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ASSAULTING OUR STATE WITH HATE: A YOUNG WHITE SUPREMACIST GETS BOLDER

Early in August, a 17-year-old Billings white supremacist was accused of shooting another teenager in the leg. Allen Michael Goff was charged as an adult in District Court. Court records say police found weapons and white supremacist materials when he was arrested.

Goff was arrested after an emergency call brought officers to West Park Plaza on Avenue C in Billings at about a 3:00 a.m. on July 27. The shooting victim, a Hispanic teen, identified Goff as the shooter and told officers he used to be friends with Goff. He said they were no longer friends because of Goff's white supremacist beliefs.

Goff fled on foot after the shooting and was later pulled by gunpoint from a truck driven by his father. He had the following on him at the time of his arrest: a set of brass knuckles, a nine-millimeter semiautomatic Glock pistol, a fully loaded 30-round high-capacity magazine, a 10-round magazine with seven rounds loaded, several knives, a shoulder holster, two .38-caliber bullets and a patch for Montana Front, a white supremacist group. His backpack was decorated with a swastika and the words "Montana 136 Front."

Goff pleaded not guilty to felony assault with a weapon and a misdemeanor charge of carrying a concealed weapon. The judge allowed Goff to remain free pending trial after posting a \$50,000 bond. Goff continued promoting his racist agenda since the August court date.

Very active online, Goff posts frequently on a web forum for The Creativity Movement under the screen name "montanaWS." He has posted his phone number and told readers to call him if they wanted white supremacist materials, including T-shirts, patches, pins and key chains. In May, he was named "Creator of the Year" for "his activism" and "support and aid of creators."

Founded in the 1970s by former Florida legislator Ben Klassen, The Creativity Movement was plagued by instability after he committed suicide in 1993. That instability ended when Matt Hale (Goff, continued on page 2)



Photo from Billings Gazette

Allen Goff
The Creativity Movement

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Editor: Travis McAdam*

(Goff, from page 1)

took over in 1996 at a meeting in Superior, Montana. Under Hale's leadership, the newly named World Church of the Creator became one of the most active hate groups in the country. He visited Montana many times and unsuccessfully attempted to get his license to practice law in the state. In 2005, Hale was sentenced to 40 years in prison for soliciting the murder of a federal judge. Hale was far from the only Creator ever to engage in violence.

In 1999, Creator Benjamin Smith went on a shooting spree in the Midwest during which he targeted people of color and Jews. Smith killed two people and wounded eight others before committing suicide. Prior to the spree, Smith had been named "Creator of the Year" for his racist activism and had moved to Illinois to work at the group's headquarters with Hale. Hale refused to condemn Smith's actions. Instead, he issued commemorative T-shirts featuring Smith.

The Network had been concerned about Goff since March 2008 when the Beth Aaron Synagogue in Billings was vandalized (see the July 2008 edition of *Network News* for more). Because of the vandalism, the Network began investigating what was going on in Billings.

The Network discovered a small group of teenagers that were followers of The Creativity Movement. Goff was one of the names that kept coming up in discussions. The youth involved had quite a past that included: threatening Hispanic and Jewish students, threatening to assassinate school personnel, distributing white supremacist propaganda, spray painting racist graffiti, and threatening a black student with a gun.

The recent charges against Goff build on The Creativity Movement's violent history. They are also in stark contrast to the disingenuous rhetoric he had used with the press earlier in 2009. In January, the *Billings Gazette* ran a profile of one of the local young Creators. In the article, Kyle Anderson relied on common rhetorical games played by white supremacists. He declared he just loved his own race, and that his group was not about "doing stupid or illegal things." He claimed his group

had nothing to do with white supremacist graffiti around Billings. The article lacked any context about The Creativity Movement and dubbed the local efforts part of the "pro-white movement."

After the article ran, Goff posted on a forum that he was, in fact, Kyle Anderson. He had created the separate identity and used it for his interactions with the press. During the interview, he said he got involved with the white supremacist movement at 13 years old. He joined the Montana Front Working Class Skinheads. In 2000, six members of the group were convicted in federal court of violating the civil rights of racial and religious minorities. The charges stemmed from the skinheads trying to keep Pioneer Park a white's only area.

