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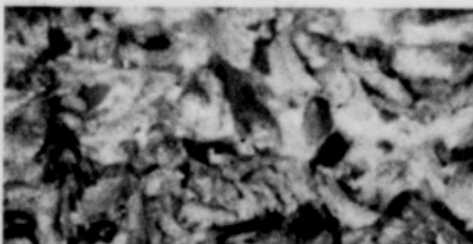
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What's on your list today?

LOCAL NEWS

Crimes via Social Media

Connections examined after flash mob incident

BY MINDY COOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

In an effort to curb the rising rate of violence and crime amongst Portland youth, local law enforcement officers encourage parents throughout the community to talk to their kids about their use of social media, including the popular MySpace, twitter and Facebook.

Earlier this month, young individuals banded together in a flash mob, which walked into a convenience mart in southeast Portland and walked out without paying for their candy and sodas.

According to the clerk, 16 people walked through his doors and stole between \$200 and \$300 dollars of shoplifted products.

Law enforcement officials say "flash mobs," are not happening at an astronomical rate within Portland, but the organizing of such incidents can be easily done via the internet and networking sites.

"Gang members definitely use social media to communicate with each other in good and bad ways," said Don Livingston, sergeant for Portland's Gang Enforcement Task Force.

Portland Police Bureau Sgt. Pete Simpson said although media technologies such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace are not driving forces for violence, there are a number of aspects of social media in many violent cases in the city.

There are online beefs that have escalated into violence, he said. "There needs to be certain monitoring by parents. There should be no grey area about it."

Livingston, who has seen a rise in youth gang involvement in the past few years, agreed.

"I recommend parents intervene at an early age and monitor their social media because they are going to use it no matter what," he said.

Livingston suggested parents to talk with their children early about the power of social technology and networking sites.

According to Simpson, the Police Bureau has seen incidents in the past organized by social media that have been both illegal and legal. "Social media is how a lot of people send out invitations or get people to do something," he said.

But monitoring is the responsibility of the responsibility of the parents first and foremost, said Simpson. "Mainly because law enforcement neither has the responsibility nor legal authority to monitor people's social media sources 24/7."

He added there are no restrictions if the information is all public,

shootings and a few stabbings."

Although Livingston attributes much of the rise in violence to the release of several gang members from the 1990s after they completed their sentences, he said he has also seen a rise in the use of social media between gang members, who often use technology as a means to both organization and communication.



but to watch an individual's private media is not right.

While many young people use social media, including Facebook and YouTube like "normal kids," Livingston said he has seen many gang-involved young people use the media tools in a negative way.

At the same time, gang violence amongst youth, especially in the past few years has soared. The number of shootings went from 68 in 2009 to 113 in 2011, Livingston said. "All of those were gang-involved

Although neither Livingston nor Simpson could provide examples from current and ongoing investigations, they both remember the case of 13-year-old Julio Marquez, who was the youngest victim of gang involved violence in Portland in the past decade.

The week before his death, Marquez, under a different name, made posts to his Facebook page about his affiliation with the Surenos

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