

THE SKANNER™

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



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JINGLE BELLS!

Rainier Beach Children's Choir sang Dec. 3 for Columbia City's first Annual Holiday Lighting Celebration at Rainier Avenue South and South Hudson Street. The festivities included performances by the Beaconettes and the Columbia City Community Choir. Hot chocolate, coffee and treats were provided courtesy of a number of local Columbia City businesses including Geraldine's Counter, the Columbia City Bakery, Tutta Bella, and Wink Eyewear. The lighting festival concluded with Xmas lights being turned on along Columbia City's entire business district on Rainier Avenue South.



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Pot Back On the Table?

Gregoire launches new push for medical marijuana

By Rachel La Corte
The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire and Rhode Island Gov. Lincoln Chafee have filed a petition with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration asking the agency to reclassify marijuana so doctors can prescribe it and pharmacists can fill the prescription.

The governors said Wednesday they want the federal government to list marijuana as a Schedule 2 drug, allowing it to be used for medical treatment. Marijuana is currently classified a Schedule 1 drug, meaning it's not accepted for medical treatment and can't be prescribed, administered or dispensed.

Washington and Rhode Island are two of 16 states, and the District of Columbia, that have laws allowing the medical use of marijuana.

"Each of these jurisdictions is struggling with managing safe access to medical cannabis for patients with serious medical conditions," the 99-page petition and report reads. "Our work with the federal agencies has not resolved the matter."

Gregoire said that the conflict between state and federal laws means legitimate patients lack a regulated and safe system to obtain marijuana.

"It is time to show compassion and time to show common sense," she said in a conference call with reporters Wednesday.

Washington voters approved a medical marijuana law in 1998 that gives doctors the right to recommend - but not prescribe - marijuana for people suffering from cancer and other conditions that cause "intractable pain."

Earlier this year, Gregoire vetoed most of a bill that made major reforms to the state's medical marijuana law, saying state workers could be prosecuted under federal law the way the measure was written.

The legislation was passed to set clearer regulations on medical marijuana use and to

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Activists: States Need Crackdown

Human trafficking busts hindered by patchwork of state laws

By Greg Bluestein
The Associated Press

A new report says 41 states have failed to adopt strong penalties against human trafficking, and advocates say a patchwork of differing state laws makes it difficult for authorities to target the crime.

In Connecticut, for instance, the strict penalties for sex traffickers are among the toughest in the nation. Neighboring Massachusetts, meanwhile, had

no statute specifically targeting sex trafficking until one was signed into law days ago.

The report released Thursday by the advocacy group Shared Hope International said more than a dozen states have passed new crackdowns, but four states - Maine, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming - have yet to impose any specific restrictions on the crime.

"Each state's laws show omissions in protective provisions for child victims and (they) lack strong laws to prosecute the

men who rent the bodies of other men's children," said Linda Smith, the group's founder and president.

Washington Attorney General Robert McKenna, president of the National Association of Attorneys General, said policymakers have to play catch-up to establish consistent policies to rein in the crime.

"Having a strong, fairly uniform set of laws across the country is very important, because traffickers are mobile, their victims are mobile and we

don't want traffickers to be moving their victims even more trying to evade stronger state laws, by moving to states with weaker laws," he said.

As many as 15,000 victims of human trafficking are brought into the U.S. each year, according to advocacy groups.

Victims are sometimes smuggled in from outside the U.S., but many started out as young runaways or simply needed money. Human traffickers target men, women and children for

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'Occupy' Moves to Foreclosed Homes

Seattle, Portland protesters arrested helping homeowners stay put

By Manuel Valdes
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — The Occupy Wall Street protests are moving into the neighborhood. Finding it increasingly difficult to camp in public spaces, Occupy protesters across the country are reclaiming foreclosed homes and boarded-up properties, signaling a tactical shift for the movement against

wealth inequality.

Groups in more than 25 cities held protests Tuesday on behalf of homeowners facing evictions.

In Atlanta, protesters held a boisterous rally at a county courthouse and used whistles and sirens to disrupt an auction of seized houses. In New York, they marched through a residential neighborhood in Brooklyn carrying signs that read

"Foreclose on banks, not people." Southern California protesters rallied around a family of six that reclaimed the home they lost six months ago in foreclosure.

"It's pretty clear that the fight is against the banks, and the Occupy movement is about occupying spaces. So occupying a space that should belong to homeowners but

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