

Rally ...from Page 1A



Blairsville Police Officers and Union County Sheriff's Deputies teamed up to provide security for the July 11 "All Lives Matter" rally. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

event started with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer.

Dr. Dan Eichenbaum, a regional radio personality known for his show "Dr. Dan's Freedom Forum," addressed those gathered about liberal values and natural rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, and about various threats to American freedom, the first and foremost identified as socialism.

Socialism, according to Dr. Dan, emphasizes groupthink and collectivism to the point where "you lose your individual freedom."

"You're a member of a group, and you are required to do what's good for the group regardless of what's good for you," he said.

When this happens, he argued, some groups begin jockeying for position to get "special stuff at the expense of other groups," effectively creating "provider" and "recipient" classes, which he said ultimately leads to division and advocacy for fewer rights for the "provider class."

"Isn't that what's happening now?" Dr. Dan asked, before going on to detail what he perceived as modern-day encroachments on the rights of free speech and gun ownership, particularly for conservatives in America.

Dr. Dan then touched on the May 25 killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer that resulted in waves of peaceful BLM protests as well as violent riots across the country, tying his speaking points together by criticizing the "groupthink and group division" of Black Lives Matter.

"When one bad cop abuses any black man, all cops become bad and only black lives matter, and we know that just is not the case," he said. "Because if you believe in God, you know that all lives matter to God, even the unborn. And how many of those have we murdered over the last 40 years? An unacceptable number."

"So, the entire concept of Black Lives Matter and groupthink and group division is contrary to every principle on which our nation is founded: equal rights and equal justice under the law; equal opportunity, not equal outcomes; and the freedom of the individual to decide his own future."

Citing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s ideal that people be judged based on character and not skin color, Dr. Dan said it was apparent that "the mob does not listen to Dr. King."

"The mob doesn't listen to reason or logic," he said. "The mob has one agenda: to

overthrow our constitutionally elected president and the government and replace it with a collectivist socialist nightmare in which only the globalist elite will profit.

"With the help of God, that is a tyranny that we must resist with all our strength and with all His strength. Tyranny is the end of individual freedom and the death of the human spirit. Resist tyranny."

The other scheduled speaker that day was a former longtime police officer named Jim, who preferred that his full name not appear in print. He offered a few examples from his career in law enforcement in another state, showcasing the various challenges officers come up against in their line of work.

His testimony culminated in an emotional story about a young boy in terrible living conditions whose life he had a profound impact on decades ago because he showed he cared, with the tale ultimately demonstrating how their difference in skin color never came between them, even when others thought it should.

"There's officers across this entire United States that do the same thing that I did every day," Jim said. "We all had the opportunity to come together when Mr. Floyd lost his life

... every single police officer that I've talked to ... said that was an atrocity, it should have never happened, and we all hope to God that that officer is prosecuted to the fullest extent.

"But it's not a systemic problem in this country. I said I wasn't going to make it political, but by golly, it's not. The systemic problem are the politicians that run those cities, those towns and those states that refuse to do anything to help their people."

Rob Mawyer of Blairsville was one of several attendees to speak after the event went open mic, and he used the opportunity to pump up support for law enforcement and first responders for the very difficult jobs they do to preserve life and property in communities around the country.

"I want to steal a chant from the other side: 'No Justice, No Peace!'" Mawyer said. "That's right; if there's no justice in our streets, if mobs can take over those streets and throw rocks and water bottles at policemen, there should be no peace for our politicians."

"We have to demand from our federal, state and local politicians that they back the police, they back the first responders, and they take back our streets before we have to."

Many demonstrators carried pro-police signs and waved flags at the rally, including the American flag, Thin Blue Line flag and hybrid flags.

Aaron and Brandi Taylor of Blue Ridge brought two flags to the rally, one incorporating the American, Confederate and Gadsden flags into a single banner meant to promote "freedom of speech," and another recognizing all first responders, including 911 dispatchers, EMS workers and more.

"For the most part, our law enforcement and first responders put their lives on the line for us to keep law-abiding citizens safe, so I think it's only fair that we're out here taking care of the good ones," Aaron said, adding that he supported all non-violent community efforts, including peaceful BLM protests.

Watching over the rally were officers with the Blairsville Police Department

and Union County Sheriff's Office, many of whom took time out of their weekends with family to work security for the event, which remained peaceful throughout. Also, there was no visible counterprotest near the courthouse.

The organizer of the event, Jamie, encouraged people that evening to socially distance and wear masks if they had them due to COVID-19, but she said facial coverings were optional, because "it's also the right of each person to make that choice."

All told, Jamie said she was pleased with the peaceful, positive nature of the All Lives Matter rally. In the future, she wants to focus less on rallies and more on directly coordinating events with local police and first responders, such as support dinners, and she's hoping to start a website for her group.

She said she was thankful for the many people who helped her organize the rally, and to Cherokee Guns in Murphy, North Carolina, for donating the speaker and microphone used in the event.

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