Hello, I’m Tom Wiknich.

Welcome to the 6th KZGN News Talking Points Editorial for Tuesday, December 11th, 2014.

Today’s topic will be “Volunteers in America and Ridgecrest.”

But first, let’s discuss some Facebook comments received recently on the newly launched KZGN news discussion group.This is a newly launched Facebook forum to get your opinions and comments on the station or any news items you’d like to discuss with KZGN staff or other members of the public.You can find it by just searching on Facebook by typing in “KZGN news discussion group” or via our website: [www.kzgn.net](http://WWW.KZGN.NET)

Here’s a summary of comments so far:

It has been brought up by a few people in the valley expressing concern about local pastor Randy Jenkins and his family out singing Christmas carols and asking for donations for their church.There is also some question if there is any connection to the business called “Teach the Kids to Fish”.We have heard from the Teach Kids to Fish spokesperson that there is no connection between their organization and Randy Jenkins.I guess the bottom line from the commentators is they question the validity of their claim to be a church, and whether it is appropriate for the parents to be putting out their children in this manner. KZGN is looking into this matter and will probably have more to report at a later date. As this is a church issue, we respect the freedom to worship as we please. We also will not report on anything that isn’t factual.More to come on this topic.

These comments kind of lead into today editorial topic:

“Volunteers in America and Ridgecrest”.

Volunteerism is in the roots of America. Do you realize our country was founded by volunteers? We wouldn’t be the country we are today if not for the first American volunteers.They fought and died for this country.Families lost husbands, fathers, and sons to a war for independence. Mothers had to endure the sacrifices in support of these volunteers. Many died or lost everything during this battle.But the result………This country we call the United States of America.

Now let’s talk about Ridgecrest volunteers. You should have noticed by now that I am wearing my PACT volunteer uniform. I wear this to demonstrate that I volunteer to help my community, just like many of you watching right now. My parents raised me from a child to always look for ways to help the country, to find an area of interest and volunteer to help. I still do that today. But this isn’t about me. It’s about the hundreds of volunteers we have here in the valley.Until Shannon and I started the KZGN TV station, we had no idea how many volunteer groups exist in the valley.One of the goals for starting KZGN was to have it be the community’s station, to promote the good causes that exist here in the valley.

To date we have estimated that there are more than 140 volunteer groups here. They vary in causes and membership, some very small and some with many members. While some of these groups are more organized than others, they are still a volunteer group.

But there are 2 main problems we keep hearing about from most of these volunteer groups.

1. Funding
2. Recruitment of new volunteers

We completely understand the funding issues. For the groups to exist, they need funds.It is very competitive trying to get donations from local businesses and individuals. As a business owner here for over 25 years, I am approached all the time for donations. We can’t donate to everyone, although we do as much as we can.

For the most part, the businesses and people of Ridgecrest are very caring and generous.

The second issue was about recruiting new volunteers.

Many groups are comprised of mostly older people. By older I mean 40 and over. It seems the groups are having a hard time getting the younger generation to join.

While I know there are some fine younger people that do step up and help, there is a large gap in the amount of young volunteers to older volunteers.

So, what’s the point to this editorial?

I think that we need to be trying to figure out how to get the younger generation more involved in volunteer groups. Are kids being encouraged by their parents and through our schools to find an interest and volunteer to help? I don’t know the answer.

And as far as funding, at this time of year when people get in the giving spirit, if you are able to donate to an organization, please do so. There are so many good causes to help. Most groups would even say other than funds, a donation of your time is just as valuable.Many groups have many members. But when there is work to be done, only a small group turns out to put in time.

Anyone that is part of a larger organization knows exactly what I mean by worker turn out.

In conclusion, if you are bored or know someone that isand say there’s nothing to do in Ridgecrest, tell them to get off their couch, find a group, and volunteer to help. If you’d like to volunteer, find a topic that interests you.I bet there is already some organization that exists to support that interest.Together as a people, we can make a difference.Just as the country was founded by volunteers, we must carry on that beginning. Volunteer to make the city and country a better place.

In closing, tell me what you think!I encourage your email comments. Whether you agree with me or not, I’d like to read your comments. I may read some email comments on my next editorial. Or, if you have a suggestion of an issue you’d like me to discuss, email that to me as well.

Please email them to info@kzgn.net.

This has been a KZGN Talking Points Editorial seen right here on KZGN TV on Tuesdays and Thursdays.Until next time, I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think!

Join the KZGN news discussion group.Just search on Facebook by typing in “KZGN news discussion group”or find links to it via our website: [www.kzgn.net](http://WWW.KZGN.NET)