

Elf seeks toys for Country Santa

By Ben Robinson
Editor

When Vernon Beigay decides to accept a mission, he gives everything he has.

So when Beigay, a volunteer for Country Santa, was assigned to purchase some basketballs for the program, he took that assignment seriously.

Thursday afternoon Beigay made his way to Easley, in search of inexpensive basketballs.

"I've just got back from Greenville and Greer," Beigay said. "I bought about 60 basketballs at each place."

At his first stop, he was told that the basketballs he had purchased at other stores —

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Photo by Ben Robinson

With the basketballs purchased, Vernon Beigay drags the sack behind him, heading for the front door of the store.

"I guess we'd better go back to the other place," Beigay said. "I know it's a dollar higher than what I've been buying, but I don't have any choice. We've got to have them."

So back across town Beigay traveled. This time he brought a large plastic bag inside the store. "Those \$3.99 balls were not in boxes," Beigay said. "I was able to get about 60 in the bag. We'll see how many we can get of these with the boxes."

The answer to that question was 34.

Beigay paid for the basketballs, wrapped up the top of the plastic bag, and dragged it over his shoulder from the store's sporting goods section to its front door.

Such a sight was bound to draw comments.

"He must really like basketball," someone whispered as Beigay passed.

"They're not stealing those, are they?" asked a store employee

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those priced at \$3.99 — were not available at the Easley store. However, the store did have plenty of basketballs priced at \$4.96.

"We can't afford those," Beigay said. "We've got to get as many as we can on what money we have."

So Beigay traveled across town to another store. There, he found the cheapest basketball was \$5.96 — and the store only had eight on display, and none in the warehouse.

who was not familiar with the situation.

Beigay left the bag at the front door while he pulled his truck closer. There was no real danger of anybody walking off with a bag full of basketballs while he was gone.

When Beigay picked up the bag, it stood a few inches taller than he was. Beigay struggled with the bulk of the bag, but

otherwise had little problem loading it onto his truck.

"Well, I'll take these back," Beigay said. "Next week, after the stores have been stocked, I'll be making my trips again, I guess."

Last year Country Santa provided Christmas gifts for 2,400 children in the Upstate. With that in mind, Beigay has quite a few more basketballs to purchase before Dec. 24.