

Christmas from both sides of the fence

A loud buzzing noise wakes you from a very sound sleep. You look at your alarm clock and realize that it is 4 o'clock in the morning. You wonder why you are up so early as you make your way to the kitchen for a bite to eat. You open up your refrigerator only to find a half-eaten turkey and several Tupperware containers full of leftover sweet potatoes, stuffing, and cranberry sauce. Then it hits...it is the dreaded annual Black Friday.

Now if you're in the majority of the American population, that 4 a.m. alarm began your first official day of the Christmas 2000 shopping season. If you are in the minority of the American population, that 4 a.m. alarm began just another day of the Christmas 2000 retail season. Although the consumer has been known to spend the money on Black Friday, and the retailer has been known to make the money on Black Friday, both groups have to withstand the pushing, the shoving, the lines, and the stress.

As both a retail employee and customer, I was blessed with the privilege of experiencing the retail and the customer side of Black Friday 2000. My day began at 5 a.m. A cappuccino and some comfortable shoes accompanied me as I began my day. Grove City was my destination, and only a few select leftover gifts were my goal. I have always had good luck shopping at the Grove City Outlet Mall on Black Friday, and this year was no exception. Finding a parking spot was easy, lines were few and far between, and the sales and discounts just kept appearing out of nowhere.

By 1 p.m. I was home and relaxed. Getting home earlier than I expected gave me extra time to regroup and recuperate before I began my turn as the retailer. The time passed too quickly, and before I knew it, it was 5 p.m. and time to start my evening shift at my retail



Chit Chat for Change
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associate editor

job. As I made my way past the crowds, and into the store, several relieved and smiling faces greeted me. The poor sales associates that had barely survived the peak hours of Black Friday were free to go home for the day. After four hours of whining customers, mile-long lines and demolished displays, I thought to myself, "was I really that bad earlier in the day?"

Resting my tired feet and sipping some hot tea later that evening, I began to brainstorm. I thought about all of the similarities of the day. Contrary to popular belief, the stress and the pressure of being a retail employee is very similar to the stress and the pressure that the customer feels.

I knew at that point that I was really looking too deeply into the situation. All in all, there wouldn't be one without the other. Both sides balance each other out, and both sides are necessary to make the economy what it is today. I decided to look at the situation more lightly. So that is where "The 12 Days of Christmas from Both Sides of the Counter" comes into play. (You know it's amazing what you think of when you are completely drained and exhausted.) Note: this is just a play on words of the original Christmas Carol. This is not meant to offend anyone...it is just for fun.

"The 12 Days of Christmas from Both Sides of the Counter"
On the first day of Christmas shopping season, the retail world

gave to me, a broken ornament on a display tree.

On the second day of the Christmas shopping season, the retail world gave to me, two fighting children, and a broken ornament on a display tree.

On the third day of the Christmas shopping season, the retail world gave to me, three expired coupons, two fighting children, and a broken ornament on a display tree.

On the fourth day of the Christmas shopping season, the retail world gave to me, four long lines, three expired coupons, two fighting children, and a broken ornament on a display tree.

On the fifth day of the Christmas shopping season, the retail world gave to me, five angry customers, four long lines, three expired coupons, two fighting children, and a broken ornament on a display tree.

On the sixth day of the Christmas shopping season, the retail world gave to me, six credit cards charging, five angry customers, four long lines, three expired coupons, two fighting children, and a broken ornament on a display tree.

On the seventh day of the Christmas shopping season, the retail world gave to me, seven shopping bags ripping, six credit cards charging, five angry customers, four long lines, three expired coupons, two fighting children, and a broken ornament on a display tree.

On the eighth day of the Christmas shopping season, the retail world gave to me, eight cars a' honking, seven shopping bags ripping, six credit cards charging, five angry customers, four long lines, three expired coupons, two fighting children, and a broken ornament on a display tree.

On the ninth day of the Christmas shopping season, the retail world gave to me, nine sales associates

running, eight cars a' honking, seven shopping bags ripping, six credit cards charging, five angry customers, four long lines, three expired coupons, two fighting children, and a broken ornament on a display tree.

On the tenth day of the Christmas shopping season, the retail world gave to me, ten shoppers weeping, nine sales associates running, eight cars a' honking, seven shopping bags ripping, six credit cards charging, five angry customers, four long lines, three expired coupons, two fighting children, and a broken ornament on a display tree.

On the eleventh day of the Christmas shopping season, the retail world gave to me, eleven candy canes cracking, ten shoppers weeping, nine sales associates running, eight cars a' honking, seven shopping bags ripping, six credit cards charging, five angry customers, four long lines, three expired coupons, two fighting children, and a broken ornament on a display tree.

On the twelfth day of the Christmas shopping season, the retail world gave to me, twelve bargainers bargaining, eleven candy canes cracking, ten shoppers weeping, nine sales associates running, eight cars a' honking, seven shopping bags ripping, six credit cards charging, five angry customers, four long lines, three expired coupons, two fighting children, and a broken ornament on a display tree.

There you have it. Hopefully this little song helped put a smile on your face after experiencing last Friday's bills, bruises, and stress. I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season, and a joyous new year. Don't let commercialization take over your Christmas season, good luck with your finals, and have a happy new year!

Kleck's column appeared every three weeks.

'The Hot Debate of The Week' Whatca' doing over there Bill?

Should President Clinton...

In today's growing economy, the U.S. should be looking for new trade opportunities with other countries. However, we should not lower ourselves to do trade with countries that stand against what this great nation stands for. Clinton should not have made his recent visits to Vietnam. He dishonored the memory of everyone who fought and died in the Vietnam War. Why, out of all the other countries in the world, did Clinton feel that we must open trade with them? Does the United States not still stand against communism? Do we not still have an embargo on Cuba, against Castro's oppression?

Vietnam is still under the same tyranny that we fought against 25 years ago. They have not changed or even made amends for the atrocities that they made during the war and continue to make with their own citizens. They didn't follow the rules of war set at the Geneva Convention then, and I doubt they do now. If their government desires something, they send their storm troopers into whatever village it is in and take it. Up to about 10 years ago, the Vietnam government still had POW's. Maybe if Clinton had not dodged the draft by going to England for his fancy education, this foreign policy would be more acceptable. Clinton's own wife would not allow her picture to be taken in HO CHI MINH City (Saigon) because she didn't want to dishonor those soldiers who fought for another's freedom. The truth is, since Clinton represents our country, we are selling out. We make nice to a country that opposes every American ideal for the quick buck.

How long should Americans hold a grudge over something that was our fault? Apparently, it is over twenty years, since we are now trying to make peace with President Clinton's visit to Vietnam. Many Americans are up in arms about this, but why?

Less than a month after the end of World War II, we were working closely with the governments of Germany and Japan, but Vietnam was off limits. The Vietnam War was a terrible time for our country, and now is the time for some type of closure, and while Clinton might not be the best person to be going, at least it is a start.

This was a war that we never were going to win. Public opinion at home was heavily against the war among people who would have to go fight it, mainly people our age. The military was horribly abused and misused from the beginning with politicians in Washington controlling the war instead of letting the commanders on the ground just win the war. And then, after thousands of American soldiers sacrificed their lives, the ones who came home did not receive the ticker tape parade of heroes that they deserved; they were instead spat upon and cursed at.

Vietnam needs to be put behind us. We need to recognize our mistakes, learn from them, and then make peace with them. Let's just assign Vietnam its place in history and try to move on to bigger and better things.

Every week, two editors from the staff will debate a topic that is hot. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to email suggestions for the hot topic. Send ideas to behrcoll2@aol.com

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