

JEWISH COMMUNITY
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MINNESOTA & THE DAKOTAS

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March 18, 2014
16 Adar II 5774

Mario Pierzchalski
Gasthof Zur Gemütlichkeit
2300 University Avenue NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418

Dear Mr. Pierzchalski:

The *City Pages* is reporting – and other outlets are commenting – about a dinner held around Christmas-time at the Gasthof Zur Gemütlichkeit which, I understand, is your restaurant.

The picture shows people dressed in what appears to be World War II era German military uniforms sitting beneath or near a German battle flag of World War II and a Nazi party banner. The *City Pages* story said some of the people were dressed in SS uniforms although it is difficult to tell from the resolution of the photograph. Mr. Boorum is quoted in the story as saying this was a party of German "Re-enactors." Your restaurant, according to the story, had hosted this "party" for six years.

Glorification and/or celebration of Nazi Germany and its military would appear to be incongruous with the nature of a family restaurant and its surrounding neighborhood. As you may be aware, thousands (3,793) of Minnesota soldiers and airmen were killed in the Second World War. A significant percentage of these men were killed in action fighting the Germans in the European Theatre of Operations. (This includes my cousin Gerald "Sonny" Cohen killed in action in France.) Many of these men would have attended and/or graduated from the northeast Minneapolis high schools of De LaSalle, Henry and Roosevelt. Honoring their memory, at the least, would mean not playing host to such a party celebrating the German military of the Second World War.

There is also the association of the Germany of 1933-1945 and its military with the Holocaust and all those targeted for extermination including the Jews, the Roma people, homosexuals and the disabled. To be more precise, the first Nuremberg war crimes trial found the German military and its high command was "responsible in large measure for the miseries and suffering that have fallen on millions of men, women and children" in the words of Judge Sir Geoffrey Lawrence.

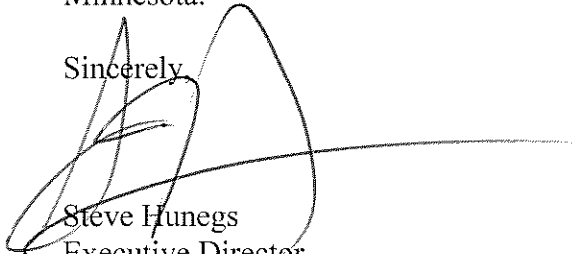
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I appreciate the fact that you and the restaurant have no sympathy for Nazi Germany and its criminality and never intended to disparage Minnesota's World War II veterans and Holocaust survivors. Indeed, I would gladly meet with you to discuss this matter further and find a way forward.

Having been to your restaurant, I know that it celebrates German food, spirits and culture. I would hope that your restaurant would sever any connection to those who believe it is appropriate to dress up like German World War II soldiers and have a party and instead: honor Minnesota's veterans; and continue to honor the country which Germany has become over the decades since 1945 and the great traditions of German Americans in Minnesota.

Sincerely



Steve Hunegs
Executive Director