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## Joyce Washington All Stars

*A salute to all the  
teams and players*

See pages 8 and 9

**Peace in Art**  
*Looking at the  
world from inside  
and outside custody*  
See Metro, page 11



# The Portland Observer 45

'City of Roses'



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## Struggling to Hold its Place



PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Ross Danielson has formed a petition to get relief from the city over code violations and fines that threaten the future of the historically African-American St. Joseph Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter of Eastern Stars, one of the last vestiges of the black community on North Mississippi Avenue. He is joined by his friend and neighbor of the lodge, Fito Roberts.

## African American lodge in crosshairs of city regulators

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A small corner of Mississippi is struggling to hold on its place in the neighborhood. The historically African-American Lodge of Freemasons, a center for the St. Joseph Grand Lodge and Mt. Olive Grand Chapter of Eastern

Stars, has served the community at the corner of North Mississippi and Fremont since the late 1960s.

But today the lodge is under increasing pressure for its survival as one of the last vestiges of black culture on a street that epitomizes the rampant gentrification that has occurred in north and northeast Portland.

A complaint over the use of food carts on the lodge's property has led to several building and property code violations that city inspectors say must be remedied or the lodge will face heavy fines.

The lodge rented out a section of its parking lot to two small food carts to address its economic shortcomings a few years ago. The carts, Ella's Kitchen and King Burrito, pay rent to the lodge that helps the lodge keep the lights on

and maintain the aging the building.

However, an anonymous complaint in 2011 led to a determination that the carts are overly structured, take up sidewalk space, or are otherwise out of compliance. The carts, and the lodge, have struggled to stay up to code ever since. The Lodge Grand Master John Bryant estimates that bringing the building up to code could cost the group up to \$20,000.

Other expensive requirements the city has placed on the lodge have drained the organization of much of its tiny budget, according to local activist Ross Danielson, who has been an ally to the group for several years and is mar-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5