"I don't mean killing them off with militant style but if the white race gains control again our racial loyalty would make their numbers dwindle, slowly making their 'race' become extinct...things are different with blacks here though, they would rape you and light you on fire while still alive before hearing talk of white pride."

– Allen Goff on a white supremacist website forum

"I saw them [Montana Front] and it appealed to me," Goff said in the article while pretending to be Kyle Anderson.

Goff has been quite active since his initial arrest and bond hearing. He has actively worked with white supremacist in Bozeman and Kalispell.

On a Creativity Movement website, he has claimed credit for numerous racist literature drops in Billings and for designing a new Montana Creators website. Along with Goff in Billings and Keith Sones in Bozeman (see related article on page 3), the Montana Creators Assembly has contact points in Kalispell, Laurel, Missoula and Helena.

Goff's jury trial that was originally set for November was postponed. He has been charged as an adult, and his attorney is trying to get the case moved to juvenile court.

"We've had active Creators in Montana ever since the early 1990s," said the Network's Travis McAdam. "Allen Goff and Keith Sones are organizing the next generation. It's clear that Goff is the ringleader, but we think somebody in his family has ties to the previous generation of The Creativity Movement in Montana and is acting as a mentor."

The Network has been working with community groups in Billings and Bozeman that are organizing in response to the new generation of Creators. Contact us if you would like to get involved. □

DISTRIBUTOR OF SUPREMACIST LITERATURE IN BOZEMAN IDENTIFIED: DESIGNATED “CREATOR OF THE MONTH” BY BILLINGS ACTIVIST

As part of a recent upswing in white supremacist activity across the state, Bozeman residents have continued finding racist literature on their doorsteps and around the community. A local business has also been vandalized.

In late September, the Network publicly identified Bozeman resident Alan Keith Sones as the local contact point for The Creativity Movement, a national hate group. He has admitted on several online forums to being responsible for the racist leafleting. Before the racist flyers appeared around Bozeman, Sones responded to an online message from Allen Goff (see related article on page 1) about Goff’s racist literature drops in Billings.

“Just wait,” wrote Sones, “I’m gonna piss off Bozeman too!!!”

Sones claims to, and is given credit for, “handing out flyers, posting on bulletin boards, etc” in the Bozeman area about what he believes is a problem—“white racial extinction.”

The flyers spread around Bozeman promote the “Stormfront” website, which was the first major white supremacist website to go online. It was established in 1995 by former Ku Klux Klan leader Don Black. One flyer features a photo of a white child and text claiming that minorities are taking away a future for white children. This particular flyer has been seen before in Bozeman. It was used in 2004 by Kevin McGuire, a racist recruiter for another white supremacist organization, the National Alliance.

Sones is coordinating with other white supremacists across the state, recruiting new members, and mentoring a younger woman activist in the Kalispell area. Though Sones is a relatively new member of The Creativity Movement, he has quite a history of white supremacist activity. He admits to being a participant for the last 10 years in Stormfront forums and self identifies as a skinhead for the past 14 years. He sports a tattoo reading “Nazi Skinhead.”

He is 30 years old and a transplant from Texas.



Keith Sones shows off his tattoo that reads “Nazi Skinhead.” This photo is from his profile at a white supremacist social networking website called New Saxon.

Based on conversations the Human Rights Network had with officials in Williamson County, Texas, Sones has an extensive criminal record. He is currently unemployed but has worked in construction in the past. Following Sones’ recent activism, The Creativity Movement’s Allen Goff named Sones as September’s “Creator of the Month.”

His various postings on white supremacist forums detail Sones’ racist and anti-Semitic views. Posting under the screen names “redwood” and “sskeith88,” he also displays an affinity for Adolph Hitler and the Third Reich. The “88” in his one screen name is white supremacist shorthand for “Heil Hitler.” Some examples of his postings follow:

◆ “Blacks are vial disgusting animals! All they contribute to for the most part

is destruction!!!”

