

From: [Rdskr10](#)
To: [CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Thin Blue Line Flag
Date: Monday, January 25, 2021 11:19:54 PM

Mr. Mayor and Council Members,

I am arriving a bit late in this chaos regarding the gift of a banner & flying of a flag representing The Thin Blue Line at our Police Dept. main station . My goodness!! I am a resident of Santa Rosa, and have been for the last thirty years. I take my residency and citizenship in this community seriously. I am shocked with this story and action.

Certainly, I am not privy to the conversations that occurred leading up to the removal of the banner and the taking down of the flag in front of the Police Dept.; and, sadly, a public apology by Chief Navarro. However, it strikes me as appalling, that the Council would not preface any decision with investigation and facts. It appears that this was an emotional and political response to some in our community (or from outside our community by chance) voicing an incorrect and false displeasure to what they "thought" the "thin blue line" insignia represents.

The "blue line" represents the work all law enforcement do to keep order and peace from those who want to spread crime and chaos on the communities law enforcement serves....and you represent. The blue line are the officers - standing between your citizens and those who have recently been in the news causing chaos, crime, injury and death. There are MANY internet sites, respectable, reliable and historical ones, that easily could have educated you in the process of making your decisions. Here is one, written in 2018: <https://www.thinbluelineusa.com/blogs/thin-blue-line-blog/what-is-the-thin-blue-line>. Chief Navarro is, I'm sure, keenly aware of the meaning of this flag. It has been around for many years, long before the current social unrest and political issues involved in same. It sounds as though you all have cowered to the angry and incorrect voices of the few, who have the wrong definition of what this flag means. Is your vote more important than truth?

The "blue line" officers are those who you, personally, would not hesitate to call if your house was burglarized, your child assaulted or kidnapped, your loved one in an accident, evacuation notices must be made, residents rescued, and on and on. Would you remove the presence of any military honors, flags lowered, or any other sign of respect and appreciation for our military? Aren't law enforcement personnel a form of citizen military-style employees whom we have asked to risk their own life for ours? For yours? Yes. We select them, investigate them, train them, and arm them with specific instructions on how to protect life and property. They deserve the same respect as our military. They offer their lives for us. They are the "blue line".

It goes without saying, that any employee in any assignment or department, that violates rules, breaks the law or harms another without cause should be let go and prosecuted if appropriate. That "rule" applies to us all, even a City Council member.

Correct? Would you endorse classifying the entire group if one member broke the law? I hope not, or we would have no government!

I am asking for a reason, a justification, for this decision between my City Council and the Police Chief as to why this decision was made. And, if no reasonable answer can be given, I ask you all for a PUBLIC apology to all of law enforcement that represent this city, this community - and protect your voting public. The impression you have given to them, and to the citizens who support them, is wrong. It appears you do not respect their lives, their integrity or the work they do with this decision to remove the symbol and honor of their sacrifices.

I would have preferred to also include Chief Navarro in this communication; however, no email is listed for him. Please feel free to share this email with the Chief.

Awaiting your replies. Thank you.

Kathleen Ramazzotti

file: City of Santa Rosa - 1/25/2021

From: [Patriot Honey](#)
To: [CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Councilman Alvarez and "Thin Blue Line Banner Gift"
Date: Monday, January 25, 2021 9:42:32 PM

To Councilman Schwedhelm and the entire Santa Rosa City Council,

I am a lifelong resident of Sonoma County. I spent 18 years as a volunteer fire fighter and 26 years as a full-time paid fire captain specializing in vegetation management. I have dozens of friends serving in both law-enforcement and the fire service as well.

I am deeply concerned with councilman Alvarez and his friend's Facebook conversation about how they consider the Santa Rosa Police department and its members to be "trash". This statement coming on the heels of a knee-jerk reaction order from the Santa Rosa city Council directing the Santa Rosa police chief to remove a "thin blue line flag" banner given to them by gracious and very thoughtful residents of Santa Rosa.

Your actions in ordering the removal of the gifted banner to the Santa Rosa police department is disrespectful, disgusting and supports the false narrative that Law Enforcement officers are racist! A very small handful of people subscribing to the far left view that officers are racist, complained about this amazing gift of support and honor given to the Santa Rosa Police Department and its members in the form of a banner with the "thin blue line" symbol on it from a fellow community member. After you received these handful of negative comments about the thin blue line flag gift your decision was to order its removal and thus essentially siding with their false idea that this represents racism when it clearly does not.

Most of us are Americans that live in the middle of most ideas and do not subscribe to either far right or far left notions. We take an honest look at everything and don't immediately jump to the conclusion that something is bad, racist or otherwise. But in this day in age it seems as though the fringe left gets to dictate what everything means; what is racist; what needs to be torn down; what needs to be removed and on and on.

For a moment let's take a side trip down memory lane. The last time that an African-American was shot by the police department was over a decade ago and under the circumstances was a completely justified shooting. This homicide suspect decided to escalate the situation to a point where SWAT had no choice but to return fire as he was not going to prison for murder and was not going to be caught alive.

