



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

April 15, 1997

- 1. CHD STAFFER TRAINS OREGON JUDGES, COURT EMPLOYEES:** Senior CHD research analyst Steven Gardner, working with the State Court Administrators office, conducted trainings for Oregon judges, prosecutors, clerks and other state and county employees on April 4 in Portland and April 11 in Salem. The Portland event, held at the Multnomah County Courthouse, was attended by 60 people and the Salem event at Willamette University by 40. Gardner delivered a multi-media presentation, "Guns & Gavel: Common Law Courts, Militias and White Supremacy," covering the history, ideology and activities of common law courts, militias and related far right groups.
- 2. RICHARD BUTLER ARRESTED:** Aryan Nations leader Richard Butler was arrested April 12th for trespassing when he handed out literature on private property outside an event hosted by the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment and the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations. Butler and eight other protesters at the event had been warned not to enter the private property. When Butler stepped into the parking lot to distribute information, he was arrested and taken to the Kootenai County Jail. He was released after posting \$150 bail (Associated Press, April 13).
- 3. IHR TO RESUME PUBLICATION OF JOURNAL:** According to a recent mailing by the Institute for Historical Review, the Newport Beach, CA-based organization will soon resume publishing the Journal of Historical Review and plans to organize an IHR conference. Due to a protracted battle with anti-Semitic mogul Willis Carto the group has not published an issue of the Holocaust-denying publication since March 1996 and has not held a conference since September 1994. Despite a November 1996 ruling that Carto must turn over \$6 million plus in money belonging to the IHR, the group is still struggling financially. A recent fundraising letter moans that, "We can't count on any of the diverted money ever becoming available to help the IHR. We must carry on as if Carto already spent every penny, as he claims."
- 4. OREGON HATE CRIMES IN 1996:** Reported bias crimes in Oregon increased by 5.8% from 172 in 1995 to 182 incidents in 1996, according to the Law Enforcement Data System's "Report of Criminal Offenses Motivated by Prejudice." 48% (89) of incidents were motivated by racial bias, 24% (44) by sexual orientation and 10% by religious bias. African-Americans were victims of hate crimes in 32% of the cases (56), Hispanics in 11.5%. Whites were the victim in 48.5% of cases. However, because the LEDS reporting system does not categorize incidents by specific racial motivation (i.e., anti-black, anti-Latino, etc.), this number certainly over-estimates anti-white bias crimes. Many of the whites targeted were likely targeted because of their sexual orientation, religion, or national origin. Whites were the perpetrators of bias crimes in 78.4% (149) of reported cases.
- 5. MONTANA FREEMEN TRIAL UPDATE:** The first person charged in connection to the case of the Montana "Freemen" could go to trial as early as May 12. Judge John C. Coughenour ruled on April 9 that the trial of Lavon T. Hanson, charged with conspiracy to commit fraud for having aided LeRoy Schweitzer in his fraudulent check scheme, should go forward despite motions by both prosecution and defense attorneys to dismiss the charges. Defense attorneys have argued that the case should be dismissed because Hanson's right to a speedy trial has been denied. Prosecuting attorneys apparently hoped to retry Hanson on more narrowly defined charges (Billings Gazette, April 10).
- 6. ACM "ECCLESIA CAMP" SCHEDULED:** The Identity group American Christian Ministries has scheduled its first annual "Ecclesia Camp" for May 31-June 3. The location is as yet unspecified. Contact: (208) 926-0884.

The Northwest Update is a publication of the Coalition for Human Dignity

© 1997. All Rights Reserved. Material herein may not be reproduced without permission of the Coalition for Human Dignity.

7. FOCUS ON THE FAMILY SUMMER SCHOOL: Focus on the Family is adding a summer school course to its regular program at the Institute for Family Studies in Colorado Springs. The six-week course will run from June 14 to July 25. The summer program will offer the following core courses: "Relationships of Respect" which focuses on marriage; "The Sanctity of Family Life" which "explores the family through...Christian theology, psychology and sociology;" and "The Family, Civil Society and the State," which examines "the impact of government policy on the family" (Focus on the Family, April 1997).

8. HOLLAND GETS TWENTY YEARS: North American Volunteer Militia leader Joe Holland received a 20 year sentence with 10 years suspended and a \$30,000 fine for threatening public officials and tampering with juries. Holland was charged under Montana's criminal syndicalism law—a law that has historically been used against labor unions—for sending threatening letters to state and local Montana officials. One letter faxed to Montana Attorney General Joe Mazurek asked "how many of your agents will be sent home in body bags before you hear the pleas of the people?" Holland pleaded guilty in December 1995 to criminal syndicalism and jury tampering. Holland mailed more than 12,000 letters to Ravalli County residents urging those called to jury duty to practice jury nullification. Holland's attorney plans to appeal the criminal syndicalism charge on the grounds that the law violates his constitutional right to free speech.