◆ “I am white and I am SUPERIOR!!!”

◆ “I know that there will be a race war someday!...There will come a time when whites stand up and it will be a great day indeed!!”

◆ “Hitler was a good man trying to make things better.”

◆ Under a forum thread titled “BEWARE OF STEALTH JEWS,” Sones complained that, on more than one occasion, he had discovered women he was interested in were “half STINKING jew[s].”

◆ “How could anyone like/defend/etc anything about niggers? Mongaloid [sic] retards with weopons [sic]!”

In late September, a reader of the *Belgrade News* contacted the paper and said he found white supremacist literature inside. The newspaper quickly announced that it did not authorize the placement of the literature. It believed the flyers were placed inside the newspapers at a Bozeman distribution point. The *Belgrade News* stated it would seek to prosecute anyone who inserted

(Sones, continued on page 11)

SMALL GROUP OF WHITE SUPREMACISTS RALLY IN KALISPELL

When a young white supremacist in Kalispell announced online that she was going to hold a rally in Kalispell's Depot Park on October 3, the Network quickly alerted law enforcement and the media.

The event was announced on "Stormfront," a website that serves as a clearinghouse of information for the white supremacist movement. The site features many forums.

When asked if the rally was a "WN" [white nationalist, a term members of the movement use to try to downplay racism] event, the local organizer, Kaitlyn Bolliger, wrote, "Its [sic] not so much a rally as it is a protest. We are going to keep the Swazis [swastikas] out of it. This is only our first one of many to come. We are going to start showing people we are here without bringing in the Nazi stuff." Bolliger identified herself as being 20 years old.

"The deliberate attempt to put aside outwardly offensive symbols like swastikas is an effort to appear more mainstream and appealing to everyday people," said the Network's Travis McAdam. "It shows a level of sophistication by Bolliger or, more likely, that she is being mentored by a seasoned activist, possibly somebody like April Gaede. Bolliger and this rally were particularly concerning, because she is a young woman who may attempt to recruit Flathead-area youth on a peer-to-peer level."

April Gaede, a prominent white supremacist activist and mother of the two twins who comprise the white power music group *Prussian Blue*, has lived in Kalispell since 2006 (see the October 2006 and August 2007 editions of *Network News* for more on Gaede).



Kaitlyn Bolliger (right) organized the Kalispell rally. Brian Gray (left) was one of the people who attended. This picture is posted on Stormfront.

She continues to advocate for fellow white supremacists to move to Montana, specifically the Kalispell area, as part of "The Northwest Imperative," which calls for the formation of a white homeland in the Pacific Northwest. Gaede herself says she moved to Kalispell from California to "get away from the mud [non-white] invasion." On Stormfront, Gaede regularly posts new jobs listed on the Montana Department of Labor website. She is on an online "friend" of Bolliger.

The rally consisted of five demonstrators, most of whom refused to give their full names to the *Flathead Beacon* reporter at the scene. Some of them also covered their faces.

The Network had checked with the Kalispell Parks and Recreation Department and no permit had been requested or issued for the rally. That meant that the white supremacists couldn't rally in the park. Instead, they legally held the rally on the public sidewalks surrounding

Depot Park.

At the rally, Bolliger, who would not reveal her real name, told the *Beacon*, "If we say something about us being white we're automatically racist and I don't think that's right." She added, "Blacks have their entire month."

As she had requested, many of the signs exhibited racist underpinnings, but not swastikas or overt racist slurs. Bolliger held one that read "Affirmative Action = Racism." Another had a placard stating, "It's not illegal to be white...yet!" A woman held one warning that "Communism is Globalism."

Brian Gray stood on the sidewalk holding a sign written in Nordic runes. The *Beacon* reported that it roughly translated to, "(expletive) off my favorite brother ... I'm not going anywhere!" Perhaps as a result of the advocacy by people like April Gaede, he said he moved to Kalispell a year ago from Pittsburgh, because the Flathead "is still a decent culture."

