

Atlantic Canada's First Street Newspaper
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Street Newspapers Association (NASNA).

Mission Statement:

To provide a voice for the poor and needy,
to educate and develop a critical conscience,
to develop a community based solution
to poverty and to generate income
for those in need.

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A note to our readers: Street Feat is a monthly paper. It is sold by the homeless and unemployed and supporters throughout Halifax Regional Municipality and beyond. The paper is not a charity, it is a social and economic enterprise which generates income from both sales and advertising, as well as from special projects. Vendors pay seventy five cents per copy and sell them for a dollar and fifty cents, keeping the difference. Subscriptions are also available from the office at \$20 per year.

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Gilt or Guilt by Response: A Thousand Voices

'Tis the season when we ponder on the reason why we do what we do when we do it.

One such issue for thought is that of generosity or to some charity or to some our humane expectation to our species or to some that time of year we are guilted into 'and good will to all men'. No more is this more obvious in North America at year end, otherwise know as Christmas.

Gilt or guilt?

No other time do we witness those who give because they have enough to share and those who give because it is a convenient tax deduction or a point earned for a good deed. Some may argue that it should not make a difference on why people give as long as the giving gets done. Are the Poor going to refuse wearing a winter coat or eating a meal out of moral indignation because the giving was done not out of humanity but out of some sort of displaced sense of guilt, an enforced perhaps coerced obligation?

Is there a rule that if I have more than my fair share I am expected through my membership to the civilized specie, to share my guilt with others who have less? Does one have to be wealthy in order to give? Why do some folks only give in front of witnesses? Why is some giving done with the stinging backhandness of pontification or pious, the antithesis of what generosity is all about? And are all things given materialistic? What is it to share?

It would be a misnomer, an uneducated assumption that the Poor do not give to the Poor for often they are the only ones that do. So with that we know giving is not dependently related to the ability to give according to guilt or the amount of gold (wealth) one has in their possession. Without singling out any particular denominations we know that people through their relations with organized religion are obligated through

doctrine to share what they can with others. Yet around the world we do not have all these individuals sharing according to this practice, so giving is not dependently related to being told what to do for group membership.

It appears that being generous is more about being humane and from there we can find direction and understanding about why some give while others do not. One does not require materialistic or financial wealth to share their guilt for much can be given that is not materialistic; the phrase 'heart of gold' is such an example. We all know at least one person that gives without expectation of compensation, one that gives without being told, one that gives for giving sakes and not because they fear retaliation or reprisal. We all know those who give regardless of the time of year, the people who have understood the very basics of humanity: that the giving of ourselves to others is the only way to also give back to ourselves as a collective. Without this very basic compassion for ourselves and others we cannot survive as specie. In fact without compassion we become our own worse enemy, threatening our very existence.

So if the amount of guilt does not predict who gives and the amount of guilt, whether internally or externally influenced, does not predict who will give...

The answer is in the mirror.

Who ARE you?

Are you a person that just does not like to share your piece of the pie, afraid that someone else may get the tastier piece?

Are you a person that would not share but for the fact that others are watching and there may be negative consequences for not sharing so best to share to avoid personal discomfort usually at this time of year?

Are you a person who gives because it makes you feel superior to others that should be forever thankful to know you even exist?

Are you a person that gives because you have extra and want to share with others who have little or none?

Are you a person who gives because who do not know how not to give to others, your 'worth' determined by how you 'behave' as a human being not by your bank account balance?

WE cannot possibly give of ourselves all the time, that would be a self defeating venture. However, the subsistence needs of the Impoverished and Vulnerable know no clock or calendar other than when they are left out in the cold wondering if they will wake up each morning or when their bellies rumble begging for food, time measured by the last meal eaten.

Please be mindful that the financially vulnerable cannot store up like squirrels stuffing winter boots and food in their cheeks, your generosity is needed all year round.

Please remember to give when and if you can and if it is ONLY the Christmas spirit that moves you by all means...be moved!

Wishing a safe season

Much health and peace in the new year.



Nova Scotia KAIROS' Anti-Poverty Fund Board, a Canadian Ecumenical Social Justice Initiative (formerly NS PLURA), extends its deepest Christmas blessing to the staff and subscribers at Street Feat - The Voice of the Poor in Halifax.

We will once again be soliciting applications from interested groups starting now with the deadline of 15 April 2009.

We are hoping to hear from groups who have projects that:

- ~ increase awareness of social justice
- ~ use creative approaches to overcome the effects of poverty
- ~ develop a greater understanding of the impacts of poverty
- ~ increase resources to bring about change
- ~ and develop alternative community-based economic models

Please contact us to receive an application form:

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