

NEVER SETTLE FOR LESS

BLACKWELL COOK LAW

INJURY & CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS

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December 2015 Newsletter

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When to Get Mad about "Merry Christmas"

The time to get po'd about "Merry Christmas" has long passed. The time to get angry about folks taking away from the true meaning of Christmas was back in the day when Santa Claus was created. In the early 1800's, Santa was introduced as a North Pole resident who brought presents to kids on the night before Christmas. That was the beginning, when our focus was taken off of the celebration of The Birth, to the expectation of us all 'getting something'.... As if the life of Christ wasn't enough of a present!

Later on in the early 1900's, CocaCola used Santa in ads to hawk their drinks, totally changing the marketing landscape forever. Santa was a selling machine! The Season has gone from a ChristMass, a celebration of a Life, to this "Christmas season," where a day (Thanksgiving) intended to gather together to give thanks to God for our blessings is totally ignored in order to beat everyone to Black Friday sales (even if we trample over weaker people to get a Playstation; I mean, it IS \$20 off!). We spend the next month fretting over finding the 'right' gift, and how cheap 'they' were last year on your gift, who's having a party, who got hammered at said party, whose house has the best decor, and someone please tell Aunt Doris not to bring that horrible green bean casserole to Christmas dinner.

On TheDay, we lavish our kids with gifts, only to be dismayed and frustrated when they ignore the expensive toys, and by noon they're only playing with the empty boxes. We are disappointed that mom didn't like what you spent weeks looking for, and that your husband thought you'd love a weed-eater. We over-eat dinner and retire to the den to watch football or some HBO movie loaded with vulgarities and violence. Our kids retreat to their bedrooms to play video games, and we get on the computer to post pics on Facebook of the ExpensiveThingsWeGot

...while the elderly sit there silently, too embarrassed to watch this movie yet so grateful to be included in their usually too-busy family's life,. They won't rock the boat by asking for the TV to be turned off and for everyone to sit with them and talk about the Christmases of their day- when Christmas was visiting and catching up, telling stories that would be taken with their passing, and a chance to hug the grandchildren and opportunity for one more time to say 'I love you'.....or maybe even discuss TheStoryOfTheBirthInBethlehem.

I think if anyone is offended by Starbucks' change to exclude anything associated with 'Christmas,' it's because it reflects the bigger issue of our PC society, where our traditions are almost forcibly being torn from our culture. But if we look at ourselves, we will see that the long-held Christmas traditions are being dissolved from within our very homes. If we start with ourselves, then maybe the American marketing machines will follow. Maybe.

OH PS... I really don't think I like the Birth of our Lord and Savior being used to sell coffee, anyway. Or chainsaws, toys, hams, or cars, for that matter. -Ronda Martin





David's Turn

We have a huge bulletin board in the lobby of our Lancaster office. It's been there for a few years. "The Board" is always full of all sorts of things—photos of family and friends on vacation, employees doing cool things, and Business Law students featured in the paper. We post thank-you notes from clients, newsletter articles, and right now we even have an awesome drawing of Judge Judy given to us by an eight-year-old fan. I want to see you on The Board. Send me your

photos, jokes, notes, news, and anything you'd like. I'll post it on The Board and share it with our group. (david@blackwellcooklaw.com or PO Box 2799, Lancaster, SC 29721).

It's been a big year at Blackwell Cook Lat, but none of it would have been possible without the support of great folks like you who refer clients to us. We added a partner, several employees, and even got rolling with a non-profit this year (you'll hear more about that in 2016). The best part about my job is helping people who have real needs. The best compliments I receive are when clients tell me they recommended me to someone that needed help.

Thank you for telling others about us. It really means a lot. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



A Message from Bob

Growing up as a kid, Christmas was all about what really cool gifts I received, and looking back, those were some great times. But, that's pretty selfish of me to say. As I've gotten older, the best Christmases are the ones where I get to spend more time with family that I don't normally get to see. I also enjoy seeing the joy on the faces of others in giving to them. It isn't about me anymore, it's about making others happy. After all, it's a lot like being a lawyer, making your client happy is what matters most.

Christmas is also a time for reflection. Look back on the year and count your blessings. This year has been great for me. A lot has happened....I've gotten married, became partners with another lawyer, and our firm added new staff and office locations. Seems like a lot, huh? It really has been great, and I'm looking forward to see what 2016 has in store for me, my family, and for Blackwell Cook.

