

# A Look Back At 2016



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

## MLK Celebration

About 5,000 people participated in the 34th Annual Martin Luther King Jr Day march from Garfield High School to the Federal building in Seattle Jan. 18. The annual celebration held on MLK Day included workshops, a rally in the Garfield High School gym and the march.



## Freemason Lodge Repaired

The Sons of Haiti Masonic Lodge - threatened with closure due to building code issues and fines - held a community fundraiser and received assistance from the Portland Development Commission and the Boise Neighborhood Association that enabled the building to keep its doors open. The space - which is more than 3,000 square feet in size -- primarily functions as the meeting lodge for a historically African American faction of the Freemason fraternity, it's also used as space for kids' karate classes and Sunday church services.



## Wake of Vanport

The Skanner News held two screenings of its oral history project on the Vanport flood, "The Wake of Vanport," with each screening featuring new stories from survivors. "The Wake of Vanport" chronicles the history surrounding the city of Vanport, a quickly-built workforce housing town that became the most racially-diverse city in Oregon. The town itself was a model for racial integration during a time where most of the nation - including Portland - was segregated.

Vanport went from being the second largest city in Oregon to completely destroyed in a matter of hours. On Memorial Day, May 30, 1948, the dam protecting the city burst and a 10-foot wall of water destroyed homes, shops, a hospital and a technical college. Vanport documentary storytellers Betty Duellen, Ed Washington, Eleanora Larson, Dorothy Hadley, Hurtis Hadley, Henry Kaiser, Curnel Walden and John Beverage at the Wake of Vanport screening at the historic Hollywood Theatre in Northeast Portland Nov. 20. A previous screening was held April 3 at the Oregon Historical Society.

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## Juneteenth

Clara Peoples, the mother of Juneteenth in Oregon, passed away in 2015 after witnessing the 150th Juneteenth anniversary celebration. Her granddaughter, Jenelle Jack, has chosen to keep her grandmother's dream alive by organizing and educating Oregonians about this too-often overlooked part of history. This year's celebration took place June 18, from noon until 7 p.m. at Legacy Emanuel field at the corner of NE Williams and Graham streets. Juneteenth commemorates the events of June 19, 1865 in Galveston, Texas, when Union General Gordon Granger read a proclamation announcing the freedom of all slaves. Every year after, the 19th was celebrated as Juneteenth Independence Day or Freedom Day.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OREGON STATE BAR

## Civil Rights Director Sues DOJ

Erious Johnson, the civil rights director for the Oregon Department of Justice sued the DOJ in October, saying the department has failed to take corrective measures after learning an investigator was creating profiles for Oregonians, including Johnson, who used the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on social media. In October 2015, Johnson learned a DOJ investigator had created a file labeling him a potential threat based on his social media use - and used a digital tool to search for and gather information on other individuals in Oregon who used the #blacklivesmatter hashtag. On Tuesday Rosenblum said she had fired the investigator responsible for tracking Johnson's social media messages. When news broke about the creation of Johnson's file last fall, Rosenblum told the media the same investigator had been placed on paid leave.