In 2017 one of the most historic and at the time most deadliest, destructive wildfires swept through parts of the city of Santa Rosa. Well the community members of Santa Rosa were fast asleep in their beds not only the fire department but specifically the police department ran into the fray with no specific fire safety training nor fire safety gear in an effort to save human lives. They worked 14 to 16 hour days day after day after day for weeks on end making sure that the public and community was safe from the threat of wildfire and the aftermath left in its wake. Some of these local law-enforcement officers lost their homes while they were out protecting the community. They view the community in which they work as part of their family. The Santa Rosa city police officers heroic actions saved hundreds of lives and afterward kept the evacuated areas safe from looters and thieves. Some of these officers to this day are suffering silently with the post traumatic stress that came with dealing with this calamity and did so with little to no accolades from the city of Santa Rosa Council. But the tail of their heroic and day-to-day actions doesn't stop there.

Since the Tubbs Fire of 2017 they have had to answer the call to action against fast moving deadly blazes again. Most recently was the glass fire that yet again swept into town and threaten the lives of all of those in its path. Only this time the glass Wildfire took a game at Santa Rosa's most vulnerable community, the community of Oakmont. Once again the Santa Rosa police officers answered the call in the middle of the night and ran head on into danger in order to save lives. Now some of you might say "well that's their job and they get paid to do it". I say to that "yes you're right it is their job and they do get paid but they don't often get shown the gratitude or recognition deserved for such heroic acts of courage while executing their duties".

Our humble law enforcement officers experience some of the most awful and terrifying human conditions anyone

could ever imagine. Unless you were in the business you would have no idea about what these officers have to see and deal with on their own each and every day they serve.

Our law enforcement officers have to respond to murders, burglaries, dead bodies, car wrecks, medical calls, calls in which victims bodies have been torn apart or squashed into unrecognizable pieces, rape, child molestation, spousal abuse and even a simple welfare check that turns into finding an elderly person who has been dead in their house for days. When officers, EMS and firefighters contend with those type of scenes there is a mental scar burns into their minds. The often putrid and vile smell of a decomposing body that permeates into our first responder and lawn Forssman's uniforms. These calls for service are never heard about in the newspaper. Councilmembers never have to see or smell or deal with the mental anguish associated with properly dealing with these incidents.

Our police officers, on a daily basis, are consistently having to walk into a completely foreign and unknown situation in which the very breath from their chest may be removed by someone in a split second. Yet day after day our heroic and courageous police officers don that uniform and badge while suppressing the horrific memories of atrocities and mind scarring incidents that they have had to respond to and do so with the "thinnest" number of officers on the force compared with the population they serve. Nobody is there to help them, certainly not the likes of a group of political cowards safe in their homes, but rather each other and their families.

The United States flag is a symbol comprised of stars representing the states and the stripes representing the original colonies. It represents freedom, liberty, democracy and so much more. Some malcontent who has an axe to grind on a political issue can claim all sorts of things about the symbology of our United States flag and while some of those incidents may have happened, that is not what the United States flag represents and you all know that as well otherwise the City of Santa Rosa would order the removal of all US flags across the city.

As I've explained to you above the thin blue line is a symbol for law-enforcement officers all across this great nation. It's symbolizes the very nature of how small the ratio is of law enforcement officers to the number of citizens under its protection. It is a blue line for it symbolizes the cold and often unappreciated, lonely work that is done in the name of public safety consequently leaving our officers to deal with the mental aftermath all alone except for their coworkers and family. It is a symbol that each officer as well as his or her family understands the gravity of their mission and job.

When my spouse goes to work at the Police Department, I watch her walk out that door as she says "I love you babe" and I burn that memory in my mind as I know that may be the last time I see her or feel her love. It is part of the job. It is sometimes a fatal job. The "thin blue line" represents the family. It is comprised of officers and their loved ones who all live this job together and lean on each other for guidance, support and counsel.

The thin blue line does not represent racism. It's edicts do not advocate the beating, mistreatment or shooting of anyone and certainly not persons of color. We are not Nazi's. We are not racists! We are not PIGS. We are not Bastards! I say we because it represents Law Enforcement and their families; that it takes a family structure of support to survive the daily job and the scars the service of that job burns on their souls!

Our Law Enforcement Officers have been wrongly accused of racism and brutality. They have been called the worst imaginable things possible. Their headquarters spray painted with nasty names, the threat of violence and Old Glory ripped down and trampled while they had to sit back and take it. I suppose that's their job.

Council Members, it is not your job to bestow credibility on an accusation of racism because of an ignorant political activist saying something is racist! By its very nature, an ignorant comment or opinion has no standing in fact. The far left activists have no understanding of who our Law Enforcement Officers are nor what the meaning of the thin blue line actually is. Ordering the removal of the symbol of family and duty, contained in that thin blue line, is a political, thoughtless, disrespectful and cowardice act of spineless ignorance!

Our new President of the United States speaks and preaches the ideals of unity, tolerance and understanding yet you so promptly and willfully trampled all three of those ideals by ordering the removal of that precious and most gracious blue line banner thank you gift proudly given by some of our grateful community members.