I've been very fortunate to represent you in your various legal problems. Hopefully you've been happy with our services and we've sent a little joy your way. Thank you all for the opportunity to represent you and also for the client referrals.

I hope each of you has the best Christmas yet. Just remember, it's not all about you and what gifts you received. Enjoy your time with family and friends and have a blast. Be safe, be smart, and remember to call me if you find yourself in some holiday trouble.

Upcoming Events

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|---------------|---|--------------------|
| December 1st | Christmas Tree Lighting | Springs House |
| December 5th | Christmas in the City | Downtown Lancaster |
| December 8th | Blackwell Cook Law Christmas Card Award Presentations | City Hall |
| December 12th | Lancaster Christmas Parade | Downtown Lancaster |



People Matter

Last month, Helen Sowell removed many hats as she stepped into the world of retirement. Ms. Sowell has been the Administrator for the City of Lancaster and a catalyst for improvement for the past eight years. During her tenure she assisted in the rehabilitation of the Olde Presbyterian Church on Gay Street—now known as the Cultural Arts Center. Sowell also assisted in the development of the Native American Studies Center on Main Street, a collaboration between USCL and the City.

Helen worked with City staff to develop the 15th Street Training facility used by local law enforcement, EMS, and fire departments for training exercises. A facility like non-other, many emergency service agencies throughout the state also frequent the facility for indoor training and classroom instruction. Other successes for the City of Lancaster during her tenure are a voluntary curbside recycling program, an additional phase of streetscape, improvements to the City's 7.5 mgd wastewater treatment plant, enlargement of the City's solid waste transfer station, and improvements to Main Street with the façade grant program and other enhancements such as new trees, roses, planters, etc.

Ms. Sowell ends her 35-year career with the City after serving most of her years as a judicial officer in the City's Municipal Court. She is happy with her accomplishments and looks forward to dedicating more time to her family—husband, Ronnie Sowell, and three children—Michael, Mitchell and Mark Greene. She also looks forward to more time with three granddaughters—Abbie, Maddie and Ellen Greene. On behalf of the residents and business owners in Lancaster--thank you for a job well done. Enjoy retirement!

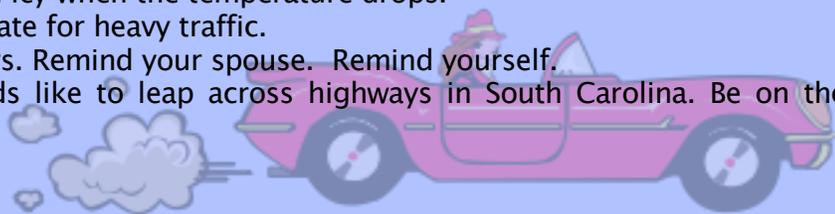
Know someone great in the community? Email linzie@blackwellcooklaw.com



Travel Safety

December is a very busy month. Please remember to be extra cautious as there will be many travelers on the roads. Often, folks are so busy that they try to do too much at one time and make careless driving errors. Take a look at this list of safe holiday travel tips:

- Be aware of your surroundings, take extra caution when walking to your car in the parking lot.
- Pay attention to wet roads that may become icy when the temperature drops.
- Allow yourself extra travel time to accommodate for heavy traffic.
- Don't text and drive. Remind your teenagers. Remind your spouse. Remind yourself.
- Keep in mind--Santa's reindeer and friends like to leap across highways in South Carolina. Be on the lookout!



Pepper Jack Chicken

Ingredients

6 chicken breasts

1 box Stove Top Stuffing

1 can Cream of Chicken Soup

6 slices Pepper Jack or Swiss cheese

1/4 cup melted butter

1/4 cup milk

Instructions

Cover the bottom of the pan with chicken. Leave the breasts whole, or cut as small as you'd like. Layer slices of cheese to cover the chicken. Mix the soup with milk and pour over the cheese. Sprinkle on package of unprepared stuffing over the top. Drizzle melted butter over the stuffing mix. Bake at 350 for 45-60 minutes. If you plan on making ahead and freezing, do not add stuffing until cooking. Serve over rice or noodles.

photo cred: prepared-housewives.com



What's your favorite recipe? Send it to us! linzie@blackwellcooklaw.com

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FROM OUR FAMILIES TO YOURS

We wish for you the very best that this season has to offer, for a healthy and happy 2016 as well.

*Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace, good will toward men.
Luke 2:14*



This newsletter is published for informational purposes only and no legal advice is intended.