

# Milwaukie Daze festival features mishmash of cultures side-by-side

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Maury Hooper regales Milwaukie Daze visitors with stories about the PT boat he sailed on in World War II. He stands on PT-658, which is owned by the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C., but Hooper and a group of volunteers spends Mondays and Thursdays restoring the boat to its original condition. Milwaukie Daze was its second adventure away from its home on Swan Island

## Text of Article

The annual Milwaukie Daze festival is as much about displaying the area's history as it is about the carnival rides. With a World War II boat docked at the waterfront Saturday and hula dancing on the festival's main stage, what seemed like a mishmash of cultures was a reflection of the community that has hosted the event for almost a half-century. Friday featured events for kids and Saturday started with a parade Ed Zumwalt, festival co-organizer, calls "one of the finest chunks of Americana you'll ever see," and ended with fireworks. Zumwalt can't quite put an exact number on when the festival started because it's had different names, but it's more than 45, he said.

This was the second year Kaleialoha Gina Mahiai-Hess's hula dancing school performed. Mahiai-Hess's school, which opened in 2002, has about 45 students. She also teaches dance and Hawaiian language at Lot Whitcomb Elementary School in Milwaukie. Transplanted when her father moved the family to Beaverton, Mahiai-Hess's traditions are as much a part of Milwaukie as the veterans who were manning a moored World War II PT boat in the Willamette at the festival.

Maury Hooper sailed on PT-238 in World War II -- a boat similar to the one he spends most Mondays and Thursdays working on at Swan Island. PT boat 658 has been sitting in the Portland area since 1994, but has made few public outings. Saturday was its second and it was packed with festival-goers, with more waiting in line on the dock to get tours.

Hooper, of Longview, Wash., inherited the boat as his hobby when he heard about it sitting on Swan Island and went to visit.

"They immediately grabbed me and took me to the boat and said, 'Here, it's yours,'" he said. "And I've been with it ever since."

Hooper was excited to show off the boat because he knows there aren't too many more of his era left, and he wants to pass on his knowledge.

"What we want to do with this is create a living history artifact, catering to school kids," he said.

Jerry Gilmartin gave short lectures about the boat's former function and how it ended up in Portland. A retired Army man, he got involved to be around older veterans, but quickly became the boat's unofficial historian and curator from "listening to their stories and learning this is a living piece of history."

Local artists showed off more recent culture downtown by displaying their wares in booths along Main Street and at a poetry reading at the Ledding Library.

Jaime Jones, who makes stuffed sock animals, worked on a new doll while people perused the booths.

"Someone gave me a cool pair of socks one day and it seem like it could be something other than a pair of socks," she said of her start in the Milwaukie crafting scene.

Jones, of Milwaukie, sells her dolls during the Farmers Market on Sundays and at First Friday events, as do other local artists. Sometimes she sells a lot, sometimes she mostly knits new dolls while people pass by her stand. But, Jones is content if people just comment on how cute one is.

"That's my favorite part, is seeing people's smiles," she said.

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