If the "Thin Blue Line" flag symbolizing family and duty cannot be tolerated in the City of Santa Rosa then I suggest you order the removal of any and all flags throughout the City as they may be considered hurtful or scary by

any ignorant snowflake who comes across them.

Respectfully,
Husband of a Law Enforcement Officer and Supporter of AFM (All Flags Matter)

“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”

To Members of the Santa Rosa City Council:

First, I ask that you do not disregard my voice simply because I am a retired police officer, as I am also a long-time member of this community. I proudly served Santa Rosa Police for twenty-five years, and prior to that worked at other police agencies. I can say out of the agencies I worked for, SRPD is the most professional and dedicated. All of the employees of the police department are not just employees, they are community members who live here, work here, volunteer here and raise children here. They are a diverse group of human beings who impact their community in many ways in addition to sacrificing to be essential workers who hold that “blue line” between the public and those who would cause harm to them. I believe that most of THEIR community supports them and empathizes with the difficulties of their job.

Community members gifted a banner of support for their police, and city officials ordered Chief Navarro to remove it. ***The community members who gave that banner have a voice that deserves to be heard.*** They represent the majority of Santa Rosa residents who acknowledge that police work is a difficult job. These community members saw the courageous acts of our police officers during the Tubbs fires, where officers saved lives despite shock, fear, and loss of their own homes. These community members cried with our police employees at the death of Detective Mary Lou Armer and left flowers at the police department in support. Yet, those employees, her dear friends and co-workers, kept showing up to work. Despite being painted with the same brush as the few flawed officers nationwide, officers showed up to face protesters, vandals, and those who threatened to do them harm in order to protect the residents of this city.

The knee-jerk reaction to this banner and social media post is not what I expect from my elected officials or the City Manager. Just as police officers are expected to look at all sides of an issue and make a careful and informed decisions (even under split second, life-or-death circumstances) those charged with running our city should take a more global approach and consider all stakeholders.

Some fringe groups have hijacked other symbols, such as the American flag. Should we take that down as well? Gang members have used the word “Santa Rosa” in their title, or “707” area code. Do we simply acquiesce and stop using those terms? I believe those in authority (members of council and city manager) are dismissing the majority of Santa Rosa residents and voters who support their police and believe the thin blue line is a symbol of those willing to stand between danger and the public.

I also feel compelled to address the social media remarks made by council member Alvarez. His lack of professionalism and cavalier public criticism of SRPD is contrary to the values of this city. Police employees DO NOT have the option of expressing themselves in this rude and ignorant manner as they would face discipline. I hope the rest of the council understands how detrimental it is to the relationship between the community, the police, and the council to behave in this disrespectful manner.

The hiring standards of SRPD have always been stringent and I believe the personnel ultimately hired are some of the best you can find. The morale of your police department is suffering due to the fires, pandemic, loss of an officer, public perception and the behavior of this city council.

This will be a huge issue in recruitment and retention of the remarkable quality of officers you have. I suggest instead of wasting time micromanaging the Chief and publicly insulting the agency, the Council should show some support and collaboration with your police department to enhance public safety and improve the relationship with the community.

Lisa Banayat

lbanayat@msn.com



Santa Rosa, CA 95405

From: [Reese Marie](#)
To: [CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Monday, January 25, 2021 6:04:13 PM

Dear Santa Rosa City Council Members,

I worked at Santa Rosa Police Department for over 11 years, and I am proud of the service that I provided to every part of my community. I am equally proud of the people I worked alongside. I watched them run toward danger when everyone else ran away from it. They ran into burning buildings to save residents even as their own homes burned. They were spit on, insulted, threatened, and hit by flying objects directed at them during multiple days of riots. I have seen them weep at the horrors the darkest parts of society cause and wrap their arms around victims experiencing the very worst days of their lives. You know what they never do? They never give up. They show up, every damn day, determined to stand along that thin blue line between the evils of the world and the community they took an oath to protect. And how does their employer thank them? By removing a flag that honors them and the sacrifices they make, all because a few people are offended now that a bunch of right-wing extremists chose to hijack it for their own disturbing and racist cause. Just because they took it, does not mean it's theirs. You caved when faced with the slightest pressure and slapped every officer right in the face. Including the amazing Detective Marylou Armer who made the ultimate sacrifice. Instead of trying to make amends, the City Council decided to double down on the level of disrespect thanks to the choice words of Council Member Eddie Alvarez. When a community member wrote "SRPD is trash" Mr. Alvarez responded with "I won't deny, ...". Just to reiterate, Mr. Alvarez publicly said that he feels SRPD is trash. Is this the level of professionalism that is acceptable in local government now? Because I could guarantee if an officer wrote that in criticism of the Council, they would be fired.

I have no interest in receiving a response from anyone, so please save yourselves the trouble. I have already read a response someone received from Mr. Alvarez on this matter and he took no responsibility, instead opting to go on the defense and play the victim. This letter is to just make you aware that as a 25-year citizen of Santa Rosa I have the utmost respect and confidence in the good men and women of Santa Rosa Police Department. What I now have zero respect for and confidence in, however, is City management and the City Council. Do Better.

Sincerely,

Cherice Silva