9. SPOKANE BOMBER CASE ENDS IN MISTRIAL: On April 2 the trial of Jay Merrell, Charles Barbee and Robert Berry ended in a mistrial on eight charges connected with the April 1, 1996 bombing of the Spokane Spokesman Review, the robbery of a US Bank and the July 12, 1996 bombing of a Spokane Planned Parenthood office and second robbery of the same US Bank. The charges carried mandatory life sentences. The three were convicted of lesser charges of conspiracy, transporting stolen vehicles and possession of hand grenades in connection to a failed attempt to rob a Portland, Oregon bank in October 1996. Each of the three faces up to 35 years in prison for these convictions. Sentencing has been set for June 30. The mistrial occurred after four days of deliberation when a lone juror would not vote guilty. The three will be retried on the robbery/bombing charges (Associated Press).

10. MONTANA ABORTION CLINIC ARSON: A longtime pro-life activist has been charged with felony arson for setting fire to the Bozeman, Montana building housing Bridger Mountain Family Planning and the office of Dr. Susan Wickland. John Yankowski was arrested on the roof of a nearby building next to a duffel bag containing a fire-starter and a propane bottle. Fire Marshal Chuck Winn estimated that the damage to the building totaled about \$2000, but that the four fires set on the roof of the Medical Arts Building were just minutes away from blazing out of control. Winn told reporters that "Whoever did this was serious about causing damage."

Yankowski had been previously convicted of misdemeanor trespassing for disrupting a 1994 mother-daughter workshop held at the Bridger Clinic. Just days before the arson he was seen handing out articles by anti-choice murderer Paul Hill to people attending a Good Friday Mass at the Grand Avenue Christian Church. In a phone interview with the Billings Gazette, Yankowski stated that, "I did see flames and it was kind of nice, actually. Nice for the same reason as if I saw flames in some other kind of building for killing people—some Nazi camp." Yankowski also stated that it would be "an honor to go to prison for babies," and that "Those flames there were more of a symbolic thing rather than serious arson. To call this arson is really making a mountain out of a molehill (Billings Gazette).

11. RIGHT RALLIES BEHIND TEN COMMANDMENTS: Some 6000 people attended a "Save the Commandments Rally" April 12 at the state capitol building in Montgomery, Alabama in support of circuit court Judge Roy Moore's placement of the Ten Commandments in his courtroom. Speakers at the rally included Alabama Governor Fob James, who has vowed to call out the National Guard to defend Moore's Ten Commandment plaque, Christian Coalition executive director Ralph Reed, American Family Association head Donald Wildmon and Christian Reconstructionist George Grant. One of the sponsors of the event was the Conservative Citizens Council, an organization which mirrors the 1960s White Citizens Councils in its mobilization of white reaction against affirmative action and immigrant rights, and for the Confederate flag. The Alabama Constitutional Militia headed by John Hassey also called on supporters to attend the rally. His call to action declared, "This would be a good time for the Militia to parade down main street Montgomery, Alabama with each State's flag waving proudly in support of Gov. James (sic) stand and State's Rights and our Constitution!" (New York Times, April 13; Free American, April 1997).

12. SUMMIT MINISTRIES COMES TO WASHINGTON: The Manitou Springs, Colorado-based Christian Right group Summit Ministries will hold a week-long "Worldview Academy" in Olympia, Washington August 24-

29. The event is similar to the group's regular two-week summer seminars held in Manitou Springs from May to September each year. Worldview Academy seminars are also scheduled for Texas, Tennessee, Indiana, Missouri, Minnesota, Maryland, South Carolina and Florida. Contact: (409) 822-5045.

13. RACIST SKINHEADS ARRESTED FOR INTIMIDATION: Three racist skinheads were arrested April 7 in Salem, Oregon on charges of 2nd degree intimidation in connection with racial slurs aimed at an African-American male. Arrested: Michael Vantzelfelen, 27 and Susan Vantzelfelen, both of Corvallis; and Lance Shuims, 23, of Salem (Salem Statesman Journal, March 9).

14. PROPOSED GAY RIGHTS INITIATIVE: Hands Off Washington, a Seattle-based organization originally formed to fight anti-gay initiative efforts, is now sponsoring an initiative of its own: Initiative 677. The Initiative asks the unwieldy, but noble, question: "Shall discrimination based on sexual orientation be prohibited in employment, employment agency and union membership practices, without requiring employee partner benefits or preferential treatment?" In order to place the initiative on the ballot, Hands Off must collect 225,000 signatures by the July 3 deadline. For more information contact Hands Off Washington at (206) 323-5191.

••• 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. •••

