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March Against Guns

A dismal turnout mars Portland's 'Million Mom' anti-gun event

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

Sen. Ginny Burdick and Mayor Charlie Hales spoke to about 100 people Saturday, at a rally outside Portland City Hall to call for gun control measures. Organized by Portland supporters of the grassroots group, One Million Moms 4 Gun Control, the rally called for universal background checks on gun buyers, action to ban guns in Oregon schools, and bans on military-style assault weapons and high capacity magazines.

Sen. Ginny Burdick, who is sponsoring several bills in the Oregon Legislature, urged everyone who supports gun control measures to contact their state and national elected officials and press them to add their support. Even legislators who support gun control are reluctant to speak out, she said. "Democrats are "trying to hide from the issue."

Burdick drew applause when she said the NRA had given her an F- grade. Nonetheless she said, she won reelection with 70 percent of the vote.

Jenn Lynch, local organizer for "One Million Moms For Gun Control spoke first followed by Mayor Charlie Hales; local business owner and NRA member, Rick George; and Sen. Burdick.

"We are not gun grabbers," Lynch said. "We support your Second Amendment right to own a handgun to protect your business or your home; a rifle to hunt with.... All we are asking for are common sense regulations on the sale of military-grade assault weapons; common -sense bans on the manufacture and sale of high-capacity magazines...Like 85 percent of NRA members we support background checks on sale of a weapon..."

Mayor Charlie Hales said the measures are "common sense" and are supported by "thousands of people across the city." He said he has been out with the Portland Police Department when shots have been fired, hitting vehicles and buildings. That's

See GUNS on page 3

AMERICAN WINTER



PHOTO COURTESY AMERICAN WINTER

Filed in Portland through the course of last winter, a documentary about poverty, "American Winter" follows the lives of several local families getting help from 211Info, the social services referral nonprofit. One of the families is that of TJ and his wife Tara, who are slowly watching their bills swallow all their resources until the point that they face losing their home; above, TJ prays with his son. The film shows at the 36th Portland International Film Festival at the NW Film Center's Whitsell Auditorium in the Portland Art Museum, on Sunday, Feb. 17 at 3 p.m. and at Cinemagic, 2021 SE Hawthorne Blvd., on Monday, Feb. 18 at 7:30 p.m. The film airs on HBO on March 18. For more information go to www.americanwinterfilm.com.

2013 Urban League Action Day

Advocates head to Salem for lobbying by everyday people

Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

The Oregon Legislature is beginning its 2013 session with hundreds of proposals for new laws, or tweaks to old ones. Of course, many of the proposed bills will never gather enough support to come to a vote, but others are coming to the table with support already lined up.

High on the agenda are a host of healthcare bills that will finalize the state's version of

Obamacare. Gov. Kitzhaber is pushing for reforms to the prison system. And corporate lobbyists, advocacy groups and nonprofits all will be pushing for their own legislative priorities.

African Americans, and other advocates from minority communities are planning a day of action to make sure all of our voices are heard.

"A lot of what we do is to educate and inform legislators about how issues affect our communities," says Midge Pur-

cell, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy for The Urban League of Portland.

The league has been working with groups such as, the Portland African American Leadership Forum, the Center for Intercultural Organizing and the Coalition of Communities of Color to draw up a list of priorities.

Advocates from those groups will be heading to Salem next Tuesday, Feb. 19, for Our Voices United Legislative Action Day. Buses will leave Portland

around 7:30 a.m. taking advocates to meet legislators, discuss issues, and watch a session in progress. The group will meet in the Oregon State Capitol Building, Hearing Room 50, 900 Court St. NE, Salem, at 9 -9:30 a.m., and will head back to Portland at 3 p.m. Students from several high school Black Student Unions have signed up. Anyone interested in attending can contact the Urban League to reserve a seat.

"It will be an incredibly pow-

See ACTION on page 3

Police Activities League Center Closes

Group pulls plug on East Portland, keeps Beaverton facility open

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

The Portland Police Activities League announced that its Eastside youth center and its office at the Northeast police precinct will close Feb. 15.

Based at Northeast 172nd at Glisan Street, the youth center served some of the poorest children and teens living in the Rockwood

neighborhoods of East Portland and Gresham. The youth center served breakfast and lunch to 80-100 youth each day.

Longstanding financial troubles left the youth center with little money to effect crucial repairs. Last year, the league, whose board includes prominent law enforcement leaders, had to turn down financial help to repair its roof, because matching funds were not immediately available. The leaks were

repaired, but a press release from the league says financial difficulties remained.

The league recently parted ways with the center's popular director, Jay Williams, who had been an outspoken internal critic of the center's management. Williams now works for Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center.

See PAL on page 3

INDEX

News2,3,6

Opinion4

A & E5

Bids/Classifieds7