Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association

OLD TOWN CHINATOWN CRIER

FALL EDITION 2003

A Publication of the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association

Old Town Chinatown Welcomes Skidmore Historic District

The Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood has officially expanded its boundaries. At their September 3 meeting, members of the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association voted unanimously to approve a change in its by-laws which extended the neighborhood's boundaries. The new boundaries are: the Willamette River to the east; SW Stark Street to the south; NW Broadway from the Broadway Bridge to W Burnside, from W Burnside to SW 3rd Avenue, south from SW 3rd Avenue to SW Pine Street, east from SW Pine to SW 2nd Avenue, south from SW 2nd Avenue to SW Oak Street, east from SW Oak to SW 1st Avenue, and south from SW 1st Avenue to SW Stark Street. The important expansion means that the entire Skidmore Historic District now lies within the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood boundaries.

The Skidmore District derives its name from Skidmore Fountain, Portland's oldest piece of public art, located at SW Ankeny Street and SW 1st Avenue. Pharmacist and city commissioner Stephen Skidmore earmarked $5000 in his will for the fountain's creation. Friends and family added to Skidmore's donation and commissioned sculptor Olin Warner, who finished the fountain in 1888 at a cost of $18,000. The fountain's design boasts a bronze upper bowl supported by two granite female figures, a lower pool, where people could fill their cups, and at ground level, four troughs which take the runoff from the lower pool and were placed for the convenience of dogs and horses. For the fountain's grand opening, brewer Henry Weinhard offered to pump beer from his brewery to the fountain via fire hoses. But Portland only had one set of hoses, and city leaders feared that overzealous residents might poke holes in them. The inscription on the fountain reads, "Good Citizens Are The Riches of a City," a quotation from C.S. Wood. Today, Skidmore Fountain serves as a gateway to Tom McCall Waterfront Park as well as an anchor for the Portland Saturday Market.

Have you wondered from where streets "Lovejoy," "Overton," and "Pettygrove" draw their names? Meet Portland's original founders, lawyer Asa Lovejoy and drifter William Overton, who beached their canoe on the banks of the Willamette in 1843. Overton saw great potential for a city within the beautiful natural setting. His only problem was that he did not have the twenty-five cents he needed to make a claim. Lovejoy lent him a quarter in exchange for half the 640-acre parcel of land, and the two men laid claim by slashing tomahawk marks in "The Clearing," known today as the Skidmore District.

Overton had an adventurer's heart, however, and he soon found the work of cutting trees to lay a city tedious. Overton sold his claim to Francis Pettygrove, who came from Portland, Maine. Asa came from Boston, Massachusetts. When it came time to decide on a name for their new city, they flipped a coin, best-of-three. Guess who won?

Within the Skidmore Historic District stand some of Portland's oldest and most notable buildings, such as the Poppleton Building, built in 1871, New Market Theater (1872), Blagan Block (1888), the Glisan Building (1889), New Market Annex, and the Haseltine Building (1893). Any trip to the Skidmore District would be incomplete without taking in these stately structures.

Old Town Chinatown feels fortunate to have such an exciting historic district of town within its new boundaries. With the addition of the Skidmore Historic District and the implementation of the 3rd and 4th Streetscape plan, the Old Town Chinatown neighborhood keeps growing and reaffirming its status as a Portland treasure.

Our Community Our Neighborhood

Community Partner Profiles

Union Gospel Mission: Building a Center where Men and Women Build New Lives

At the corner of NW 3rd and Burnside, Union Gospel Mission occupies the heart of our newly expanded Old Town Chinatown neighborhood. This fall, the old buildings will be demolished, allowing construction to begin on UGM's new LifeChange Center, which will look out over Burnside Street toward the Skidmore Historic District. Slated for completion in late 2004, the handsome, 5-story, $5.38 million structure will be home to 72 men and women who are building new lives.

In initiating LifeChange a decade ago, Union Gospel Mission moved beyond providing temporary shelter to becoming a comprehensive residential program for people with 15- to 25-year histories of addiction, severed ties, and burned bridges. Director Bill Russell describes LifeChange as an "urban monastery." Rooted in practicality and prayer, the program ties people together, making them accountable for choices in their lives and forging their own leadership.Newcomers are mentored by those ahead of them in the rigorous, 2-to-4 year program. In addition to working 40 hours a week in the UGM Family Thrift Store in Tigard, or cooking and serving hot meals to others, members study academic and GED subjects, information technology, and the Bible. As they move toward graduation and toward outside jobs, they pay off debts and begin reconnecting with children and kin.

By serving hot meals every evening and distributing 160 sack lunches every morning, Union Gospel Mission continues to reach out to poor neighbors in Old Town Chinatown. This effort depends on hundreds of volunteers, who are organized into teams by coordinators who are themselves volunteers. LifeChange members supervise operations.

