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104th KZGN News Talking Points Editorial  
By: Tom Wiknich

We say Merry Christmas here, as well as other greetings.

First, there were a few questions from last Thursday’s editorial titled: Are drunk driving check points a good thing? This was a basic editorial providing information as to how DUI check points are set up, and paid for by the city. The Ridgecrest police department will join police departments across the nation over the holiday period to crack down on drivers under the influence of alcohol or drugs. As a volunteer with the Ridgecrest PD, I have worked these DUI check points. I see the professionalism the officers use in setting up the check point and the instructions they receive in how to conduct the check point.

Here are some questions. Skip asked, “Tom, I have two questions about the local DWI checkpoints. 1) Are you, the driver, legally required to participate in this checkpoint? And 2) are the checkpoints all completely staffed by licensed police officers?” My answer is yes, once you enter into the check point, the driver must stop if so signaled by the officer. And yes, the officers that conduct the check point are sworn officers trained in the proper use of a check point.

Dan commented, “It’s not clear that some of the sites chosen by RPD fully comply with CA requirements, specifically location; for example the frequent site on Norma.” To you Dan, all locations chosen by the police are chosen and set up in accordance with state law.

Stan questions the effectiveness of them, thinking that only one person has ever been caught. Stan, more than one person has been caught in the check points over the years. The main point Stan was trying to make was that he felt that saturation patrols might be a better way to get DUI drivers off the roads. Well, Stan, the police do both. They do the check points and special saturation patrols. As a note, the labor and equipment used specific to these check points were all paid for out of grant money, not the city’s general fund. The message: don’t drink and drive.

Now, on with today’s editorial titled: We say Merry Christmas here, as well as other greetings. Most of you know that besides this TV station, I also own GUNS4US here in Ridgecrest. When it comes to Christmas time, all my employees are free to provide any greeting on the season they see appropriate. The political correctness world has tried, somewhat effectively, to change the greeting to happy holidays, instead of Merry Christmas.

The important point is that while many businesses have actually banned their employees of saying Merry Christmas, telling them to say nothing, or maybe happy holidays, I do not make that dictate. I, myself, wish everyone a Merry Christmas. But if someone turns to me and offers a Happy Hanukkah, I accept that as a meaningful greeting. If someone says Happy Kwanza, that’s fine too. I have Jewish friends that I say Happy Hanukkah to, and they return with Merry Christmas. It’s a mutual respect of each other’s religious backgrounds. For those that do not believe in the religious meaning of Christmas, that’s ok too. You have that right.

Religious freedom applies to everyone. Of course, Christmas wasn’t always an official holiday. Before 1840, a public display of partying and merry making was kind of frowned upon as being too unchristian. Between 1840 and 1870, more and more people started celebrating Christmas. Then in 1870, the congress did establish it as a holiday.

I really enjoy Christmas. I enjoy my family coming to visit. I have family coming in to Ridgecrest from Mammoth Lakes and Los Angeles. All coming here to celebrate here. I don’t even care about presents anymore. All I really want is my family around to eat, play games, visit, and yes, celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Oh, and we might even go out to the gun range and do a little shooting too. We’ll all be going to Christmas Eve service at Our Saviors Luthern church. It seems almost everyone likes the holiday.

Well, almost everyone. Apparently there are still some nuts that want to apply the first amendment to meaning that the government should do away with the holiday, as it is supposedly, in their opinion, the federal government recognizing one religion. Well, news flash, it is not just one religion. There are hundreds of different religions that still share in the belief of Christmas. Of course, there are also some religions that do not believe in Jesus Christ. Some do celebrate this as the birth of Jesus Christ. What harm is everyone knowing that? Just think of it as everyone knowing someone else’s birthday. Enough with thin-skinned reaction to another’s beliefs. If you don’t share the same belief, just ignore it. If you don’t care to hear Merry Christmas from someone, just say no thanks. For all the nuts out there that don’t want the Christmas holiday, go to work on Friday. Enjoy yourself. If you don’t want to celebrate it, fine. But for the rest of the sane, understanding people out there, we’ll just go along as it was established in 1870. We’ll enjoy the Christmas season. Have a day off work. Go out and drive around town to look at Christmas light displays. Some will exchange gifts in the celebration. Some of us will also go to church to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Whether I hear Merry Christmas, or Happy Kwanza, or Happy Hanukkah, all is good. All I know is, my employees are free to offer the greeting or not with no repercussion from me. Freedom is good.

In conclusion, freedom is important. No one is forcing anyone to celebrate Christmas. If you don’t want to celebrate it, go to work and have a great day. For those that do want to celebrate it, I say Merry Christmas.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. I’d like to know what you think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to [info@kzgn.net](mailto:INFO@KZGN.NET).