

# Santa Cop auction to help needy

By **MARISSA CARSTENS**  
Staff Reporter

An atmosphere of charity mixed with one of purchase power Saturday as the Lincoln Police Union auctioned more than 100 items to benefit its Santa Cop program.

Bidders gathered in the Auld Pavilion at Antelope Park, 3140 Sumner St., Saturday night to buy authentic collectibles and useful goods donated by local businesses and firms. The money will be used to

buy and deliver toys to underprivileged children for the holidays.

This year's items included a guitar autographed by Brooks and Dunn, a pair of Wrangler jeans autographed by Garth Brooks, original art, an autographed Nebraska Husker football and volleyball, Maverick hockey tickets, gift certificates, cellular phones, cookies and tires.

But many people attending did not come merely to buy the goods.

"I showed up to support the organization," said Judi Gierlich, one of

the people attending the auction.

Gierlich heard about the auction through mail and phone calls from the police department. Others, like Jim and Carol Thoms and Julie Gade, heard about the auction on local country station KZKX-FM 96.9.

The auction marks the beginning of the Santa Cop program, a much larger effort to "keep the magic of Christmas alive for all children," according to banners and fliers at the event.

The program began 17 years ago

when a group of police officers realized that current programs were inadequate, said Officer Thomas Duden, Lincoln Police Union charities president.

Duden and other officers created the program when they realized that some underprivileged families were not eligible to get help from Lincoln's low-income programs.

Usually people associate the police with bad things, Duden said. Through the Santa Cop program, they can be associated with something positive.

# Former TV anchorman eyes House

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that's something people want in a congressman — someone who listens well."

Scott said he was concerned, but not deterred from running, by the media scrutiny he is sure to face as a public figure in the "rumor mill" that, he said, is Omaha.

"I know how we in the media go after politicians," he said. "I would have to be a lion-tamer at the podium to keep everyone at bay."

Although Scott said he was motivated by a chance to make a change in government, he said he would wait until he has made his decision before discussing issues that would be central to a campaign.

He expressed concern about the two-year terms served by members of the U.S. House of Representatives. The short terms force congressmen to campaign almost continuously, he said, and give new representatives little time to learn on the job.

Gary Randall, 2nd District chairman of the Nebraska Democratic Party, said Scott has assessed his prospects in a potential campaign with elected officials, corporate representatives and organizers of previous political campaigns.

Randall speculated that Scott, a former junior high and high school teacher in New York City, would stress educational issues in a campaign.

# Wilson would strengthen crime laws

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whether the 2nd District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives would be the best place to continue his efforts for tougher crime legislation.

Wilson, himself a long-time homicide investigator, founded the James B. Wilson Jr. Memorial Foundation in memory of his son.

He has worked for passage of a law that would make it easier for killers of police officers to receive the death penalty by making the victim's status as a police officer an aggravating circumstance in sentencing. He also worked to place video cameras in police cars and helped gather support for the Omaha Police Department's helicopter program.

Wilson said he was encouraged by the public's rallying around his efforts in the wake of the tragedy. But he said he didn't know whether it would be better to try to take his efforts to Congress, or to continue his present work.

"Do I think one person can make a difference in one term in Congress? Probably not," he said. "If I thought I could do it, I'd tear my shirt off and start walking to Washington."

Also, Wilson said he was concerned that he wasn't as knowledgeable on many issues outside of law enforcement.

"I don't know if I could fit this round body into the square pegs in Washington," he said. "I probably wouldn't be too politically correct. I would tell my constituents the truth, even if it hurts."

Chuck Sigerson, state GOP chairman, said Wilson's name recognition would be a good base on which to build a campaign.

He said the public realizes candidates aren't fully informed on every issue. Thus potential candidates like Wilson need to articulate their basic philosophies to give the electorate an idea of how they will vote, he said.

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