sales, but we really do it for the camaraderie," Perrilloux said, though a third sister, who asked not to be named, peered up from her book to joke that she was only there by force.

She wasn't alone. Several shoppers had friends or fiances who were "along for the ride" or "here to help haul the

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appliances.”

Loranger’s Brittany Duhe, whose family has made Black Friday a tradition for more than 15 years, brought fiance Daniel Stilley for his first taste of the shopping event.

The couple was hoping to take advantage of the half-off pricing on a washer and dryer pair at Sears, while the rest of the family caught some sales at another store across town, she said.

Kenny Babin, of Ponchatoula, and his family also took the divide-and-conquer approach, with him holding down the fort at Sears while they lined up across the shopping center at Target.

Babin said he was in line for a dryer, too, because his died on Wednesday.

“ I’ ve got to get one anyway, so I might as well get a great deal on it,” he said, smiling.

Nathan Farris, of Hammond, knows that feeling well.

He and his fiance are building a house and need all the appliances

See BLACK FRIDAY, 3A

they can get.

“ Refrigerator, washer and dryer, dishwasher, double ovens — I’ m here for it all,” he said.

After he left **Hammond Square**, Farris would head back home to continue working on the construction, he said.

“ We just finished framing, and we’ ll be doing the shingles tomorrow,” he said, though by that point “ tomorrow” had already become “ today.”

Getting good prices on items they were planning to buy anyway was also a draw for the Primeaux family of Hammond, with mom Kelly waiting outside Target for a television while dad Shaun and son Stafford stood in line at Best Buy for other electronics.

“ We had already planned to buy them, but these are better prices on better products, so they’ re worth the effort,” Kelly Primeaux said, adding that she’ d be heading home for some sleep as soon as her mission was accomplished.

No sleep for early birds

Most shoppers said they hadn’ t slept since early Thursday morning, with only a few having grabbed a nap after a big family dinner of turkey and dressing.

Debra Steadman, of Ponchatoula, said she tried to sleep but just couldn’ t.

“ I just kept thinking about all the sales and all the money I’ d be saving,” she said. “ I was all pumped up but tired and sleepy too. In the end, the sales won out.”

Sleep wasn’ t the only thing shoppers skipped over in their rush to get to the stores.

“ When we left, it was 17-0 Saints going into the second quarter,” said Prefrance Fair, of Hammond, who set up shop in

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front of Target' s doors around 5 p.m. Thursday along with her sister, Dvans Howard.

“ We had to get updates by text on how the game was going,” Fair said.

She and Howard, both teachers in the Tangipahoa Parish School System, did bring some homework to keep them busy, though.

Fair was checking papers and cutting some laminated paper for activities for her first-graders at Hammond Westside Primary, while Howard worked on lesson plans for her home economics class at Independence High.

Some of the shoppers around them thought the pair' s 5 p.m. start-time was impressively early, but they weren' t the first to arrive at **Hammond Square** for Black Friday.

Around the corner, Kevin and Michelle Cutrer, of Amite, became the earliest of “ early birds” when they lined up outside Best Buy at 4 p.m. Thursday.

The couple said they had lined up about three hours later last year and nearly missed out on the laptop they were after.

“ We got the last ticket,” Michelle recalled. “ And we were worried we weren' t going to get it when some people tried to cut in line ahead of us at the last minute.”

So when Michelle' s sister, Melinda Clark, rode past the shopping center around 3:15 p.m. on Thursday and saw no one waiting outside, she decided this would be their year to score big.

“ I called my sister and said, ‘ There' s no one here! Let' s go!’ ” Clark said.

Seeing the Cutrers in line, Channa Chiasson and her grandson Matthew soon followed.

The pair have stood in line for Best Buys in three different states, depending on where they are for the holiday each year, and they weren' t going to miss out on this year' s sales, Channa Chiasson said.

And so it begins.

One family lines up behind another, behind another, behind another until, with only minutes remaining before the floodgates are opened and the shelves wiped clean, the sidewalks are lined with people waiting for the start of another sleep-deprived, sales-induced, family tradition known as Black Friday.