35th KZGN News Talking Points Editorial

The topic of today’s editorial is: Is it OK for parents to dictate to their children’s friends’ parents what gifts to bring for a birthday party?

But first, a couple comments received on the KZGN discussion group about my last editorial: Did the council do the right thing last night in not offering support for the kern county land use management plan?

Stan said, “Tom, I disagree with you on two counts. 1) Well water levels are dropping at an ‘unacceptable’ rate, not an ‘alarming’ rate. The well water levels are dropping pretty much at the same rate as they have been for 50 years. We have been in overdraft since the late 1950s. We don't need alarmists attempting to further polarize the valley. We are required to set up a groundwater sustainability agency, and we will need people to be willing to work together to get the job done.

Polarizing the entire I.W.V. is not going to help cooperation. 2) The state mandated groundwater sustainability agencies are locally controlled agencies with the power to regulate water usage. We have a water problem. Not supporting the I.W.V. will not allow the state to come in and take over. That problem is the jurisdiction of the G.S.A. In my comments to the draft eir, I asked if the county knew of any precedence regarding using zoning to solve a water problem. I got no answer. The US is having water problems, California is having water problems, Kern County is having much more serious problems than the I.W.V. We are not alone and we should not be jumping out with a unilateral solution not understanding the unintended consequences. If land rezoning is such a great idea, why are the other four districts in Kern County not doing the same thing?”

To you Stan, I agree with most of your comments, except the state mandate issue. We need to do everything we can to make the new GSA a locally controlled agency. We do not want the state to come in and tell us what to do. Thanks for your comments.

Now today’s editorial: Is it OK for parents to dictate to their children’s friends’ parents what gifts to bring for a birthday party?

Parents have birthday parties for their kids. That is normal. However, the new issue is these parents are sending out birthday party notices with instructions to invited kids’ parents to please purchase gifts that are on a store registry somewhere, much like we do for weddings. On the surface, I think it is a good idea because often people don’t know what to buy for someone.

However, when the invitation goes the next step and says the following, I have a problem: “If you don’t want to purchase any of the listed gifts, then please bring cash.” It’s like being told, buy this or this, or bring cash. It’s like bring a gift or don’t attend. So there is no discretion on the part of the person buying the gift out of the goodness of their heart. What’s next? If you bring cash, please bring in even quantities in $5 or $10 increments? And what about the invited kid that might not be able to even bring a gift, but would like to attend the party for his friend? Does that kid have to show up with a note from his parent that no gift was able to be provided?

One justification to the trend I saw was: Well, this method keeps us from confronting a person that gave a gift that the child didn’t want or was duplicated, to get a receipt for the gift so it can be returned. This is a hassle for the receiving parents and can be eliminated by this new method.

While this thought has some merit, I just never had a problem happily accepting any gift that someone was nice enough to buy for my child. It wasn’t about expediency or the potential hassle of returns. It was about being gracious to the person that took the time to go out and spend their money on a gift for my child. For that I would say thank you very much. Your gift is appreciated.

In conclusion, the practice as a suggestion method is ok. But when it swings into this or cash, I think it goes too far. What do you think?

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I 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.