

# Making her own MLK Day in Manzanita



LaNicia Williams

## Tillamook County resident celebrates civil rights icon

By **BRENNA VISSER**  
*The Daily Astorian*

MANZANITA — When LaNicia Williams moved to Tillamook County a few years ago, it was the first place she had lived without any sort of celebration for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

“I just didn’t know what to do with myself. I was used to being a part of something,” she said.

Williams decided to change that last year by starting the Oregon Coast Love Coalition, an activist group that focuses on equity education and creating inclusive events

of all religions, races, nationalities and sexuality. Last year, she prepared a community breakfast with a focus on racial issues. This year, the coalition expanded celebrating the holiday with three days of events, including a movie with community dialogue, presentations about civil rights leaders at the Hoffman Center for the Arts in Manzanita and a day of service. More than 40 volunteers were registered to help build six different homes around Tillamook County for Habitat for Humanity.

“Traditionally, Martin Luther King Jr. Day is celebrated as a day of service,” Williams said. “We live in an individualistic society. We forget that people have needs around us.”

It’s important to Williams to plan these events, she said, because in a time where there is an “upheaval of political and social climate,” peo-

ple need to find what bonds them together.

“It seems like (the community) doesn’t have a lot of diversity, but it does. And it is growing,” Williams said. “I think it’s time to stop focusing on what separates us and to start focusing on what bonds us, which to me is love.”

Part of what inspired Williams to bring people together comes from the struggles of feeling different herself after moving to the coast. As a black woman in a county that is 84 percent white, Williams noted difficult conversations with her neighbors about race. Her devout faith also separated her from her peers, she said.

“Back in California, I grew up in church. When I moved here, I almost lost spirituality, because I never had lived around a population

where most don’t have a belief in God the same way I did,” Williams said. “I had to learn to be respectful of different viewpoints, holding my truths but not casting down my opinion upon others. I matured to a place of listening.”

It’s a lesson she hopes her coalition can continue to teach by incorporating new inclusion mentorship programs through the Tillamook and Neah-Kah-Nie school districts, as well as continuing to bring different people to the table to talk about equity issues past just one day of the year in January.

“You don’t have to agree on everything to live with each other, to live in a world of inclusion,” she said. “To move forward, how do we get different thinkers in the same room and find that we have more commonalities than we think?”



Erick Bengel/The Daily Astorian

Lewis & Clark Fire and Rescue personnel begin dousing a blaze in a second-story apartment complex on Riekkola Road in Astoria.

## Fire damages apartments in Lewis and Clark

### Chief Golightly will investigate

By **ERICK BENDEL**  
*The Daily Astorian*

Local fire personnel responded to a blaze in a pair of apartments on Riekkola Road in Astoria early Sunday

afternoon. No injuries were reported.

The fire damaged the only apartments on the second floor of a two-story building. The occupants and building owner weren’t home when the fire started. One apartment sustained far more damage, but neither dwelling is habitable, according to Lewis & Clark Fire

and Rescue Chief Jeff Golightly.

The lower level — which includes a space used by Affordable Towing & Repair to store vehicles — was mostly unaffected except for water that came in as crew members worked to put out the fire.

Lewis & Clark was joined by Astoria, Warrenton, Gearhart and Knappa-Svensen fire

departments, and Medix. The call went out shortly after 1:30 p.m., and the fire was extinguished around 2 p.m.

“It was starting to run pretty hard there,” said Golightly, adding that he was “getting really nervous” they wouldn’t be able to save the structure.

Golightly will head the investigation into the cause.

## Justices to hear Washington state appeal of salmon habitat order

By **GENE JOHNSON**  
*Associated Press*

SEATTLE — The U.S. Supreme Court said Friday it will review a court order that could force Washington state to pay billions of dollars to restore salmon habitat by removing barriers that block fish migration — a development the state attorney general is using to try to persuade Northwest tribes to settle the case.

The justices said they’ll hear the state’s appeal of the ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. That court affirmed a lower court order requiring the state to fix or replace hundreds of culverts, large pipes that allow streams to pass beneath roads but can block migrating salmon if they become clogged or if they’re too steep to navigate.

