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SOUL CHRISTMAS



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Children visited Santa at Northwest African American Museum Dec. 10 as part of the museum's Soul Christmas event, held during the first two weekends in December.

Work Begins on Alberta Commons Lot

Plan Moving Forward for retail center for minority-owned businesses

By *Melanie Sevckenko*
Of The Skanner News

In early 2014, it seemed as though the long-vacant lot at the intersection of Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Northeast Alberta Street would remain in purgatory, after Trader Joe's pulled out from negotiations amid community backlash.

Critics of the grocery store deal, namely the Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAALF), felt the Portland

Development Commission (PDC), which owns the lot, was only furthering gentrification and displacement in the once-predominately Black neighborhood.

PAALF, backed by a wealth of local activists, saw the lot as a ripe opportunity to build much-needed affordable housing in the MLK corridor, which has experienced a decline in its African American population.

But by mid-2015, the PDC had finalized a deal with the California-based developer, Majestic Realty Co.,

who purchased the land for just over \$500,000 — about \$2.4 million under the appraised market value.

After securing the Colorado-based Natural Grocers as the new anchor tenant — and a reshuffling of optimistic timelines that fell short by about a year — the hammers have finally fallen at the site, just weeks ago.

Colas Construction, an African American family-owned company, is on board as the development's prime contractor. "We're

tracking at about 50 percent minority business participation overall," said Andrew Colas, president and COO. "That's pretty unprecedented for a project of this size and this nature. Not only are we getting the opportunity, but we're bringing a whole bunch of other minority sub-contractors and businesses along for the ride," Colas said.

Called Alberta Commons, the new development will dedicate 50 per-

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Clark County Officials Seek Information on Cold Case

Investigators are looking for more information about Martha Morrison, who was killed in 1974

By *Christen McCurdy*
Of The Skanner News

Martha Mare Morrison was just 17 when she disappeared. In October of 1974, hunters discovered a skeleton buried in a shallow grave in the hills of rural Clark County — which were positively identified with DNA testing as Morrison's last year.

At the time of her disappearance,

Morrison had been living in Portland with her boyfriend and had not been in close contact with her family, so relatives were not able to provide investigators with many details about her life. But deputies working with the Clark County Sheriff's Office are asking for public help with the case — and specifically, they're looking for more information about Morrison's boyfriend at the time of her

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Martha Marie Morrison



PHOTO BY JERRY FOSTER

The average monthly rent in Portland rose 7 percent between 2015 and 2016, with increases between 12 and 18 percent in 1, 2, and 3-bedroom units. Forty-five percent of households are renters with a median income just over \$30,000 per year.

State of Housing Report

New report finds grim reality for renters, communities of color

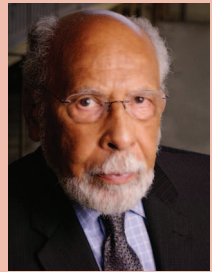
By *Melanie Sevckenko*
Of The Skanner News

Earlier this month, the Portland Housing Bureau, led by Commissioner Dan Saltzman, released a State of Housing report for 2016. The document analyzes Portland's housing affordability and encompasses 24 neighborhoods in the city.

Despite definite wins such as the voter-approved Affordable Housing Bond, which allots \$258 million toward affordable rental housing programs, the lifting of the state preemption on mandatory inclusionary zoning, and a 90-day notice for 5 percent rent in-

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Howard Moore, Jr. to Speak at The Skanner Foundation Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast



Attorney Howard Moore, Jr. earned his B.A. degree in 1954 from Morehouse College. He obtained his LL.B. degree from Boston University School in Law. In 1962 he joined the Atlanta law firm of Moore, Alexander and

Rindskopf. As one of only 10 black lawyers in Georgia, Moore worked long hours and traveled on Sundays with Vernon Jordan. Moore has represented both Julian Bond (1966) and Angela Davis (1971-1977).

Neo-Nazi Dropout Program

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