



The Chairman's Corner

by

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

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As everyone is all too well aware, the past two years have been particularly rough for everyone. Somehow, things seem even more difficult when holiday time rolls around. But let's take a second and step away from the world's troubles, and enjoy what makes this season fun and special.

As I've noted in previous years, we should all be proud of Columbia County's rich history of providing for those less fortunate.

Among the various organizations working to make the holidays a more joyful time for those less fortunate, including those that collect and distribute toys for children, I would like to recognize the efforts of the Santa Claus Club, the oldest such club in the United States, in Valatie; the Marion Stegmann Fund, which delivers gifts and food to those in need; and the Edith Casey Stocking Fund, coordinated by the Columbia County Department of Social Services.

Having trouble with gift ideas? Okay, some may have completed their shopping and are sitting back pretty happy about that, but many of us are just getting going, searching for that perfect something for the special someone.

While it can seem like the better approach -- okay, sometimes even necessary -- to take the easy way out and make your holiday purchases online, there are reasons it might be better to sidestep that route and head on out -- safely -- in the world.

While I would advocate that throughout the year shoppers keep local merchants in mind, there's no time like the holidays to see what they have to offer.

Not only does a local purchase keep your money in the community, with all the benefit that has for the local economy, but there's a better than even chance that you'll stumble upon that special gift not available anywhere else. We are extremely lucky in Columbia County to have such a wide variety of small businesses offering unique selections.

There's a lot to think about at this time of year. People we miss, people we are happy to have around us, things we can do to improve ourselves ... you get the idea. Aside from that, don't forget to stop and take a moment for yourself, and remember what it is you are thankful for.

In my family, the traditional Christmas meal is ravioli. This began with my father's mother, who passed the recipe down to my mother, who passed it down to my wife. I don't think I've ever had anything but ravioli for Christmas dinner. But regardless of what you celebrate this season, or how you celebrate, keep your family and friends close.

That's where it all begins. On behalf of the county Board of Supervisors and all county staff, I wish a healthy, happy, and safe holiday for all.