



In Defense of Democracy & Civil Rights

COALITION FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

P. O. Box 21266 • SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98111-3266 • (206) 233-9775

PORTLAND (503) 281-5823 • FAX (503) 281-8673 • E-MAIL: chdpx@aol.com

NORTHWEST UPDATE

October 1, 1997

1. COALITION FOR HUMAN DIGNITY AT NWCAMH CONFERENCE: Coalition for Human Dignity Executive Director Terre Rybovich, Research Director Jonathan Mozzochi and Research Analyst Robert Crawford attended the annual conference of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment held Sept. 26-28 in Colorado Springs, CO. On Sept. 27 Mozzochi participated in a press conference with Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights President Leonard Zeskind, drawing attention to the support given to militia causes by public officials such as U.S. Representative Helen Chenoweth (R-Idaho).

Robert Crawford presented on the Biblical arguments used by the racist and religious right at the annual NWCAMH Symposium, this year titled "American Armageddon: Religion, Revolution and the Right." Other symposium participants included Leonard Zeskind, Western Washington University political science professor Vernon Johnson, Montana Association of Churches educator Susan DeCamp, Political Research Associates Executive Director Jean Hardisty, University of Colorado professor Abby Ferber, Karen Cooper, executive director of Washington State NARAL, and Diane Alves and Sally Sheklow of the All Women's Health Services.

Crawford also gave a workshop on the anti-immigrant movement, focusing on the contrast between the economic arguments used by such groups and their core Euro-American nationalism. Crawford and Mozzochi gave a workshop on common law courts, tracing their roots in the Posse Comitatus and racist notions of citizenship and describing their use by Christian Patriots to harass political opponents.

Keynote addresses were given by Democratic Party campaign strategist Celinda Lake, Manning Marable, Director of Columbia University's Institute for Research in African-American Studies, and Chicana lesbian poet and activist Gloria Andalua. Workshops were also given by IREHR president Leonard Zeskind, Devin Burghart of the Center for New Community, Tarso Ramos of the Western States Center, Ken Stern of the American Jewish Committee, Marlene Hines of the Mountain State Network Against Bigotry, Michelle Lefkowitz of Communities Against Hate, and Estevan Flores and Lisa Duran of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

2. HATE CRIMES TRAINING ABSENT FROM KITSAP COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT:

According to Kitsap County, Washington Undersheriff Mike Davis, deputies in the Kitsap County Sheriff's department have never received training in recognizing hate crimes and in 1996 the department failed altogether to keep track of hate crimes. Seven hate crimes were reported by the department in 1993, five in 1994, and 14 in 1995. In 1997, Davis told reporters, nine hate crimes have been reported. Davis reports that he is currently revising the department's hate crimes policies and that the department now plans to provide training. In a disconcerting note, Davis told reporters, "If there's inconsistency within departments such as ours, you can imagine what inconsistencies there are across the state. We're all reporting things differently. I think everybody could stand to have an update on exactly what hate crimes are" (Central Kitsap Reporter, Aug 16.; Seattle Times, Sept. 14).

3. AFRICAN AMERICANS MOST FREQUENT TARGET OF HATE CRIMES: According to the annual bias crimes report of the Washington State Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, African Americans were the target of 40% of all reported hate crimes in Washington state in 1996. According to the report, African-Americans were targeted in 80 of the 199 reported bias crimes in 1997. Asian-Pacific Islanders were the target in 15 reported bias crimes, Native Americans 7, Latinos 15, gay men and lesbians 31, and Jews 17. Overall, reported hate crimes were down from 261 in 1995 and 286 in 1994 (Seattle Times, Sept. 14).

4. WASHINGTON CHRISTIAN COALITION AGENDA '98: The Christian Coalition of Washington will hold a statewide meeting to focus on its 1998 Legislative agenda Oct. 23-25 in Yakima. The group will meet on Oct. 23 at the West Valley Nazarene Church (7109 W. Nob Hill Blvd) and Oct. 24-25 at the Yakima Convention Center (10 North 8th St). The Christian Coalition is currently organizing against I-677, a measure to ban discrimination against gay men and lesbians in public employment. A Christian Coalition "I-677 Alert" states "It is not just bad public policy, as are all things contrary to God's Word, but would be an open invitation to continuous litigation. Homosexual activists know it would not stand the light of legislative scrutiny... As the initiative is drafted, if you choose not to hire me, I can take you and/or your charitable organization to court. It is up to you to prove, at your expense that you did not reject me because you thought I was a homosexual... This is a quota requirement in disguise."

5. SKINHEADS GET LIGHT SENTENCES FOR ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT: Racist skinheads Daniel Wright Sessions and Angelina Maddox received sentences of just six months and ten days in jail, respectively, for harassing and assaulting an African American man outside an Oregon City Fred Meyers in March. In addition the two were placed on a three year probation during which they must cease involvement with hate groups, undergo anger management counseling, have no contact with the victims, pay fines to the victims and perform community service.

The light sentences came despite the fact that after his conviction Sessions was arrested for trespass and for using racial epithets against an Hispanic man – a violation of an Aug. 27 agreement under which he was released. Sessions is also required to attend an "anti-gang" program run by former white supremacist Steven Stroud, a fact which may have played a role in the lenient sentence. Stroud told reporters after the sentencing that, "The worst thing for anyone attempting to pull away from these groups is incarceration." In the opinion of CHD, for someone such as Sessions who continued after his felony conviction to spew racial slurs, the best medicine is a sentence befitting a white supremacist who harasses and assaults people of color (Oregonian, Sept. 23).

6. KEHOE AND ASSOCIATE CHARGED IN ARKANSAS TRIPLE-MURDER: White supremacists Chevie Kehoe and Danny Lewis Lee have been charged in the 1996 murder of Arkansas gun dealer William Mueller, his wife Nancy, and her daughter. Lee was arrested Wednesday Sept. 24 in Yukon, OK in a joint operation between the FBI, ATF and Pope County Sheriff's Department. Kehoe remains in custody, also facing charges in connection to a February shoot-out with Ohio law officers.

Kehoe was linked to the Arkansas murders when gun parts stolen from the Muellers were found in a pickup used by he and brother Cheyne at the time of the February shoot-out. A paint sample taken from the pickup was reported to match paint found on duct tape used to secure plastic bags over the heads of the Muellers. If convicted, the two could face the death penalty (Spokane Spokesman Review, Sept. 25).

7. RACIST VANDALISM AND LEAFLETING IN WASHINGTON: In September, copies of a "New Order" leaflet proclaiming Adolph Hitler's "Aryan truth" of "racial idealism" were placed in the newspaper box of a mixed race couple in Spanaway, Washington (Tacoma News Tribune, Sept. 21).

In Kirkland, Washington in late September a racial slur was etched in the paint of the car of an African-American football coach from Garfield High following a game against Juanita High School. Just one week earlier a Juanita student had been barred from participating in a school event for using a similar racial slur. Responding to the racist vandalism, Juanita principle Sue Cohn told reporters that "We're not going to jump to any conclusions and assume it was one of our kids. But at the same time it happened at my school under my watch, and I want to get to the bottom of it. We don't play around on that issue. I don't think I can state that strongly enough. We're not going to bury it, and we need to send a strong message that that wasn't OK" (Eastside Journal, Sept. 27).

***The CHD Research Department prefers incident reports, newspaper clippings, event write-ups, questions and comments to be e-mailed to chdpdx@aol.com. Alternatively you can mail such items to the address below or call us either in Portland or Seattle at the numbers listed below. CHD Research staff rely upon such information to fill out much of the Northwest Update and we appreciate your contributions. ***