

## **Thoughts on Christmas, Commerce, and Community**

By Town Manager John Simko – December 16, 2008

Christmas for many young parents (such as me) this year, the holiday has snuck up on us, like a toddler hiding behind the refrigerator shouting “surprise!”. As you drop the mail you held in one hand and the bag of groceries you held in the other, you temper your response by realizing that your youngster meant well, and indeed, you’re happy to have a little one to play such tricks. But of course it doesn’t make cleaning the egg yolks off the light bill any easier...

Christmas is much the same way – we’re glad for the opportunity to celebrate our traditions which typically, no matter what your spiritual beliefs, include family and friends and appreciation and affection for each other.

The commercialization of this holiday is a difficult experience for many every year, many more of us than usual during a recession. Many parents struggle to afford the gifts they want to give their children. Others struggle to pay for food, rent, and fuel.

The Greenville community is fortunate to have many of its own traditions, the most common being our desire to help one another. At the Town of Greenville, we’re fortunate to hold many donated funds for fuel assistance and continue to offer these to households in need. We witness community members reaching out to other community members in need, offering housing and amenities to those who need it. Agencies such as the Salvation Army remain ready to help those in need for the most basic necessities, as do the food cupboards at the local churches. Our local Kiwanis has a program to help with clothing and other goods for those in need. And their “wish trees” located at Harris Drug Store, Indian Hill Trading Post, Morrill’s Ace Hardware and Camden National Bank have become often-used mediums for connecting those in need with those who want to help.

If you’re looking for a gift this holiday season which would support our local community, consider goods and services offered by non-profit groups and entities like the Town, School and Hospital. C.A. Dean Hospital Auxiliary’s Community Calendar is available for sale at the receptionist desk, and orders can be taken for next year’s calendar, proceeds of which go toward capital improvements at the hospital. The Greenville High School Yearbook can be ordered now at a discounted price, and the Greenville High School Key Club is taking orders now for GHS sweatshirts. The Shaw Public Library Association has canvas tote bags for sale at the library to support library programming and improvements. Both the Greenville ITS Snowmobile Trail Grooming organization, which maintains the 70+ miles of ITS Snowmobile Trails in our region, and the Moosehead Riders Snowmobile Club, which maintains all of our local trails and helps with numerous special events, have sweatshirts for sale.

At the Town Office, you can purchase a Greenville Fire Department car magnet, proceeds of which support equipment for the fire department. Last year’s Moose-on-the-Run and 100-Mile Wilderness Sled Dog Race long and short sleeve shirts are available in the lobby by donation, proceeds to support next year’s races. And for the practical shopper, there can be no more useful gift than an “orange bag”, available at the Town Office or Landfill for \$5 each. Any type or amount of Construction or Demolition Debris (or Christmas wrapping paper) which you can stuff into this bag will be accepted at the landfill for no additional charge.

There are many more options available from community groups in Greenville, and hundreds of local businesses to shop at this season. So please, shop locally and smartly this holiday season – support the community which supports you!

Sincerely;

John Simko  
Town Manager