

## Thrift store the perfect place for gifts

**By Sarah Sobanski**

So I bought myself a little somethin'-somethin' for Christmas.

Let me defend myself. I didn't mean to.

Usually I have a rule. As of mid November I refuse to buy myself anything I want. No new clothes for Christmas dinner, no sweet and salty popcorn, no pistachio body wash ? nothing. You never know what Santa is going to bring. It's a rule someone should have told my mother, really. I went home last weekend and saw an angel in her nativity set that my father and I had splurged on.

?It was half price,? she said when I picked it up and asked why Dad had given her an early Christmas present. Should've had a V8. I digress.

I was in the Thrift Warehouse just outside of Bancroft last week to talk about their new smash room opening in January. It's a really cool idea. For a stipend you will get a couple of thrift pieces, most likely glasses, and get to smash them in a safe environment. Talk about therapy.

While I was there Mary-Ellen Coghlan, the lead store clerk, took me on a tour.

The Thrift Warehouse has been busy since it was opened by SIRCH in April 2015. Besides the renovations for the smash room, it has expanded its clothing selection. Coghlan explained shopping carts of salvaged treasures come in every day to be put up for sale in the store.

?We get some really nice treasures in here, and how do you put a price on those?? Coghlan asked, telling me about the shop's monthly silent auctions for the priceless-wares people drop off. ?Everyday it just changes. Every day and it's dump diversity. We're saving it from the dump. People don't have places to take stuff and we can in turn give it for a lower cost to anybody.?

There was hockey equipment, so those who couldn't afford new equipment might have a chance to play. There were long coats and short coats. Coghlan noted these the shop had been giving away so no one went cold in the winter. There were tables and chairs and furniture for college students or anyone with an eye for refurbishing real-wood pieces ? harder and harder to come by these days without a million bucks.

Then, as we turned the corner out of the kitchen wares, there it was ? an elliptical.

I know, I know, big deal. Everyone makes a New Year's resolution to work out more. Can we talk about this after all the turkey and what-not? I have to tell you though, I have been searching for one of these things, under \$1,000, for a long time. Not just an elliptical, but a back-wheel powered elliptical with a fan. This one just also happened to power itself with the energy you expelled from running ? how cool is that? Not to mention the shop had someone who could help deliver it, because that 200-pound machine is not fitting in my X-Trail.

So I did it, call me crazy. I bought myself a Christmas present from Sarah-Santa.

It got me thinking about all the other hidden treasures I might have found if I had stayed longer. Then, I might not have needed to shop at all. Not just for myself, but for everyone on my list as well. Who would have thought I would find something I've wanted for ages at a reasonable cost in a thrift shop?

Typically, when I think of thrift shopping I think of two types of shoppers ? those who are down on their luck, and those who have an eye for antiques. To be honest, I never thought a thrift store would have something for someone as average as me.

There are many wonderful businesses and bargain shops in Bancroft. They do a lot of good for this community ? why shouldn't everyone shop with them?

The Thrift Warehouse employs four people regularly, two full time and two part time. It also helps fire victims and people in need when it can, donating to those who have lost everything and those who need a little extra help.

?I'd like to see more people knowing about it, and telling each other about it to hopefully make a profit beyond this to put back into the community,? Coghlan told me speaking to the shop's upkeep cost.

I'll be going back.