

THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



For The Skanner
news alerts
Text "NEWS" to
503-715-0890 or
scan this QR code



MAY DAY



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Kids from Amistad School in Seattle came out on May 1, to show their support for immigrants' rights at the annual May Day March and Rally. Their signs say, 'Quiero mas justo,' (I want more fairness) and 'We nide (need) more love.' The event drew thousands of participants.

Restoring Home Values

Report shows impact of foreclosure crisis in Seattle metro area

SEATTLE, WA – With over 16,500 Seattle homes foreclosed on and over 42,000 homeowners underwater, Reset Seattle is calling on City Council to stop at nothing short of principal reduction to provide real relief to struggling families.

The campaign, a coalition of more than 30 faith, community and labor groups, is trying to achieve significant principal reduction for these families in crisis. Communities of color have been hit disproportionately hard by the housing crisis, losing 15 years in homeownership gains for minority families.

"What we are seeing here is a deterioration of generations of hard work for African American families," said Reverend Lawrence Willis, the head of TrueVine Missionary Baptist Church and the President of the United Black Clergy. "Our elders are losing their legacies, and our young adults are losing hope that they will ever make it."

At a kick-off event on Thursday, Reset Seattle released a new report, "The Wall Street Wrecking Ball," which details the impact of the foreclosure crisis on Seattle. The findings are grim. Between 2008 and 2012, there has been \$4.4 billion in lost home value and a \$142 million cost to the City of Seattle. \$91,999 is the average amount by which Seattle homeowners are underwater.

In addition, the report details the positive impact that resetting mortgages to fair market value would have on Seattle. The results are staggering. It would save underwater homeowners in Seattle an average of \$9,253 annually. This would pump \$392 million into our local economy every year, creating 5,800 new jobs.

Reset Seattle leaders said that anything short of principal reduction will not provide real relief to struggling families or stop the crisis.

"I received a loan modification two years ago," said Vera Johnson, a Seattle Resident and owner of the Village Green Perennial

Gregoire's Retirement Benefits

Outdated pension rules mean fat checks for former governor

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Former Gov. Chris Gregoire is benefiting from old state pension rules that ended in 1977.

Gregoire receives a pension of \$159,608, the most of any retiree from state government, The Olympian reported in Sunday's newspaper. She benefits from an old rule that gave elected officials a special deal on retirement. She was eligible because she began working in state government a long time ago.

Gregoire served two terms as

governor and three terms as attorney general, plus another 20 years working in state government before being elected.

"I'm one who frankly believes that everybody should be treated the same. So I was surprised," Gregoire said of learning about the special benefits around the time she became governor in 2005.

Lawmakers closed the special plan for long-time retirees in 1977, but lawmakers felt it would have been legally questionable to change benefits for

employees already in the plan, like Gregoire.

"To me it's never been about (a) pension. If it was, I probably wouldn't have run, out of concern that I would have lost," she said. "To me, it's always been about service and not about money."

Once most of her fellow members of the old pension plan known as Plan 1 of the Public Employees' Retirement System work 30 years, further longevity no longer boosts their benefits. That cap doesn't apply to time

in elected office, so Gregoire's 40 years of public service are all counted toward her benefit.

Another difference: most members of the group receive a payout of 2 percent of their final pay for every year they worked. The formula for elected officials uses 3 percent of pay for every year they are in political office.

"It's one of the reasons why they closed the plan back in '77," said Dave Nelsen, legal and legislative services manager at the Department of Retirement

See PENSION on page 3

See FORECLOSURE on page 3

INDEX

News2,3,6

Calendar2

Opinion4

Bids/Classifieds7

Spokane Air Force Crew Killed in Crash

The three fallen soldiers are remembered for their dedication

By Nicholas K. Geranios
The Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Capt. Victoria A. Pinckney was a mother and college rugby player.

Capt. Mark T. Voss was a graduate of the Air Force Academy and was known for his smile.

Tech. Sgt. Herman Mackey III was

humorous and the father of a young daughter.

All three died when their KC-135 tanker refueling plane crashed in the mountains of Kyrgyzstan on Friday.

All three were members of the 93rd Air Refueling Squadron stationed at Fairchild Air Force Base near Spokane and were operating out of a U.S. air base in Kyrgyzstan that supports military operations in

Afghanistan.

A public memorial service is being planned near the eastern Washington state base for all three.

"These brave airmen leave behind an incredible legacy and remind all of us that freedom is never free," said U.S. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., whose district

See SOLDIERS on page 3