(Kalispell, continued on page 10)

EXAMINING THE TEA PARTIES: GETTING UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL IN BELGRADE

This summer, during the August recess of the US Congress, people across the country and in Montana showed up at public meetings and screamed about, among other things, healthcare reform. The angry crowds were mobilized in large part by a coalition of conservative, anti-government organizations called the TEA (Taxed Enough Already) Party Healthcare Freedom Coalition.

What began on April 15, 2009, as a moderately successful protest of the federal government's bailout programs for industries and of individual income tax rates, picked up steam over the summer as it targeted meetings about federal healthcare reform. The mainstream media covered screaming town hall participants interrupting each other and elected officials to express their outrage. Outside these events, protesters carried signs, screamed about socialism, and compared President Barack Obama to Adolph Hitler. Some protesters openly carried firearms at these public events. Were these events a spontaneous uprising against a perceived tyrannical federal government? Or was it a coordinated right-wing effort to block movement of a Democratic president's agenda?

In *Right-Wing Populism in America*, Chip Berlet states that populism generally includes a celebration of "the people" and strong anti-elite sentiment. He goes on to define right-wing populism as "a repressive populist movement motivated or defined centrally by a backlash against liberation movements, social reform, or revolution."

The resurgence in right-wing populism that was on display this summer contained all the typical characteristics. The framework included an "us vs. them" sce-

nario in which wholesome Americans who paid their own way and acted responsibly were forced to bailout "undesirable" types. It also claimed that the Washington DC and liberal elite were going to force good, American people to betray the founding principles of America and allow a socialized takeover of industry and the creation of a welfare state. All of this would happen, protesters said, at the expense of the hard working, over-taxed American.

The undesirables in this scenario were those who got caught in the housing market collapse and those who could not afford healthcare. The undesirables also included poor people and immigrants who were used as scapegoats for the high cost of the current US healthcare system.

Many in the conservative establishment would contend that this right-wing populist revival sprung organically out of dismay and contempt for recent government activity. However, they would be ignoring a great deal of evidence that these efforts were a well-financed, well coordinated, centralized, and top down effort.

This summer, corporate interests saw a valuable opportunity in harnessing the fear and anxiety that Americans felt over recent economic turbulence, and the federal government's attempts to steady the US economy. Right-wing groups including FreedomWorks, American Liberty Alliance, and Americans for Prosperity formed the TEA Party Healthcare Freedom Coalition. According to Think Progress and Media Matters for America, these organizations are funded by big corporate interests such as Koch Industries.

The Coalition quickly became a central source of information on events around what were called "recess
(TEA, continued on page 6)



When a TEA Party protested outside President Barack Obama's town hall meeting in Belgrade, one protester held a sign based on a right-wing conspiracy theory that Obama is not actually a U.S. citizen.

(*TEA*, from page 5) As the debate over national healthcare reform intensified, lawmakers across the country went back to their home districts to hold public events and meetings to discuss the ideas and details that were contained in reform proposals.

Many of these lawmakers, especially Democrats considered to have close re-election bids in 2010, were met by self-proclaimed “TEA Party Patriots” armed with anti-reform and anti-government talking points, in addition to a great deal of anger.

The mainstream media reported on disruptions, intimidation, threats, and violence at town hall meetings, fueled by grassroots, populist outrage over healthcare reform. Violence and the threat of violence during public forums have the potential to quash open, public discourse which is central to the democratic process. People are less likely to participate in public forums if they fear being shouted down, physically threatened, or at worst, assaulted.

Public forums must be safe for everyone to participate. The TEA Party protestors’ activities at the meetings proved to be a major disruption of the democratic discourse on federal healthcare reform.

There were three main components to the effectiveness of anti-re-

form protests. First, corporate-backed, right-wing groups put out coordinated information through

officials made the TEA Party messages credible by adopting and using them.

Montana was not immune to aggressive anti-reform protests. The first effect of the TEA Party activity was the stifling of the democratic process. Senators Max Baucus and Jon Tester both chose not to hold public meetings during their recess break.

When President Obama chose to hold a pro-reform town hall meeting in Belgrade in mid-August, various TEA Party activists began planning a protest of the event. In turn, pro-reform organizations and activists began planning a rally to express their views as well.

