

# THE SKANNER™

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## FREEDOM RIDERS



Freedom Riders sit next to a burned-out bus in an unknown location. An incredible amount of violence was directed at Black and White activists who risked their lives to protest racial segregation in the South.

### Remembering the Freedom Riders

Civil rights activists welcomed back to the South this week

By Bobby Harrison  
Of The Northeast  
Mississippi Daily Journal

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Flonzie Brown-Wright was an 18-year-old from Mississippi living in Los Angeles when the Freedom Riders reached Jackson in May 1961.

After seeing reports that summer on the arrests of the Freedom Riders, she called her mother to ask what was happening in her home state.

“I didn’t have a clue what was going on,” she recalled

last week. “My mother and daddy protected me.”

In hindsight, Brown-Wright said, she never wondered why, as she walked to school each day, busloads of white students passed her. That was just the way it was.

Brown-Wright returned to Mississippi in 1963 and soon became involved in the civil rights movement. She admits, however, that she wasn’t a willing participant until then-NAACP state director Medgar Evers was shot dead in front of his wife and children as he

returned to his Jackson home one night.

Today, Wright sits outside her office at the historic Ayer Hall on the Jackson State campus where she is working as the office manager to help coordinate the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides. She works her cell phone like a teenager, texting in between answering questions.

About 100 Freedom Riders will be on hand for this week’s events.

In a speech to the Mississippi Economic Council

earlier this year, Henry “Hank” Thomas of Stone Mountain, Ga., national chairman of the Freedom Riders, said, “After 50 years, American has evolved. The South has changed. Mississippi has changed.”

Thomas said the anniversary observance would be a “religious, racial, reconciliation time.”

Planned events include the placing of Freedom Trail Markers by the state in key

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## State Budget Bleeds

Washington leaders push through budget deal, cutting teachers

By Mike Baker  
Of The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — A tentative agreement to fill Washington state’s \$5 billion budget shortfall includes cuts in nearly every corner of government, slashing pay for teachers and forcing other K-12 workers and state employees to take deeper hits.

Budget negotiators said there simply wasn’t the money available in the \$32 billion spending plan to sustain current salaries, and lawmakers talked openly about the need to make equitable cuts. In total, they will reduce spending by \$4.6 billion over the coming two years.

“There were sacrifices made in every single part of services provided by state government,” said Sen. Ed Murray, D-Seattle.

The budget includes a 1.9 percent cut for teacher pay and a 3 percent cut for other K-12 employees. Teacher pay was not reduced as much because they already had their salaries cut when lawmakers decreased paid teacher-training days. The changes will save the state \$179 million over the next two years.

Rep. Ross Hunter, D-Medina, said local contracts determine teacher salaries, so the legislative decision may not result in across-the-board cuts in pay, especially in districts with more financial flexibility because of their ability to raise money through local property taxes.

Lawmakers also were moving to suspend voter-approved cost-of-living adjustments for education employees, saving another \$300 million.

Mary Lindquist, president of the Washington Education Association, said she was disappointed by the spending plan and argued that the state needs to identify a new source of revenue to sustain schools. She warned that the budget likely will lead to growth in already-large class sizes.

“Let’s not kid ourselves, this budget hurts kids,” she said.

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## Asthma Rates Increase for All Groups

Activists are struggling to motivate urban communities on clean air

Lisa Loving  
Of The Skanner News

For asthma sufferers nothing is like the panic of an attack – you can’t breathe, you can’t control your body. If the attack is really bad, you can die.

The Centers for Disease Control reported this month that asthma rates are up for every demographic category they track – but it’s

rising fastest among African American children, 17 percent of whom live with asthma.

For activists around the country working to bring attention to the issue, the current state of environmental research and regulation are standing in the way.

“People know what’s wrong with them – everybody has a nebulizer, everybody has asthma, they’re preaching for cancer survivors in their church or in their mosques,”

said the Rev. Lennox Yearwood this week. “They know they have a problem, but they aren’t connecting that sometimes with corporations who are not being regulated the way they should be.”

Yearwood, founder of the Hip-Hop Caucus and the subject of a new documentary film on the Discovery Network, was in

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