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White Extremist Violence

Experts Say 2011 a Big Year for Attacks

By Nicholas K. Geranios
The Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) - They exist in the margins of the Pacific Northwest.

Some are white supremacists. Some are anti-Semites. Some are anti-government. Many are all of the above.

Sometimes their margins are literal, as they live in small towns near the vast forests that dominate this region. Almost always their margins are social, as many are unemployed, or underemployed, and live alone.

Every now and then, one breaks from the margins and creates a public spectacle.

The latest incident occurred last week as a house in Washougal, Wash., burned to the ground while someone inside shot at firefighters to keep them away. The homeowner has been identified as a self-proclaimed white separatist.

It was one of numerous incidents this year in which extremists of various kinds made news in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana.

The crimes involved a white supremacist couple charged in a three-state killing spree; an attempted bombing at the Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade in Spokane; and a former militia member who opened fire on deputies in Montana and vanished into a forest.

To be sure, the perpetrators are by no means representative of the broader, law-abiding population in the Pacific Northwest. But they are part of a trend that has seen extremist activity on the rise nationally. The region has also been the base for some of the highest-profile ones, including the Aryan Nations and the Militia of Montana.

Travis McAdam of the Montana Human Rights Network said the reasons for the trend include the election of a black president, growing distrust with the federal government, the downturn in the economy and the continued growth of minority groups in the population.

"All of this has created a perfect storm of anger, fear, and resentment that white supremacists are trying to tap into and capitalize upon," McAdam said.

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PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Volunteer Deborah Hilsman helps a little girl select a toy at the Third Annual Christmas Day of Caring at Mount Zion Baptist Church on Saturday Dec. 17. Over 1,000 children, and their families received toys, gently used clothes and refreshments at the holiday event co-sponsored by C.A.M.P and Mount Zion.

Investigation Released on Seattle Police

US Department of Justice finds Bureau used 'excessive force'

By Donna Gordon Blankinship
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Inadequate supervision and training have led Seattle police officers to grab weapons such as batons and flashlights too quickly and to escalate confrontations even when arresting people for minor offenses, the U.S. Justice Department said Friday.

The department launched an investigation last spring follow-

ing the fatal shooting of a homeless Native American woodcarver and other reported uses of force against minority suspects. The probe was aimed at determining whether Seattle police have a "pattern or practice" of violating civil rights or discriminatory policing, and if so, what they should do to improve.

Federal investigators determined Seattle police have engaged in excessive force that violated federal law and the Constitution. They did not find discriminatory policing, but the

report acknowledged that many community members believe the department does show bias.

"Our findings should serve as a foundation to reform the police department and to help restore the community's confidence in fair, just and effective law enforcement. The problems within SPD have been present for many years and will take time to fix," said Thomas E. Perez, assistant attorney general for the civil rights division.

The Department of Justice is currently conducting 20 investigations of police department

across the country and the use of force is a prominent issue in most of them, Perez said.

He was optimistic about Seattle's chances of improving, based on his experience in other cities. He mentioned Los Angeles as an example of a city that had much worse policing problems than Seattle 12 years ago and has since been transformed.

In interviews and a department-wide email, Seattle Police Chief John Diaz disputed the

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Achievement Gap's Surprising Division

Report: African American students score worse than African ones

SEATTLE (AP) — A new look at test scores by Seattle Public Schools shows African-born black students lag behind black immigrants in academic achievement.

African-American students, whose primary language is English, perform significantly worse in math and reading than black students who speak another language at home, The Seattle Times (http://is.gd/0q7lmw) reported in Monday's

newspaper.

The results were presented at a community meeting at Rainier Beach High School. Michael Tolley, an executive director overseeing Southeast Seattle schools, said at the meeting that the data exposed a new achievement gap that is "extremely, extremely alarming."

The school district for years has analyzed test scores by race, but now is doing a more

nuanced breakdown.

District officials have pledged to find out what might be causing this disturbing trend.

But some community members said the administration doesn't appear to be taking the results seriously enough.

"I saw that and I was shocked," Rainier Beach PTSA President Carlina Brown said

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