

GYM STAR
SPORTS CENTER

...where every kid shines!

- Preschool Gymnastics
- Kindergym
- Stellar Dance Studio
- Recreational Gymnastics
- Shooting Stars Preschool
- Team

5519 Hovander Rd.
Ferndale, WA 98248
360.384.3861

www.gymstarsports.com

ALLEY AUTO INC
365 D Street • 360-332-7018
MON-FRI 8AM TO 5:30PM

NAPA AUTOCARE CENTER
We Install Quality NAPA Parts.

We're small, but we have it all!
In stock, same day or next day service!
Your one-stop shop for all your automotive needs!

ASE CERTIFIED

We won't be undersold on all truck, car and motorhome tires!

LeafFilter GUTTER PROTECTION
NO MORE GUTTER CLEANING, OR YOUR MONEY BACK GUARANTEED!

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE 1-888-360-1582

15% OFF YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE*
AND!
10% OFF SENIOR & MILITARY DISCOUNTS
+
5% OFF TO THE FIRST 50 CALLERS!*

Promo Number: 285 Mon-Thurs: 8am-11pm, Fri-Sat: 8am-5pm, Sun: 2pm-8pm EST

*For those who qualify. One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. ** Offer valid at estimate only. CSL# 1035795 DOP# 10783658-5501 License# 7656 License# 50145 License# 41354 License# 99338 License# 128344 License# 218294 License# 603 233 977 License# 2102212986 License# 2106212946 License# 2705132153A License# LEAFNW622J License# WW056912 License# WC29988-H17 Nassau HIC License# H01067000 Registration# 176447 Registration# HIC0649905 Registration# C127229 Registration# C127230 Registration# 366902918 Registration# PC6475 Registration# IR731804 Registration# 13V409953900 Registration# PA069383 Suffolk HIC License# 52229-H

Receive the news that matters to you!

Sign up today for The Northern Light e-newsletter delivered directly to your inbox.

GO TO: TheNorthernLight.com/newsletter

eNL
The Northern Light

CONGRATULATE YOUR 2020 GRAD
with a personal message!

PUBLISHED IN **The Northern Light** NEWSPAPER

Blaine High School Class of 2020 Special Keepsake Pull-Out Section
In the June 11 issue!

SMALL \$49 **MEDIUM* \$69** **LARGE* \$89**

Ad Deadline: JUNE 5

Morty,
We're very proud of you & love you!
- Mom, Dad, Summer, & Grandpa Rick

*Photos only for medium and large size ads.

To schedule your congratulatory ad...
Call Molly at 360/332-1777
sales@pointrobertspress.com

Blaine police chief: it's long past time the two Americas come together

BY DONNELL TANKSLEY
BLAINE CHIEF OF POLICE

America is going through a challenging time. Many in America are responding to the deaths of George Floyd, Aundrea Arbery, Atiana Jefferson, and many others at the hands of the police. They are also responding to systemic racism that has affected people of color for many years. Too many years.

As the chief of police of Blaine, Washington, I stand for truth and righteousness. I condemn any abuse, however slight, of police power and authority. The members of the Blaine Police Department are highly trained and have the utmost respect for life and humanity. Blaine police officers are trained in de-escalation techniques, effective use of force, crisis intervention and the unjustness of bias-based policing. We have been taught how to recognize our own implicit biases, understand how biased policing impacts community members and have developed skills and tactics to reduce the influence of bias.

I also support peaceful speech and expression. Expression that is constructive and not destructive. I do not support looting, arson, thievery, destruction of property, violent attacks or murder. On Monday, one of my former police supervisors was murdered on the streets of St. Louis, Missouri, by a looter.

I am a retired military veteran with 22 years of voluntary, faithful and unwavering service. I have served in the homeland and abroad and have proudly worn the "red, white, and blue" which represents our country.

I have been a law enforcement officer for almost 27 years, pro-



tecting those who cannot protect themselves. I am a guardian who affords others safe havens and safe spaces. I've served in communities and on college campuses so all people may live comfortably, educate comfortably, and be freely able to love one another and have the freedom to peacefully live.

I am also a black man in America. It has not been easy being Black in America. There are several different Americas, depending on the lens through which you are viewing. I will only speak of what I see through my lens. My truth. A lens that has experienced racism, bias, preconceived judgments and assumptions.

People often ask me why I decided to become a police officer. I tell them a story about an incident I had while living in Ferguson, Missouri, in the late 1980s and attending community college there. Incidentally, I lived in the same apartment complex where Michael Brown was shot and killed many years later in 2014.

One Sunday morning, two cars of mostly friends and one relative decided to go horseback riding at a horse farm in an adjacent county. After about 45 minutes of driving, I decided to exit the interstate so we could get a bite to eat. We ate our meal, got back into our cars and entered the ramp onto the interstate to continue our journey. As we entered onto the entrance ramp, we were pulled over by four or five police cars. Both of our cars were pulled over. The officer approached my driver's side window and asked me where we were going. I told him we were going to ride horses. I then asked the officer the reason why he stopped "us"? The officer said he stopped us because I failed to use my electric signal (blinker) when I exited the interstate an hour ago. I was stunned and I knew this encounter was about much more than an alleged signal violation. This encounter was about why two cars with young black males were in this county on a Sunday morning.

Thereafter, the officers summoned us out of the cars, demanded identification from everyone, thoroughly searched us from head to toe and demanded to search the vehicles. I asked if searching my car was legal and he said to me, "Oh, you must be one of those smart niggers." The officer told me if I did not let him search the car then he would arrest me for "Failure to Signal" and the arrest would give him

the opportunity to search the car. In Missouri, traffic offenses are criminal charges and officers can arrest and book someone into jail at their discretion. As a young black man surrounded by four or five white police officers on the side of a road in a majority white county in Missouri, I did not have much choice. Jail was not an option. I agreed to the search. The search was overly extensive, illegal and unjust; seat cushions removed, and parts of the dashboard disassembled with a complete disregard of property. The officers found nothing of interest to them. I recall the female officer asking one of my friends, "Why you niggers didn't go horseback riding in St. Louis?" He told her he wasn't aware of any places to ride horses in St. Louis.

At one point they were extremely excited after a radio transmission, which I now know was from their dispatcher. The dispatcher informed them one of the occupants had an infraction warrant for "Failing to Display a Fishing License" from the Department of Conservation. I vividly remember the excitement from the officer when he loudly said, "We got one." The officers applied the handcuffs and led my relative to a patrol car. Prior to getting into the car, he was able to tell us he had paid the fine and the receipt was on top of his dresser drawer at his home.

After the arrest, the officers seemed satisfied that their work was done. I inquired where I could file a complaint and the officer told me at the station. No address, no directions, no nothing. Of course we did not have cell phones and this was pre-internet. Nevertheless, we traveled back to St. Louis to retrieve the proof of payment for the fine and found the address of the police station in the phone book. Three hours later we arrived at the station, and provided the receipt. My relative was released from custody.

What didn't happen? The police department would not let me file a formal complaint. The person I talked to told me he would have a conversation with the officer. That day I knew I wanted to become a police officer. I believed there had to be a better way to treat the community. I believed and hoped not all police officers were like the ones we encountered. I was right - but I was also wrong.

Fast-forward a few years. After being a police officer at the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department for a few years, I was granted the opportunity to teach our next generation of police officers at the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Academy. I told this story to each academy class. I felt it was important to let new officers know that each and every encounter can have a profound effect on someone's life. Words matter and actions matter. Being just matters. How do you want to be remembered?

(See Tanksley, page 15)

