



THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



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League Lobbies Salem

Urban League annual event brings citizens to the state Capital

African Americans from around the state will gather at the Capitol in Salem for a Legislative Action Day April 19.

Co-sponsored by The Urban League of Portland, Our Voices United, and the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs, who together are transporting more than one hundred participants — including high school students, community members, organizations and seniors — to discuss with legislators the Urban League’s legislative priorities and concerns of the African American community.

The overall focus of the event, organizers says, is to promote access for African Americans to family wage jobs, greater educational achievement, health and wellness, stable homes and income, and culturally proficient services.

As the Oregon Legislature decides how to bridge a \$3.5 billion budget gap, participants expect to advocate for retaining programs and services that benefit the most vulnerable populations in the State.

“African Americans make significant contributions to Oregon’s economy, culture and prosperity,” Marcus C. Mundy, Urban League president and CEO said. “Yet, we face extraordinary challenges and inequities in employment, health care, education, economic opportunity, housing and in the criminal justice and child welfare systems.

“The Oregon State Legislature is making policy and budget decisions that impact our lives, families and communities and its time our voices were heard.”

The official Urban League of Portland agenda includes:

—Racial Equity in Health: ensuring that health care providers are culturally competent, and that the new Oregon Health Insurance Exchange has a strong commitment to language access, staff diversity, and culturally competent health care.

—Racial Justice in Criminal Justice and Child Welfare: reducing the over-represen-

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STILL MISSING



PHOTO BY JULIE KEEFE

Mourners held balloons and sported memorial t-shirts with photographs of Yashawnee Vaughn at the candlelight vigil moment of silence/prayer April 2, before the balloons were set free in her memory.

The Exploiters of Missing Children

Psychics, lawyers, and more take advantage of families in crisis

By Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

A child goes missing and suddenly the grieving family is approached by an array of do-gooders offering to help: psychics, lawyers, search dog teams and would-be spokespeople.

In the case of local teen Yashawnee Vaughn, this past week family members found themselves with not one but two spokespeople, plus a motorcycle club, a K9 unit and a rapidly

growing crew of Facebook supporters, all offering to help in the search.

Who can they trust?

“Anybody who inserts themselves into a situation like this can be a rogue element,” says Marc Klaas, whose daughter Polly was abducted and murdered in 1993.

Klaas has spent recent years trying to bring the issue of missing child exploiters to the attention of law enforcement, but he says there are few ways to do it. “When we were looking for

my daughter the only ones we had to deal with were the psychics, the ambulance-chasing attorneys, and the tabloid journalists — they were the ones who would try to turn the situation to their own ends,” he says. “Now you have a whole industry that’s grown up and goes on social media networks and sets up bogus missing child pages.

“It’s overblown.”

Online Communities Can Help, Hurt

If you plug Michelle Bart’s name into a computer search engine, it’s as if there are two women with the same name. Numerous positive references to her work with the women’s advocacy group Soroptimist International pop up. But so do countless vicious blogs flaming her stint as a spokesperson for the grandparents of a Florida girl named Caylee Anthony.

Anthony was 2 years old when she disappeared in 2008, and as Bart became the family

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New Report Shows Banks Fail Customers

Consumer organization provides tips to shop for a better bank

Fewer than half of Portland-area bank branches fully disclosed their fees to prospective customers, while one in four provided no fee information at all — despite the fact that such disclosures are required by law, according to a survey of more than 350 bank branches released this week by the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group.

The report, Big Banks, Bigger Fees: A

National Survey of Bank Fees (<http://www.ospirgstudents.org/report/big-banks-bigger-fees>), includes consumer tips and a local comparison shopping guide.

“Shopping for banks is harder when they don’t obey the law and provide upfront information about the fees they charge,” said Jon Bartholomew, OSPIRG’s consumer advocate.

OSPIRG also made a series of recommen-

dations to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which takes over most consumer law writing and enforcement on July 21.

The group called on the CFPB to enforce the Truth In Savings Act, and to require banks to post fees on the web in searchable formats and make fee disclosures in a clear,

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