Network members, board members and staff were part of this rally, and they observed right-wing populist organizing first hand. While the TEA Partiers who showed up in Belgrade weren’t being paid by corporations, the national influence was easy to see.

At the Belgrade event, TEA Party protesters appeared with handmade signs that were very similar to the signs seen on media reports of other protests throughout the summer.

This was not surprising, because the TEA Party Healthcare Freedom Coalition (as well as other TEA Party groups) give nearly 200 suggestions for sign ideas on their website. The suggestions range from equating healthcare

reform with socialism, communism, and fascism, to quotes from US founders, to simply suggesting in various ways that healthcare reform (*TEA*, continued on page 10)



This Belgrade TEA Party protestor carried a sign equating President Obama to Adolph Hitler. Along with “Heil to the Chief,” a play on “Heil Hitler,” the picture of Obama had a Hitler-style mustache.

front groups that appeared to be grassroots in nature. Second, right-wing media outlets and personalities heavily promoted these corporate efforts. Third, right-wing elected

COUNT IT: COURT ORDERS ACCOUNTING IN *COBELL* AMERICAN INDIAN TRUST CASE

In July, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Interior Department must account for the billions of dollars it has mismanaged as part of the American Indian Trust funds.

A previous District Court ruling had stated that a full accounting of the funds could not be performed due to the cost and departmental constraints. The July decision said, "The statute [the American Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act of 1994] gives the plaintiff class a right to an accounting."

Although the accounting is predicted to take time and may have to include some statistical sampling, the ruling was a small, but important victory.

This was the latest development in a lawsuit filed in 1996 by Blackfeet tribal member Louise Cobell. The class-action suit against the Interior Department is based on the mismanagement of the Individual Indian Money Trust and seeks to make the federal government account for over \$100 billion that belongs to 500,000 Native Americans.

The money, which comes from royalties on Indian land, has been held in the Trust since 1887 (for more background, see the June 2006 and March 2008 editions of *Network News*).

The Blackfeet Reservation Development Fund describes the lawsuit like this:



Louise Cobell

"This case is not a call for damages from the federal government. This is not Reparations. Nor is it about taxpayer money. This case is about the billions of dollars of individual Indian trust funds misappropriated and used by the government for its benefit and misplaced and stolen from American citizens — their money earned on their lands — by the same trustee who is compelled by law to protect those citizens."

Although lead plaintiff Cobell said

she appreciated the court's decision, she also noted that, "For hundreds of thousands of Indians, including children, the elderly, and the infirm who depend upon their trust funds for food, clothing, shelter, and health care, this ruling means that many more years will pass before they can hope to secure trust funds that the government has withheld unconscionably and in breach of trust duties that it has owed for generations."

Cobell also stated the ruling means that the federal government only has to account for the funds that it can easily identify. She believes this convenience is not fair to American Indians.

She has also expressed disappointment with the Obama Administration for not moving to settle the case. During the Obama Administration, Cobell has written that the Interior Department is "doing nothing more than following the old Bush line topped with a new PR claim of sincerity."

She also noted the current administration "quickly devised costly rescue plans" for Wall Street and bankers. She wished Obama would show the same motivation in coming to the aid of "the nation's first citizens."

For the latest on the *Cobell* lawsuit, check out <http://indiantrust.com> □

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUND OF SILENCE: THE END IS NEAR FOR JOHN STOKES, KGEZ RADIO

John Stokes, owner of Kalispell's KGEZ Radio, is not a newcomer to controversy with the law. In his time as owner of the station and host of his right-wing talk show "The Edge," he has faced battles over right-of-way matters with the Montana Department of Transportation; the placement of his radio towers conflicting with the expansion of Kalispell's airport; challenges to his FCC license for threats he and his callers made over the air; and a libel suit brought by a neighboring business for defamation of character.

The Montana Human Rights Network and Stokes are not strangers either. Over the years, Stokes has complained and targeted the Network for making the content of "The Edge" public.

The Network went after Stokes numerous times after he and his callers used "The Edge" to target and harass people in the Flathead Valley. Stokes and his callers have discussed violent acts they would like to carry out against community members, even giving out directions to the targets' homes. Stokes has also burned green swastikas at his station to intimidate local conservationists, whom he calls "Green Nazis."

His radio program has also featured a "who's who" of guests from the local and national anti-government "patriot" movement.

However, it appears that Stokes



John Stokes pictured at one of the green swastika burnings he held at his radio station.

days as a radio personality are all but over. In September, he was served by the Flathead County Sheriff's office with a federal order to surrender his assets after losing his bankruptcy case. In short, Stokes has gone broke. Under the order, Stokes loses control of all of his assets, including KGEZ's headquarters, the station's broadcast license, and all the station's equipment.

During his bankruptcy proceedings, Stokes had lied about his assets and did not report certain items. While Stokes claimed the omissions were mistakes or his attorney's errors, some of the items are so big that is difficult to believe he could have missed them.

For example, he did list his Bigfork home, but he did not list the radio station and its property on Highway 93. He reported owning one \$100 shotgun, while in reality he owned a dozen guns worth a total of \$6,000. In court documents, Stokes failed to list:

- ◆ A projection TV worth \$1,000.
- ◆ 17 collectible guitars worth \$10,000.
- ◆ The 160 acre easement his broadcast towers sit on worth \$6.6 million.
- ◆ His FCC radio license worth \$1.5 million.
- ◆ His broadcast towers that are worth \$650,000.
- ◆ 12 of the 13 vehicles he owned.

In addition, he devalued the assets he did list by \$38,000. Stokes had initially filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection after losing a defamation lawsuit and being slapped with a \$3.8 million judgment (for more on this case, see the December 2008 edition of *Network News*). He filed Chapter 11 to protect his assets while he appealed the ruling.

However, upon discovering that Stokes lied while reporting his assets, the judge in the case changed the filing to Chapter 7 bankruptcy. It was the decision in the Chapter 7 ruling that allowed Stokes' assets to be seized.

(Stokes, continued on page 9)

(Stokes, from page 8)

Stokes has an opportunity to appeal the ruling, but the likelihood that he will find a way out of his financial mess is slim. He is touting that he has Bob Barr, a former congressman and presidential candidate, lined up to represent him during the appeal.

Stokes continues to air his anti-government beliefs on internet radio with an online presence that has listeners from around the country.

He continues to spread right-wing conspiracy theories about everything from the swine flu vaccine, to one-world government, to the supposed threat from the Obama Administration to take away Montanans' guns. His hardcore followers haven't given up. They recently

met to brainstorm ideas of how to raise money to buy the station.

Ever since Stokes bought KGEZ, there were rumors that he didn't pay his taxes. In an August meeting with creditors, he confirmed the rumor. Stokes testified that he has not filed a state income tax return since 1994 and has not filed a federal income tax return since 1985.

Although Stokes has made no claim as to why he has not paid income tax, it is a core belief of the "patriot" movement that the income tax is unconstitutional and thus does not have to be obeyed.

Until the fate of KGEZ Radio is resolved, the Network will continue with its effort to get the FCC to re-
(Stokes, continued on page 11)

(Kulstad, from page 12)

tal, natural rights that are accorded, presumptively and without thought or hesitation, to heterosexuals....

I remain absolutely convinced, nonetheless, that homosexuals are entitled to enjoy precisely the same civil and natural rights as heterosexuals as a matter of constitutional law....

I am convinced that until our courts, as a matter of law, accept homosexuals as equal participants with heterosexuals in our society, each person with the same civil and natural rights, lesbian and gay citizens will continue to suffer homophobic discrimination. Regrettably, this sort of discrimination is both socially acceptable and politically popular...discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is an expression of bigotry....

Every person in Montana is entitled to human dignity, every person in Montana is entitled to individual privacy; and every person in Montana is entitled to seek happiness in all lawful ways. These are fundamental rights guaranteed, by the Montana Constitution, and no person may be denied these elemental, natural rights because of his or her sexual orientation.

That lesbian and gay people still must fight for their fundamental rights is antithetical to the core of values of Article II (of the Montana Constitution) and speaks, in unfortunate clarity, of a prevalent societal cancer grounded in bigotry and hate."

Thankfully, Nelson's articulate opinion on the rights of same-sex couples in Montana was not overshadowed by the discriminatory statements from Maniaci, her lawyers, or dissenting Justice Jim Rice.

Austin Nimocks, Maniaci's ADF attorney, claimed the case was not about Kulstad's sexual orientation. This claim is undermined by the fact that the ADF consistently opposes equal rights for gay people in public policy and the court system. While he claimed the case wasn't about sexual orientation, Nimocks compared the women's long-term relationship to being "roommates" or "acquaintances." In addition, Maniaci claimed that during the adoption process she lied to social workers about her familial relationship with Kulstad. However, the social workers testified to the convincing nature of the family unit presented at the time.

In his dissenting opinion, Justice Jim Rice wrote that, "the Court has not acknowledged the most significant of the most fundamental fact of the case: Maniaci is a parent and Kulstad is not. This distinction involves much more than semantics."

The Network believes all families should be treated equally under the law and in our communities. Whether it is about employment rights or relationship rights, the Network knows that Montanans support fairness. In a 2008 scientific poll of Montana voters (see the July 2008 edition of *Network News*), 84% of Montanans believe that gay couples and their children deserve the same legal protections as other people. To join the efforts of the Network's Equality Project to secure equal rights and protection under the law for Montana's gay and lesbian community, e-mail us at equality@mrhn.org. □

(*TEA*, from page 6)

will kill you. The sign suggestions, like the protests themselves, are not limited to the topic of healthcare reform.

The Belgrade protests also included signs scapegoating immigrants and people on public assistance. Some signs used cartoonish racial stereotypes to portray President Obama, and some depicted President Obama as Adolph Hitler. Bright yellow “Don’t Tread on Me” flags and signs were very popular among the TEA Party protesters, as it is one of the flags used during the American Revolutionary period.

For hours outside President Obama’s town hall meeting in Belgrade, pro-reform and TEA Party protesters jostled for position. The TEA Party protesters brought a giant water truck which they used to try to move pro-reform activists by revving the engine and driving it toward people.

When they were unable to move the pro-reformers, they set up speakers on top of their truck and blasted the Rush Limbaugh Show and music, including “Dixie.”

One Network member participating in the rally was repeatedly targeted by TEA Party protesters because of his race. TEA Party protesters heckled this person, asking what country he was from and how he could read the Constitution if he didn’t speak English. The Network member was born in the Midwest and is an attorney.

It is likely that some reforms of healthcare will pass at the federal level late this year or early next year. What is still uncertain is how much momentum this most recent iteration of right-wing populism will gain, and how effective it will be at blocking social reforms. “Recess rallies” were coordinated efforts, funded by corporate interests, which capitalized on uncertainty among Americans and mobilized anti-government activists in large numbers. The Obama Administration has an ambitious social agenda, and attempts at social reform will likely continue to fuel a right-wing populist backlash.

Meanwhile back in DC

The upsurge in right-wing populism had an impact back in Washington DC. Conservative Democrats and Republicans were watching the “recess rallies.” Senator Max Baucus, who was more interested in bipartisanship than meaningful reform, used the protests as

political cover to move even further right.

Shortly after the August recess, when Senator Baucus was back in his role of chairing the Senate Finance Committee, the TEA Party protests showed in the bill he introduced. Not only was there no version of the “Public Option (a government insurance product),” which is very popular across the country, the bill also contained extremely conservative provisions that directly catered to the screams of TEA Party protesters.

Sen. Baucus removed a provision that helped people on Medicare engage in end of life planning (which TEA Party protestors help label “death panels”). His bill scapegoated immigrants, going as far as barring undocumented immigrants from buying health insurance at full market price through the proposed insurance exchange program. This punitive political measure was eventually removed. The country will have to wait and see what kind of permanent mark the TEA Party protests had on healthcare reform. □

(*Kalispell*, from page 4)

Gray also revealed his anti-gay beliefs to the *Beacon*. “I’m concerned that our society is degrading into a Gomorrah or Sodom type debacle,” he said. “We were a nation of morals and now we’re a nation of immorality.”

