

that goes
There is an old saying ~~in church circles~~: "It's better to *see* a sermon than *hear* a sermon." I've personally preached about a thousand sermons over my career and hope to preach until I'm either stricken by senility or mortality. But Seeing a sermon: that's why we preach; so that our lives will be transformed from self centeredness to joyful and generous giving. Last Saturday I got to *see* a sermon of Christmas joy unfold—and I must say, it touched my heart so tenderly that it ranks up there with one of the most memorable events in my 21 years in Humboldt County.

about 2000 ago
It all began a few days earlier when Betty Chinn invited me to come to a program ~~on~~ Saturday *Dec. 20* morning she called "Shop with a Cop." Welllll.... Saturday morning at 8:00 is my sacred surf time, ~~as~~ I weighed my options. But, after all, it is the season to be, not only jolly--but charitable. So, in order to not look like Ebenezer Scrooge, I said, "Yes, I'll be there." I am glad I did. Last Saturday at 8:00 I showed up at the Betty Kwan Chinn Center and there were about 12 cops and firemen and ~~women~~ eating breakfast with some of the cutest children you've ever seen. The kids' eyes were big with anticipation, and a bit of anxiety—after all, some of these youngsters ~~have~~ reason to have unhappy memories around law enforcement. Then, we jumped into a bunch of fire engines and police cars and off we went. Sirens were blaring as we paraded east on 7th Street and then north on Myrtle Ave, slowly, brightly and loudly, making our way to our destination.

With all the bad news of late, I think the people who saw this were wondering to what kind of crime or national disaster had hit Eureka! ~~Nope~~, we were on our way to Target to buy Christmas gifts for a dozen children. When at Target we pushed our cart down the aisles as the boys and girls picked out over \$100 worth of toys. The boys tended toward racecars and transformers and, the girls seemed to like the dolls and kitchens; I'm old fashioned enough to think that's a good thing. I was particularly impressed with how the officers used the shopping spree as an educational opportunity, encouraging the kids to do the math and make important choices. Yes, even a hundred dollars will not get you every toy in the store, not even every toy you want: so make your choices, add them up and let's go to check out.

The good vibes from Christmas giving began to radiate out among Christmas shoppers: they smiled at the cops and kids and firemen: many offered to donate money and some did!. The clerks at Target could not have been kinder or more cheerful. Oh, before you get ready to be critical and report this ~~kind of~~ good deed to the ACLU: all the money for this event was raised privately, and the cops and fire personnel were donating their time as well.

When you add up what I witnessed Saturday and throw in other events like Toys for Tots, Humboldt Bay Firefighters "Share the Magic" program—you begin to realize there is a good deal of Christmas Cheer cycling and recycling this season within our community. Community is forged when people care about each other. And as long as we have a good deal of caring people in our community, we can say with confidence that there are a lot of sermons to be seen this holiday season.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment