



The Gettysburg Area Retail Merchants Association is getting a much needed makeover in 2019. First, we want to make sure that everyone knows what GARMA stands for, and I don't mean from just an acronym perspective. GARMA has been a champion of local retail businesses for over 45 years. Our goal has always been to work together as an association of businesses that strengthens our reach within and beyond our community.

So, on to the makeover! The first course of action has been to create a vibrant, informative, relevant, user friendly website (www.gettysburgretailmerchants.com). Whether you're local or from out of town, you can now check our new Calendar of Events to see what activities GARMA and its Membership are hosting or participating in. And speaking of Membership, click on the "Members" tab on our home page for a list of all GARMA members AND their locations on our interactive map. Click on a member's name and you are automatically sent to their website! Members also now have the ability to create posts on our "Member News" page.

Our next mission was to take a look at First Friday, Gettysburg Style and see how we could have a bit more fun with this already fun occasion. Traditionally, First Friday, Gettysburg Style has had a theme each month that all of our participating businesses expound upon. Retiring some of the old themes (we all know that everyone goes Back to School in August) gives way for new fun ones (Woodstock. August. 1969. Feelin' Groovy. Just sayin'). By clicking on the "First Friday" tab on our home page you can click the LOGO of each participating business to see how they're celebrating First Friday, Gettysburg Style. In addition to having fun, we're focusing on "Giving Back to Gettysburg" by tying each First Friday, Gettysburg Style theme to a local Non-Profit. Shop Local. Support Local. Give Local.

A few things to remember – GARMA Gift Certificates make great gifts all year round. What a great way to promote shopping our local, small businesses. Gift Certificates can be redeemed at almost all GARMA businesses and are purchasable at Artworks, 30 York St., Gettysburg Heritage Center, 297 Steinwehr Ave., and Goin' Postal, Gettysburg Outlets.

April 5 is our next First Friday, Gettysburg Style and it's all about those four-footed critters that can eat us out of house and home...our pets! Visit our website to see what our members are doing for this fun night out. It should be a howling good time (did I really just say that?). Our Non-Profit beneficiaries will be our local pet rescues; Forever Love Rescue and Adams County SPCA.

In Memoriam: We say goodbye to our friend Ron Routson who passed away on February 26. Ron worked for Kapp Advertising (The Merchandiser) for over 11 years and served on GARMA's Board of Directors for over 7 years serving as our Membership chairperson and lastly as Vice President. If you never met Ron, you probably saw him somewhere on the streets of Gettysburg or in a local business and didn't know it (as he liked to say "I'm the guy that looks like Cal Ripken"). Ron has touched so many people in this community by volunteering his time and energy, lending an ear or sound advice to anyone who needed. Ron was an asset to this community, our GARMA board and Membership, and to all who knew him. (*Writer's Note: Ron, I wish I had taken you up on that offer to buy me a beer. I'm sure there would have been no lack of conversation.*)

~ Jennie Dillon is the owner of Artworks on York St. and Vice President of GARMA