The most overtly racist banner was a man holding a flag for The Creativity Movement, a national hate group. Montana has seen an upswing in white supremacist activity recently, including literature drops and graffiti in Bozeman and Billings (see articles on pages 1 and 3). Activities in the two communities are a result of the Montana Creators Assembly, a state chapter of The Creativity Movement. The Montana Creators Assembly has a chapter in Kalispell. The *Beacon* reported that the man holding the flag said his local chapter had less than five formal members.

“It’s clear that white supremacists are organizing in the area and encouraging their allies to move to the area,” said McAdam. “The Flathead Valley needs to make it clear that racism and hate are not community values.” □

(Sones, from page 3)
the materials.

Sones affirmed his knowledge of the illegal activity. On a white supremacist forum, he wrote:

“We made the belgrade paper today to [sic]. One of my guy’s was fliering and upset some folks. LOL [laughing out loud]!! We’re getting the word out here! Hope everyone in Kalispell is doing good! You guy’s need to get some media attention as well!”

The Network passed this posting on to the *Belgrade News* and local law enforcement.

In October, Sones and The Creativity Movement staged a rally at the Gallatin County Courthouse. They had their faces covered and gave fake names to reporters. One member said the group was about “fighting for our race.” They claimed that they would be holding public demonstrations twice a month.

“The people of Bozeman should take this activity seriously,” said the Network’s Travis McAdam when the organization identified Sones. “It may seem like these are just pieces of paper and a small number of activists. However, they have already begun to escalate their activities. It is important that communities be concerned about any upswing in white supremacist activity.”

Local citizens and organizations, including the Gallatin Valley Human Rights Task Force (a Network affiliate), have started planning community responses. As we go to press, the community has already held a rally and a march that drew approximately 2,000 attendees. □

(Stokes, from page 9)

consider its 2007 decision to renew Stokes’ license (for more, see the December 2007 edition of *Network News*).

Once the liquidation of Stokes assets is complete, the people of Montana will recuperate the taxes he owes. However, the negative impact he has had on the community will take longer to fade. □

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MT SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS LESBIAN'S PARENTAL RIGHTS

In early October, the Montana Supreme Court affirmed Michelle Kulstad's right to continue parenting her children as she has done since they were toddlers.

Kulstad, represented by her own lawyer and the ACLU of Montana, has been fighting for the right to parent her children since separating from her longtime partner and

co-parent Barbara Maniaci. The children were legally adopted by Maniaci, because they were told that same-sex partners could not adopt children as a couple in Montana.

In the lawsuit, Maniaci was represented by the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), which was created by prominent leaders of the Religious Right to push their right-wing fundamentalist ideology in the courts. The ADF opposes same-sex marriage, the separation of church and state, reproductive freedom, and sex education in schools. Among its priorities is working "to counter the promotion of the homosexual agenda and express an opposing viewpoint from a Christian perspective," which it does by representing ex-gay and "reformed" gay litigants, such as Maniaci.



Michelle Kulstad (center) is pictured with attorney Susan Ridgeway (left) and ACLU Legal Director Betsy Griffing (right).

Photo by ACLU of Montana

Missoula District Court Judge Ed McLean concluded in 2008 that Kulstad had presented clear and convincing evidence of her parent-child relationship with both of her children. She was awarded joint custody (see the December 2008 edition of *Network News* for more). McLean's decision stated Kulstad was a "loving and stable force in the children's

lives." Maniaci appealed the ruling to the Montana Supreme Court.

In October, the Montana Supreme Court upheld McLean's ruling with a 6-1 decision. Justice Jim Rice was the only dissenting opinion.

In a concurring opinion, Supreme Court Justice James Nelson, stated:

"This case represents yet another instance in which fellow Montanans, who happen to be lesbian or gay, are forced to battle for their fundamental rights to love who they want, to form intimate associations, to form family relationships, and to have and raise children- all elemen-

(Kulstad, continued on page 9)

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