

Community Comment 12/9/2013

By Jon Sapper
Holiday Shopping

We have entered the season where the shopping battleground is starting to be littered with the remnants of Christmas lists fulfilled and wide-eyed children being dragged along by frantic mom or dad to get that perfect gift for Aunt Elsie. It's a fun time of the season if you're somewhat masochistic.

I saw a young mother at the mall last week who was shouting at her child saying, "You have to get a gift for your brother, even if you don't like him." That's the Christmas spirit..... laying the foundation for fond memories of this special religious Holiday. As Upton Sinclair said and I paraphrase, "Could Satan in his most malignant mood come up with a worse combination of hectic activities whereby several hundred million people get a billion or so gifts, many from obligation due to tradition, and some thousands of shop clerks die of exhaustion selling them, all in the name of a religious Holiday?" I think not.

You might ask, "What was I doing at the mall?" It was Black Friday, which actually started on Thursday. But the only thing that was black on Thursday was the turkey I cooked. I talked humorously about doing this to a turkey during my last Community Comment, not thinking that it would actually happen,... but it did. We had a miserable expensive free range bird that suffered the indignity of having to be drenched in gravy to be palatable.

I thought about not going out on Black Friday and instead waiting for Small Business Saturday, Cyber Monday or Non-Profit Tuesday. Non-Profit Tuesday was a bit of an oxymoron to me given we are in the season where many retailers depend on this time of year for 20 to 40 percent of their annual revenue. That was until I learned that Non-Profit Tuesday is to think about giving back..... by supporting many of the charitable activities that make life a little easier for those in need in our community. Certainly worthy.

However, I did go out to shop on Black Friday. Amazing experience. As an unknown author stated, "Black Friday is the only day where people trample others for sales, exactly one day after being thankful for what they have." And I

was just looking for one toy. I couldn't find it. I felt like surrendering by just buying a few batteries and attaching a note, "Toy not included." The battle scars were evident even though there was a small victory.....finding a parking space within a ¼ mile of the entrance to the mall.

I hope I don't sound like a curmudgeon. I'm really not. I like to buy gifts for others, much more than getting them and I like to support our local businesses. I think the only change I'll make next time is to dress more appropriately by wearing boots, fatigues and a helmet. Enjoy the season.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.