The ruling stems from a 2001 lawsuit filed by 21 Native American tribes and the Justice Department. Because the pipes block salmon from reaching their spawning grounds, thus reducing the number of salmon, they deprive the tribes of fishing rights guaranteed by treaty, the lawsuit said.



Washington state has been working to replace the culverts with structures that allow fish to pass, but at the rate it was fixing them when the case was filed in 2001, it would have taken more than a century to finish the work, the tribes said.

State Attorney General Bob Ferguson acknowledged in a statement Friday that Washington needs to do more to restore salmon runs, and said it shouldn’t take a court order to get the Legislature to act. But he said the 9th Circuit’s ruling went too far, and he hoped the prospect of a potential reversal by the Supreme Court would prompt the tribes to settle.

“Now that the Supreme Court has accepted review of the case, I hope that all 21 tribal governments will agree on a proposal that recognizes the state’s serious concerns with the Ninth Circuit ruling and allows us to continue our conversations,” Ferguson said.

The state argues that its treaties with the tribes created no obligation to restore salmon habitat. The ruling would force it to perform work that wouldn’t benefit salmon, and would also make the state’s taxpayers responsible for fixing problems “largely created by the federal government when it specified the design for the state’s old highway culverts,” Ferguson said.

In a statement, Lorraine Loomis, chairwoman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, said the tribes are confident the justices will affirm the ruling.

“Instead of continuing to appeal the culvert case, tribes believe the state should use the momentum it has gained over the past four years to finish the job of fixing fish-blocking culverts, and focus on our shared goal of salmon recovery,” Loomis said.

In 2013, U.S. District Judge

Ricardo Martinez ordered Washington state to fix or replace more than 1,000 culverts blocking access to 1,600 miles of salmon habitat. He gave the state 17 years to reopen about 450 of the worst ones.

The Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Parks, and Natural Resources have stayed on schedule in fixing the culverts on their land, Loomis said. The Department of Transportation would come close to meeting the court’s deadline if it keeps up its recent pace, but might need more money to do so, she said.

The DOT says that by the end of next year, it will have spent close to \$200 million responding to the injunction. The agency estimates the cost of full compliance at \$2.4 billion.

By the end of this year, fewer than 400 culverts will be left to repair, Loomis said.

“Opening up habitat is one of the most important and cost-effective actions we can take toward salmon recovery,” she said. “We are losing the battle for salmon recovery because we are losing salmon habitat faster than it can be restored.”



U.S. Coast Guard

A man is hoisted to safety after being stranded at Hug Point in Cannon Beach.

## Coast Guard rescues man left stranded at Hug Point by tide

*The Daily Astorian*

CANNON BEACH — A man stranded at Hug Point was hoisted to safety after a Coast Guard rescue Sunday.

According to Coast Guard officials, a call shortly before noon brought the crew to Cannon Beach after the stranded tourist called 911

with his cellphone.

An MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Sector Columbia River arrived at the scene at about 12:30 p.m. and hoisted the man to safety before landing on a nearby beach. The man was subsequently treated by emergency medical personnel from Cannon Beach.

## Cutter Steadfast back in Astoria after 50-day tour

*The Daily Astorian*

The Coast Guard cutter Steadfast is back in Astoria after a 50-day, 11,000-mile tour along the Mexican and Central American coasts.

The crew returned Dec. 24 after stopping five separate vessels suspected of smuggling drugs. Roughly 12,000 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated \$180 million were recovered on the trip.

“Knowing we stopped tons of drugs from reaching America’s shores and the streets of our allied nations in Central and South America made this deployment over the holidays even more

rewarding,” said Alain Balmaceda, the cutter’s commanding officer.

The cutter was also involved in a search and rescue case involving three fishermen stranded 300 miles off the Mexican coast due to engine failure. They rescued the men, who spent 15 days adrift.

Crew members also trained with the Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team and Navy air crews off the Southern California coast. The training included drills in which Coast Guard members lowered themselves onto the cutters from ropes attached to Navy helicopters.

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**Deadline** to enter is **Thursday, January 25th at 5pm**  
Entries will be printed in **The Daily Astorian** on January 31st.

**\*Human babies only please!\***

