

Charity begins at home



Never has that truism been more true than today.

While there are still human involvement activities (Habitat for Humanity, Boys and Girls Club, local marathons and walks, etc.), the burgeoning internet has provided the motivationally and socially challenged (such as moi) with greater flexibility than ever before.

Lest you think all my online money spending is through Amazon Prime or at the holidays, perish and forbend!

Just like products, charities receive reviews as well. More importantly, since you are trying to decide where to send your money without anything in return (beside the warm fuzzy of being part of the better side of humanity), there are also Charity “watchdogs” that grade how good a charity is at delivering on your dollar. Charity Watch and Charity Navigator are two that come to mind.

These sites tend to grade or rate the charities on a number of criteria, some of which include how much of your hard-earned and well-intentioned money actually gets to those in need and how well the charities do on delivering on their mission.

One of my personal favorites is Doctors Without Borders. It helps to know that some of my aid goes to immediate suffering all around the world.

Another, powered by personal loss, is the Cancer Research Institute. While there are a few higher rated specific cancer programs, this one spreads the wealth around to all types (including the one that took Mom).

Yet another is high-minded and patriotic at the same time, The Conservation Fund (protecting America's natural bounty).

Each of us have, central to our core, those particular causes we most ardently support. Sometimes, finances limit it only to moral support and that's important too.

When it becomes possible, it's a wonderful thing to give to a charity you support. The impact is so much more magnified than the amount of money you can give. It's a bit from each person's heart that reinvigorates all the volunteers and staff that work at those charities.

Recently, as my financial condition has solidified, I've shifted more of my donating to "monthly" rather than one-time. The amount is smaller, individually, but I can put it into my budget in such a way that the cumulative gift for the year is much larger than before.

And, while it could be said I have the time and the physical capacity to personally volunteer, that's no longer in my mental makeup (as it was during my working years).

Still, with the flexibility of my computer and internet access, charity can just as easily begin at home.