

Stay in the Light Community Comment

December 3, 2015 Mike Goldsby

Sometimes it is hard to write a positive Community Comment. I am a relatively positive, optimistic guy. I only have to think up one community comment a month. Just three minutes. But some of the world's events, the acts of destruction and cruelty, are difficult to ignore. It is also hard to ignore the response of some of the public, ranging from uncharitable and ignorant to downright hostile. Heck, I could do three minutes every single day on just Donald Trump. You wouldn't like that anymore than I would. And focusing on the negative weighs a person down.

Christmas is a reminder to me to stay positive while it is cold and dark, to practice charity and think of peace on earth, good will towards men. Thanksgiving is a holiday of gratitude, a time to count your blessings. To me, Christmas is a time to share that bounty and good cheer.

After Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday, there is giving Tuesday. It is good to shop local and donate local as well. Police are warning of a number of telephone scams, asking for donations to fraudulently take advantage of the elderly and of people's holiday generosity. If you get asked for a donation over the phone, get an address, a website, something to verify that the charity is legit.

A donation to Hospice of Humboldt will certainly help alleviate some suffering. It is particularly timely, as a way to honor their past Executive Director, Merilee Bytheriver, who recently passed away.

Many places collect donations of food, new toys and money to help the needy. One of my favorites is Fortuna Adventist Community Services, because they serve the Eel River Valley. But there are many, many more. You probably have your favorites.

Toys for Tots is a great way to bring some joy into a child's Christmas. I just learned that they played an important role in bringing toys to children in Lake County this summer, following the devastating fires.

I am not usually motivated to give to the individual with a sign at an intersection, especially when you see the same people with the same signs. I do not want to judge them. I wouldn't want to trade places with them. But I prefer to support places like the Rescue Mission, St. Vincent, Arcata House and Betty Chinn. I find the Rescue Mission is a very easy place to donate stuff; clothing, toys and household items for their thrift store. They have a great crew of guys who help you unload your stuff and express gratitude for your donation.

The Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction is organizing an Anything Warm Drive. They do outreach to homeless substance abusers and they are asking for gently used coats, sleeping bags, blankets, anything warm and useful. You can find more information on the HACHR Facebook page.

I live in a warm house, almost paid for, with wood heat and forced air, insulation and a new roof. When I look out the window in the morning, I wonder what it must be like to live in a box or a tent or a car. My biggest problem so far this holiday is wondering if we will have local crab in the markets. There are a lot of children who are wondering where their next meal will come from.

Christmas spirit can be a political issue we all argue about. Or it can be as easy as reaching out to someone.

This is Mike Goldsby for Community Comment