

UNITY IN THE COMMUNITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Olympia Washington

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Disaster Averted is Quieter than Disaster Completed: Nazis in the Neighborhood

It is alarming to hear there are heavily armed Nazis in our community – but that’s exactly what we learned last week when Thurston County Sheriff Derek Sanders posted on social media about the execution of a search warrant here in Thurston County that yielded military weapons, including a machine gun, grenade launchers, explosives, short barrel rifles, ammunition, and ballasted helmets – all surrounded by Nazi paraphernalia from a house in Lacey occupied by suspects identified as being actively involved in Nazi white nationalist groups.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1CPcX8eBoQ/>

A photo of Adolf Hitler speaking from a parapet adorned with a gigantic Nazi flag was on display. The house walls were draped with swastika flags, insignia, and multiple other Nazi photos. As is all too common on social media, most of the comments posted are juvenile expressions of admiration of the weaponry and “joking” denial of the horrific anti-Semitic threat it poses.

While we are fortunate and grateful that the mayhem these weapons, fueled by extreme rhetoric, was prevented, the story is relatively small and quiet. Had it gone the other way, the story would have gained far more attention. Local law enforcement, in concert with the Department of the Army Criminal Investigation Division (CID) and the FBI were able to apprehend these suspects before they put their arsenal to use. This brings home the reality that the current presidential administration has unleashed and enabled overt mimicry of the kind of violent hatred that targets Jews, Muslims, people of color, LGBTQIA, and other traditional targets of deadly violence. The number of active white nationalist groups in the US has reached a historic high, fueled by acceptance in mainstream rhetoric. This unleashing of extreme hate speech has fueled similar extreme expressions of hatred and violence from the far left, as manifested in the assassination of a young couple (employees at the Israeli Embassy) as they exited the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington DC, by a suspect reported to have shouted “Free Palestine!” after being arrested - as though the brutal taking of these young lives could somehow help the suffering of Palestinian people.

Unity in the Community, a Thurston County anti-hate group that first formed in 1992 in response to the skinhead-targeted murder of a Eurasian Olympia teenager named Bob Buchanan Jr., calls upon the community to be aware and unify for the protection and support of those who are victimized and at risk. In the words of Unity co-founder Anna Schlecht, “History is filled with cautionary tales of ignoring bigotry; any time vulnerable groups are scapegoated, it’s a warning sign that the rights and safety of all are at risk. The work continues and we hope to join the next generation of activists in creating even more powerful community responses.”



Now, more than ever in this country, decent and caring people need to be alert and active in acknowledging, countering, and resisting a barrage of hatred and violence fed from the highest positions in our government. You may have asked yourself what you would have done in the lead-up to Nazi Germany. Decide what you are going to do now.

Unity in the Community

<https://olympiaunityinthecommunity.net/>

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