

Anti-racism letters in the Benicia Herald

Friday, April 23, 2021, by Nathalie Christian

White supremacy is not a cancer, it is a choice

It's been said that white supremacy is a cancer on society, but the analogy is a poor one: no rational human would welcome cancer into their body the way we choose to tolerate white supremacy—even now, even here—in Solano County. Cancer as a metaphor glosses over how white supremacy and racist ideologies are fed and bred—we (white people like me) contribute to white supremacy and the systems that uphold it every day, not just through participation in explicitly racist acts, but also by refusing to acknowledge its impact on nearly every institution and structure within the US, including here in Solano County.

Most of us can agree that there was a violent uprising at our capitol in January and accept that the fingerprints of white supremacy were all over it. We even have proof that many members of law enforcement and military were there, attacking the halls we call hallowed. But fewer of us are willing to take a hard look at our own local institutions and government, and even our own neighbors, and say the words, “White supremacy is alive and well here, and every day I make the choice to say and do nothing, so I allow it to thrive.” I refuse to make that choice, and you must too.

Consider the situation in Sheriff Tom Ferrara’s office. These are the facts: (1) Far-right, white supremacist groups encourage their supporters to enter law enforcement to uphold white supremacy; (2) Iconography popular with such groups was created, shared, and openly admired by the sheriff’s employees, and also by elected officials; (3) The sheriff has obstructed attempts to shine a light on his own employees’ behavior, ducking behind an FBI report that he will not share with the public; (4) In saying and doing nothing about this, we are all complicit in allowing it to go unaddressed.

This is a call to action. Contact your local officials, those whom you have voted into power, including the Board of Supervisors. Speak up during the public comments section of every meeting. Demand the establishment of a civilian sheriff oversight board that would have the power to investigate the presence of those sympathetic to white supremacist and terroristic ideologies in law enforcement (Assembly Bill 1185 supports this action). Demand policies to address the hiring and firing of those who are supposedly here to protect and serve. Speak to your friends and neighbors about your actions and encourage them to stand with you.



Maybe cancer and white supremacy have one thing in common: we are working to cure cancer, and we can work together to address and dismantle white supremacy and the systems that tolerate it, one step at a time. We all deserve better, and it's never too late to get started.

Nathalie Christian

Benicia