

Wednesday, May 27, 2009

## Racially charged act prompts public meeting

**OC Human Relations Commission to meet with community tonight at Little Cottonwood Park**

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THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

LOS ALAMITOS – A suspected hate crime targeted at an Apartment Row resident has prompted police and local pro-human rights groups to hold a meeting tonight to promote community policing among residents.

Representatives from the police department, the Orange County Human Relations Commission and the Anti-Defamation League will meet with residents at Little Cottonwood Park to discuss racially-charged crimes and how residents can keep their neighborhoods safe. The meeting comes on the heels of an April incident that initially was dubbed a hate crime, said Jim Armendaris of the Human Relations Commission.



*Teri Barber says she was on her way to work when she discovered that her 2002 Honda Odyssey minivan had been spray-painted with swastikas and racial epithets.*

Home health nurse Teri Barber on April 8 found her white minivan defaced with swastikas, racial slurs and the branding of a once highly-active white supremacy gang, the Northwest Orange County Skins, on the van door. Barber said she was possibly a victim of a hate crime and suggested the vandalism was well planned. "I'm Caucasian, so if they see me driving the car, they're not going to know that my children are black," Barber said.

Los Alamitos police Capt. Bruce McAlpine said after further investigation the crime appeared to be a heinous prank and not necessarily racially-motivated. "We've determined this group was not responsible for the act," McAlpine said. "They have not been active since the mid-'90s." McAlpine said race-related crimes are rare in the city. However, Barber and other neighbors in Apartment Row told a Register reporter that the area has a white supremacy problem. They cited as an example an incident where the N-word was scrawled on the pavement with chalk.

The Orange County Human Relations Commission released a report on Tuesday that determined that out of 79 hate crimes in the county, 23 were targeted at African Americans.

An incident in neighboring Seal Beach in which a half-Salvadoran man was severely beaten by two white men served as an example of the seriousness of hate crimes in the county, officials said. Armendaris added that the Human Relations Commission does not plan to make hate crimes the focus of the Los Alamitos meeting. Instead, the groups will look to facilitate a positive relationship between residents and police, he said.

"Community policing is a relationship that the police department has with the community to solve and resolve issues in the community, such as vandalism or other concerns, and coming up with strategies that the neighborhood might use," Armendaris said.