

MARCHES, SPEECHES, REPORT HONOR MLK

A slew of events in Lane County will honor Martin Luther King Jr., the week of Jan. 18, including several marches, a talk by a leading black journalist and the release of a report on the Oregon Legislature and racial equity.

On Jan. 18, the MLK holiday, the Lane County chapter of the NAACP will host a march to honor the life of the civil rights leader beginning 9 am outside the north gate of Autzen Stadium, according to the chapter's president, Eric Richardson.

"We hope to have a unified message of peace honoring Dr. King's vision," Richardson says.

The march will begin with speeches by student representatives from the UO's Black Student Union, UO Provost and Senior Vice President Scott Coltrane and Mayor Kitty Piercy. At 10 am, attendees will begin marching towards The Shedd Institute where they'll hear from city officials as well as clergy from different faiths.

Richardson says, "As descendants of slaves in the U.S., who went through that and still love this country, that's the struggle — to honor all the people who lived through that and the idea they lived through it but still held on to the love of those ideals, liberty and freedom."

There will be a second march held in Springfield, beginning at 1 pm at the Springfield Police Station, 230 Fourth Street, and ending at Springfield High School.

Richardson says organizers have partnered with EmX to provide day passes so people can attend both marches. Most of the passes have been delivered to local schools, but he says some can be found at the Human Rights Center located at the Atrium Building, 99 W. 10th Ave.

White House correspondent and author April Ryan will visit Eugene for a dinner event to honor King's life at 7 pm Tuesday, Jan. 19, at the UO's Columbia Hall, Room 150. The event is free and open to the public.

City Councilor Greg Evans says of Ryan: "We picked her because she is one of the leading black journalists in this country."

Evans, who also works at LCC, which co-sponsors the event, adds, "She just published a book that's been nominated for an NAACP Image Award about her covering three presidents, literally from the basement of the White House press corps."

Ryan has covered the White House since 1997 for the American Urban Radio Networks. Her news blog *The Fabric of America* offers a "unique urban and minority perspective in news."

Evans says MLK Day is incredibly important because not much has changed when it comes to race in America.

"The issues have not changed," Evans says. "We had the same issues when he died in 1968, when I was 7 years old. It's the same stuff we grapple with now."

Also calling attention to the issues facing people of color, a report was released Jan. 14 by the Racial Equity Report working group highlighting 20 pieces of legislation in Oregon that have significant impacts on the state's communities of color. Seventeen of them were passed into law, and the three that didn't pass were recommended to be prioritized in 2017: the health gap for children under 18, comprehensive women's health and affordable housing.

The report outlines each piece of legislation and its impact on communities of color from paid sick leave to the new Motor Voter law, and it details Oregon's "long, well-documented history of racism that is reflected in public policy."

The working group is a coalition of racial and social justice organizations ranging from the Asian American Network of Oregon to the Urban League of Portland.

The full report can be found on FacingRaceOregon.org. — *Mohammed Alkhadher*

SLANT

- **Two remarkable women** from our philosophically diverse community will be remembered Saturday, Jan. 16, both starting at 2 pm. Peg Morton will be honored at the First United Methodist Church and Robin Jaqua at the Jaqua Concert Hall at The Shedd. Better go early; both auditoriums are likely to be full. Morton fiercely devoted her life to peace and justice on many levels (see our cover story Jan. 7). When she reached 85 and was hospitalized, she chose to end her life through fasting, rather than adversely affect the lives of her family and friends with her failing body, as she saw it. Jaqua used her wealth to help children and the arts, and for decades she was the matriarch of Jungian therapy in this community, providing a Jungian library downtown, bringing national speakers to Eugene, inspiring and mentoring young therapists. She fought to live for her last breath, dying at 94.

- Oregon and the **Eugene-Springfield area** are big in the national news these days, disproportionate to our population. Here's a quick look: The ugly takeover of the Malheur Bird Refuge still fills front pages and there are many Eugene connections, including the Federal Court. The business section of the Jan. 10 *New York Times* featured quite a story about hospitalists at PeaceHealth in Springfield unionizing along with the nurses; *The Wall Street Journal* Jan. 5 ran this headline, "A High-Rise Plan Kills High for Ken Kesey Fans." We hear a book contract has been signed telling the story of Nike and the UO. Springfield singer-songwriter Matthew Edeward even made it into the *American Idol* auditions.



- The **Eugene Celebration** died a few years ago for a number of reasons. The city and then Downtown Events Management Inc. lost interest in overseeing and funding it during the recession (stuffy conservatives in town have never liked the quirky event and its outrageous parade). Kesey Enterprises took it over on contract but apparently found it to be daunting and not very profitable to run. Construction and development downtown complicated the event's footprint.

Krysta Albert and friends started up the **Festival of Eugene** as a free, two-day alternative, but after a hectic two years, Albert tells us she is "uncertain if I wish to host the event again." She says 10,000 people attended the festival last year but "this year no one seems to be coming forward to help make this weekend event happen." She asks, "Does the community want it?" The problem, we suspect, is that the people of Eugene want their grand Eugene Celebration back, even if they have to pay to get in. But the city doesn't want to pick up the costs not covered by ticket sales, even though our economy is better and downtown is reviving. Losing the celebration, and even the smaller festival, detracts from our sense of community. Albert can be contacted at 505-4031 or festivalofeugene@gmail.com.

- **Avid birders in the West** (and beyond) are increasingly irked and vocal about the invasion of their beloved Malheur Wildlife Refuge by armed Neanderthals who only relate to nature by shooting at it. One upside of the idiotic occupation by bullet-brains is increased attention on the refuge and its value for migration routes and resident species. Coincidentally, the January program of the Lane County Audubon Society will be a talk and slideshow on the refuge by its director; Tim Blount will speak at 7:30 pm Tuesday, Jan. 26, at the Eugene Garden Club, 1645 High Street. Expect a bigger crowd than usual.

SLANT INCLUDES SHORT OPINION PIECES, OBSERVATIONS AND RUMOR-CHASING NOTES
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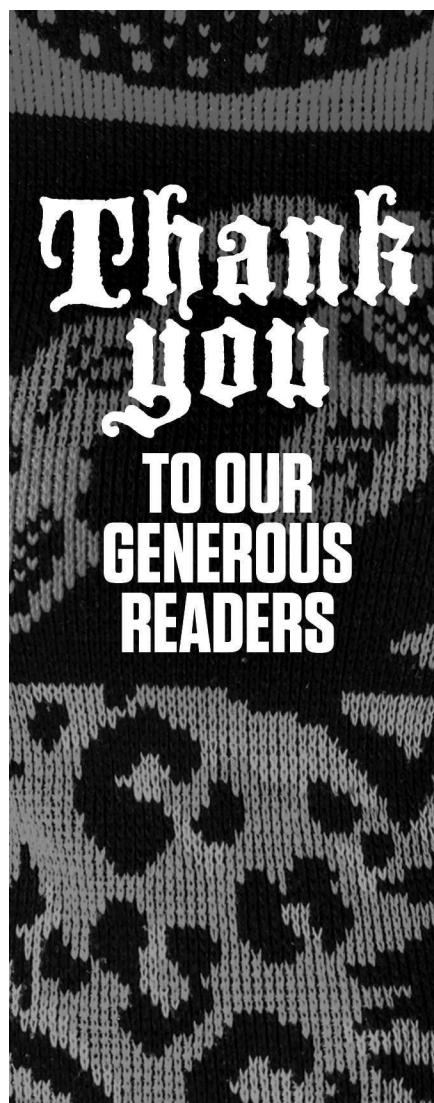
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