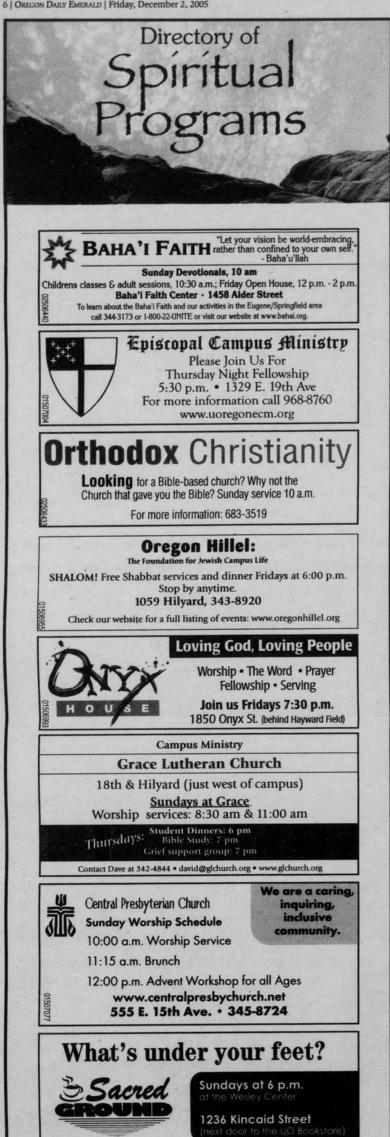
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IN BRIEF

Mother of Ashley Pond settles murder suit

OREGON CITY - The mother of murdered Oregon City girl Ashley Pond has agreed to settle a lawsuit against the state Department of Human Services for \$10,000.

Pond and her classmate, 13-yearold Miranda Gaddis, were killed by Ward Weaver in 2002. Their mothers and a 19-year-old rape victim had sought as much as \$1.5 million in a series of lawsuits.

The plaintiffs claimed state childwelfare workers could have prevented the crimes, and Weaver should have been incarcerated before the murders and rape.

The Department of Human Services had received several complaints in 2001 accusing Weaver of sexually abusing Ashley.

In an October letter to Lori Pond, the only plaintiff to receive a settlement, the Department of Human Service's assistant director, Ramona Foley, wrote, "Government agencies must find lessons in tragedy and apply those lessons to help save lives in the future."

Foley mentioned changes since Ashley's and Miranda's deaths, including increased staff training and better communication between her department and local law enforcement about

suspected child abuse.

Pond's attorney, Linda Beloof, and the teenage rape victim's attorney, Leonard Berman, told The Oregonian they had no comment.

Michelle Duffey, the mother of Miranda Gaddis, who went missing two months after Pond vanished, has redirected her focus to pursuing Weaver, a defendant in one of her lawsuits, her attorney said.

"We decided to stick with Weaver, who is the one who is most liable," Michael T. Wise said

Weaver pleaded guilty to the murders, the rape and other crimes and was sentenced in September 2004 to spend the rest of his life in prison.

- The Associated Press

DeFazio: Aid cut to reduce national deficit

Continued from page 1

McCown said the budget cuts, known as the budget reconciliation bill, would exacerbate his situation.

"This reconciliation bill creates a working-poor class," he said.

DeFazio also heard from Cassandra Day, campus outreach director for the ASUO.

Day told of how she works three jobs outside of the ASUO, but even with the extra income she is still borrowing money to pay for school.

This is scary how much more debt they're expecting me to accumulate just to get a bachelor's degree," she said.

DeFazio said he appreciated hearing the personal stories of students. He will attend a similar forum at Oregon State University this week.

"It's depressing, but it will arm me with some good anecdotes, some good facts and a new determination to fight these cuts," he said.

The budget cuts were passed as an attempt to decrease the federal budget deficit. Reducing the size of the budget became a greater political priority after the large costs of Hurricane Katrina became known, DeFazio said.

The sooner this gets to the president's desk, the sooner taxpayers can know that the size of government has begun to be put under control," said Grover Norquist, president of the conservative group Americans for Tax Reform, in a news release following the passage of the House bill.

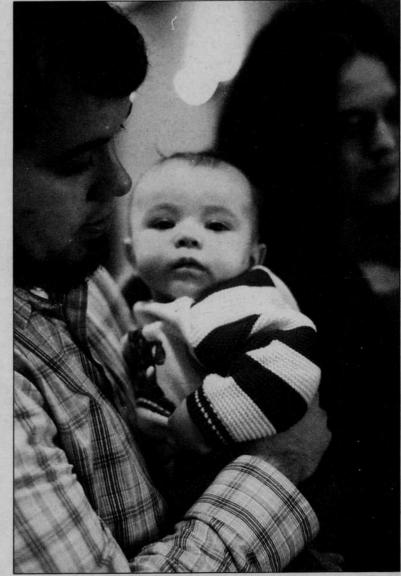
DeFazio said he would prefer to reduce the budget deficit through a combination of raising taxes and cutting certain large spending programs, such as expanded space travel and research for a Star Wars-style defense system.

DeFazio noted that next week the House of Representatives will vote on a \$70 billion dollar tax cut proposal.

We are in serious financial trouble," he said. "I don't want to minimize that, but you can't keep cutting your income.

DeFazio encouraged students to continue to lobby Oregon's congressional delegation to prevent the cuts to financial aid from becoming law.

DeFazio said in an interview with the Emerald that he hopes to see Democrats make college affordability key element of the party's



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTO EDITOR

Tony McCown, chief justice of the ASUO Constitution Court, brought his family to meet U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio and emphasized his need for a reliable student loan system.

platform heading into the 2006 midterm elections.

"I think that we can afford to live in an America where people can get an education according to their ability to get admitted and learn, not their ability to earn and pay," he said. "I would love to set that as a goal and move in that direction."

DeFazio has not yet announced whether he intends to seek re-election in 2006 but added that he usually makes an announcement

around mid-February.

He said that he does not plan on challenging incumbent Gov. Ted Kulongoski for the Democratic nomination for Governor in 2006.

"I've had a lot of people badger me about running for governor, but I've said clearly I don't intend to run against the incumbent governor," DeFazio said. "If he's running, I'm not.'

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