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Victorian Christmas customs topic of December 2 presentation at NMCC

Aroostook County - With another Holiday season approaching and Presque Isle's Sesquicentennial year coming to an end, Northern Maine Community College will host a presentation given by a local historian that takes a look back at the origin of many of the traditions we celebrate today.

Victorian Christmas customs will be presented by Kim Smith from the Presque Isle History Society on Wednesday, December 2, at 12:00 noon in the Edmunds Conference Center at NMCC. In addition to the discussion led by Smith, attendees will also learn how to make a Victorian ornament by making one themselves. Materials will be provided.

"Many of the current traditions we practice during the Holiday season come from the Victorian era," said Smith. "I plan to discuss what the Victorian era was, and where many of the traditions we look forward to each year come from."

Smith will cover a number of topics in her presentation that involve the Christmas tree, including the origin of artificial trees, the concept of a village or train under the tree, Christmas tree lights and the tree stand. She will also discuss Victorian traditions and their evolution as it relates to Christmas cards and wrapping paper, as well as Christmas carols and window displays.

Smith has researched and written over twenty presentations of topics of interest on Presque Isle's History. She presented these topics on a weekly basis over a five-month period to the Seniors Achieving Greater Education (SAGE) program at the University of Maine at Presque Isle; and currently on a monthly basis as the "Brown Bag Lunch Lecture Series" for the Presque Isle Historical Society.

She also researched, prepared, and implemented a “Guided Walking Tour of Historic Downtown Presque Isle”, a two-hour, two-mile tour given monthly and upon request. In addition, she served on the joint City/Historical Society Committee which wrote and implemented a "Self-Guided Walking Tour" that features 28 plaques around town with vignettes detailing the historical significance of each property as well as historic photos of the sites.

As a former professional model, Smith was instrumental in implementing “freeze” modeling to the Historical Society’s exhibit at the Historical Pavilion at the annual Northern Maine Fair in which freeze models wear antique clothing. This exhibit has earned the Historical Society the coveted “Best Living History Exhibit” award for 2007 and 2008. In 2009, the exhibit prepared by Smith won the prestigious “Best Overall Exhibit” award.

In 2007, Smith earned the Silver level award from the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation for donating over 250 hours of her time to the Historical Society and the Gold Award in 2008 for donating over 500 hours of her time.

Smith holds a Master’s of Science in Business degree from Husson University; a Non-Profit Organizational Management Certificate from Shenandoah University in Winchester, Virginia; and a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Affairs – Political Science from the University of Maine at Orono. She has worked both as a professional disc jockey and a television announcer for public television. In addition, she has served as the executive director for three non-profits and served as a consultant to three others.

She is a long-standing member of MENSA and a member of Sigma Beta Alpha, the international honor society of Business Administration. Currently, Smith is the Chairperson of the City of Presque Isle’s Sesquicentennial Celebration. She is a member in good standing of Presque Isle’s Historical Society where she is in her third term as Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary.

Smith is a published writer, having had articles appear in a national publication, a regional magazine, and a newspaper downstate.

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Kim Smith