

## **Mayor Deb Higgins - December 13, 2013**

We are well into the holiday season with coloured lights, holiday concerts, decorations and Christmas trees everywhere. Along with the approaching holidays, comes a little more stress with the preparations and demands on everyone's already limited time. While the commercialism can be overwhelming at times, the fact of the matter is that we each make of Christmas what we wish.

It is a wonderful time of year. We are reminded that we have the great fortune of living in a land where we are blessed with peace and prosperity. We enjoy freedoms and privileges unheard of in other areas of the world. For me, it is a time to spend with family, friends and loved ones, catching up on the year gone by, good food, lots of laughter and possibly even some walks in the snow if this cold weather lets up! It really comes down to a slower pace of life for the week to enjoy the things that are important to us.

The traditions surrounding the holidays are as numerous as the people who celebrate it. Through the years, the holiday has been adapted to local customs, culture, and history and has produced an amazing variety of Christmas traditions around the world. Some, such as the giving of gifts or the use of a star, arose directly or indirectly out of the biblical nativity stories. Some, such as the legends of Saint Nicholas, have their origins in church history, historical fact that has grown to become legendary as it has been embellished through story. Others, such as the use of evergreens and the yule log, have pagan origins but have been transformed into distinctively Christian traditions. Each of our families has adopted various traditions that we celebrate over the holidays.

For myself, and I'm sure for many of you, this year has flown by. I find it hard to believe that I have this wonderful opportunity to work for, and with the people of Moose Jaw. I also realize I would not be able to do it without the support of so many people, my colleagues on Council, City Administration and the great City staff who keep our community running. Also important are the comments, advice and feedback offered from residents within the community. Your dedication and concern for our City is displayed in so many ways throughout the year, and your thoughtful comments and advice are appreciated and invaluable. It has been an exciting year and I'm looking forward to Moose Jaw's continuing success in 2014.

Just as the first Christmas heralded a new beginning, every Christmas season offers each of us a chance to reflect on the year past, and new resolve for the year ahead. It's been a year filled with special events, renewal of friendships and a realization of the quality of life we in Moose Jaw enjoy.

From our home to yours, best wishes for a happy, healthy holiday filled with family and friends! Merry Christmas!

Deb Higgins  
Mayor