



NW COALITION FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

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NORTHWEST UPDATE

May 1, 2000

77. NWCHD ANNUAL WASHINGTON STATE GATHERING SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 3RD. The Northwest Coalition for Human Dignity invites you to attend the Washington State Gathering in Olympia, Washington, for networking, workshops, and organizing. The event will be held at the Thurston County Courthouse, and is co-hosted by Thurston Council on Cultural Diversity and Human Rights. Limited travel funds are available. Lunch will be provided, and more details are to be announced. For those of you traveling long distances, please contact Ruth Elder @ (360)786-5498 and/or elderr@co.thurston.wa.us to arrange lodging. Any other questions? Call Kate Boyd or Camelia Caton-Garcia at (206) 233-9136.

78. NWCHD SPEAKS ON NAZI SKINHEAD MOVEMENT AND WHITE POWER MUSIC: Research Associate, Michele Lefkowitz, spoke to 30 youth at a regional youth conference on human rights. Her talk centered on the white supremacy movement, and specifically, the nazi skinhead faction and their recruitment of young people. The event was held at Lake City High School in Coeur D' Alene, Idaho, April 29th.

79. NWCHD AT WYOMING ACTIVIST GATHERING: NWCHD Research Director, Jonn Lunsford, spoke on racism and white privilege at the Wyoming Activist Gathering on April 29th. More than 50 people gathered to network and evaluate the civil rights movement, in the year-and-a-half since the murder of Mathew Shephard.

80. KLAN ROBES, CONFEDERATE FLAGS AND HATE CRIMES PLAGUE HIGH SCHOOL: Officials at Kelso High School in Kelso, Washington say they will not tolerate any behavior that can be perceived as racially threatening or harassing to students. Their statements come in the wake of dozens of students wearing Confederate flags on their T-shirts and coveralls, a black student finding a noose attached to his car, and a white student attacking a black student twice in one day using racial slurs. Additionally, a parent called the principal to report seeing a person standing outside the high school wearing a Ku Klux Klan robe. According to police, some of the recent activity has involved individuals who refer to themselves as country boys or "hicks" and as part of a group. Kelso students spoke out against racism and local young people are planning a rally to promote harmony. (*Daily News*, April 20th and 21st)

81. "ARYAN FAMILY" TRIAL BEGINS UNDER TIGHT SECURITY: David Theodore Pregler and Rodney Gitchel, currently incarcerated at a Washington State prison, are allegedly "associated" with a white supremacist group called the Aryan Family. The group supposedly reaches into prisons throughout Washington and other states and includes ex-inmates, now free, willing to commit crimes on behalf of comrades behind bars, a Feb. 22 memo from Monroe prison officials contends. Pregler is charged with attempted first-degree murder, first-degree assault or second-degree assault in the April 9, 1998 stabbing of inmate Ryan Bartlett. Gitchel broke the law when he allegedly attacked a corrections officer who came into a room where he'd been strapped to a bed for 50 days for unruly behavior. Fearing that inmates or witnesses may cause a "major disturbance" at the county jail or courthouse, officials increased security. (*The Herald*, April 18th)

82. ARYAN NATIONS NAZI SKINHEAD PLEADS GUILTY TO FELONY CHARGES: John S. Yeager, 20, entered an Alford plea in which he agreed there is enough evidence to convict him of chasing and shooting

at a Sandpoint, Idaho woman and her son, outside the Aryan Nations compound near Hayden Lake, Idaho. At least five bullets were fired at their car. Edward Jesse Warfield, former Aryan Nations security chief, pleaded guilty in March 1999 to one count of aiding and abetting an aggravated assault for his part in the same incident. Yeager's sentencing is set for May 17, where he faces up to five years in prison, a \$5,000 fine or both. Warfield was sentenced to at least two years and up to five years in prison. The victim, Victoria Keenan and her son, have filed a civil suit against Aryan Nations and its leader, Richard Butler. Warfield and Yeager are listed as defendants in the lawsuit. The civil trial is scheduled to begin Aug. 28th. (*Kootenia Co. Press*, April 14th)

83. WYOMING ANTI-GAY GROUP CHALLENGES "SAFE ZONE" PROGRAM: Anti-gay activists met in Casper on April 28th to denounce a safety program at Casper College for lesbians and gays. Proponents of the "Anchor Program" oppose state financial support for "Safe Zone," a project which was set up to create a "safe and productive" work and learning environment for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans-gendered staff and students at Casper College.

84. OREGON CLERGY VICTORIOUS IN WRONGFUL ARREST CASE: Reverend Ed Brandt of Dallas and Rev. Rebecca Hazen of Eugene, reached an out-of-court settlement against two NORPAC growers, Jerry Ditchen and John Kirk, and the Marion County Sheriff, for \$44,500. In 1997, Marion County Sheriff deputies, responding to complaints placed by the growers, falsely arrested both clergy on trespass charges. It was determined the arrests violated Hazen and Brandt's civil rights. Oregon law clearly establishes the right of "religious representatives" to visit with farmworkers living in camps, regardless of the camp owner's desire.

85. RACIST GRAFFITI TARGETS PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS OF COLOR: An as yet to be identified perpetrator, sprayed "Die,...Die" using an offensive racial epithet, along with the address of a white supremacist Web site, on the door of the Association of African Students office. According to students, and campus security, a series of five racial epithets have been scrawled on doors, walls and blackboards at PSU over a period of a week. Steve Coop, PSU campus security officer, said the graffiti targeted more than African Americans. He was withholding details, pending a thorough investigation. (*Oregonian*, April 25th)

86. THREE GAY MEN ASSUALTED OUTSIDE NIGHTCLUB IN ASHLAND, OREGON: Chief Deputy District Attorney Beth Heckert announced, that after reviewing the completed investigation submitted by the Ashland Police Department, no charges will be filed against any of the participants in a fight outside the Kat Wok nightclub in Ashland on April 2nd. Originally, police charged Michael Susee, 23, a Southern Oregon University senior, with three counts each of fourth-degree assault and second-degree intimidation. The initial investigation indicated that the incident was motivated by sexual orientation, and should be pursued as a hate crime. However, after receiving conflicting reports from witnesses, the DA's office concluded that criminal charges could not be proven beyond a reasonable doubt against any of the individuals involved.

87. COLORADO HOUSE KILLS CIVIL-RIGHTS EXTENTION TO GAY/LESBIAN-RELATIONSHIPS: House Bill 1331 that would have protected people from discrimination because of their sexual orientation was defeated by a narrow 34-30 vote. Objecting to giving people a fair shake, Rep. Shawn Mitchell, R-Broomfield, argued that it would interfere with individuals' "freedom of choice in who to hire and who to rent to." Mitchell maintained that there was no evidence to show that people were prevented from getting jobs in Colorado because of their sexual orientation. "Government should leave people free to make their choices," Mitchell said. (*Denver Post*, April 5 & 6.)

...The NWCHD 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 at the numbers listed. We rely upon such information to fill out much of the Northwest Update and we appreciate your contributions. ...