Founded in 1927 through the efforts of 40 churches, the mission of Union Gospel Mission has not changed: "Feeding the Hungry, Restoring the Addict, Loving our Neighbor." Supported by the contributions of thousands of individuals as well as churches, businesses and private foundations, UGM takes no government funding. UGM arranges tours which offer an opportunity to meet LifeChange members and hear them talk about their jobs serving the community.

Call Communications Director Stacy Kean at 504-274-4483 for information about tours and volunteering. Donations of re-useable appliances, furniture and clothing for the Thrift Store are welcome; request free pickup by calling 503-639-6488. The UGM website is www.ugmportland.com

Dan and Louis Oyster Bar: A Portland Landmark Since 1907

Landmark restaurants cannot be faked, and they do not become historic simply by slapping on an "Established" date in the front window. Landmark status can only be earned through years of consistently outstanding food and service. Welcome to Dan and Louis Oyster Bar on the corner of SW Ankeny and 2nd Streets.

Dan and Louis has been serving Downtown Portland its delicious seafood since 1907, when Louis Wachsmuth began tossing live crabs from the boxes on SW Ankeny into a crab pot. In 1919, thanks to Prohibition, Louis acquired the food bar from the Merchant's Exchange Saloon and added a fresh and hot oyster stew to his menu. Soon, the small food bar could no longer satisfy the demand, and Louis began adding small dining rooms to his establishment. The "Main" dining room was built in 1937, and the "Reserve" room in 1940. When you visit, be sure to ask about the "Special" dining room, dating back to 1876; we won't spoil it here, but remember that Portland went up in flames in 1872, 1874, and 1875. . .the "Special" dining room helped keep that from happening again.

Dan was Louis' second son, who died from complications from influenza at the too-young age of 27. His name was added to "Louis Oyster Bar" in memoriam. Today, Louis' grandson Doug owns the restaurant, running it with help from his wife, Joyce, his brother, Tuck, and Louis' great-grandchildren.

Stop by and order a dozen Oregon Kumamoto oysters on the half-shell or a steamy bowl of Cocktail Yaquima Oyster Stew (Louis's world famous recipe), both of which are perfect for getting through Portland's rainy season. See and taste for yourself why Dan and Louis Oyster Bar can proudly call itself a Portland landmark. Welcome to the neighborhood.

Our Community
Our Neighborhood
Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association

OTCTNA Applies for Official Recognition as Weed and Seed Site

In its efforts to mobilize human and financial resources to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood, the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association (OTCTNA) has submitted a request to the Executive Office of Weed and Seed for Official Recognition as a site for 2004-2007. Operation Weed and Seed is a federal program launched in the early 1990s to help local communities with serious problems. The program brings together people and resources to prevent and control crime and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods.

The submission of a Letter of Intent, outlining strategies for addressing crime and other problems in the community, followed six months of community meetings coordinated by OTCTNA Chair Howard Weiner. Strategies for dealing with issues of housing and homelessness, crime and public safety, mental health, and substance abuse were explored in a series of public forums and experts meetings. Participating were representatives of the City of Portland, Multnomah County, the Portland Police, the Portland Business Alliance, the District Attorney's Office, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, an array of government social service agencies, and key non-profits from throughout Portland, including those in the neighborhood: Central City Concern, Sisters of the Road Café, Inc., Transition Projects, Inc., Blanchet House, Portland Rescue Mission, Outreach Ministries, Salvation Army Harbor Light, and Union Gospel Mission, among others. Weed and Seed encourages coordination, leveraging of local resources, and using benchmarks to evaluate progress and sustainability of effort.

Weed and Seed takes a two-pronged approach. Law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and community members cooperate in "weeding out" criminals who participate in violent crime or drug abuse, attempting to prevent their return to the targeted area. "Seeding" brings human services to the area, encouraging prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood revitalization. Programs are developed to enhance livability and safety, and to provide educational, economic, social, recreational, and other vital opportunities. A key feature of this element will be the fostering of self-worth and individual responsibility among community members.

The recent OTCTNA application for Official Recognition is not an application for funding. Instead, the Neighborhood Association has already reaped the benefits of the process by bringing partners to the table and outlining what needs to be done in our community and what are our options for action. Following a rigorous and highly competitive review, the Executive Office of Weed and Seed announces the Official Recognition of new sites in the first quarter of 2004. Only after this designation is confirmed could OTCTNA apply for funding; funding for new sites is not guaranteed. To meet federal requirements, the proposed Weed and Seed area is a bit larger than the current Old Town Chinatown neighborhood. Its boundaries are Broadway Bridge on the north, SW Alder St on the south, Waterfront park on the east and NW and SW 9th St on the west.

The Executive Office for Weed and Seed (EOWS), which is part of the U.S. Department of Justice, provides national leadership as well as management and administrative support for Weed and Seed local sites. EOWS supports sites through technical assistance, on-line consultation, training, and participation at annual conferences for Weed and Seed coordinators. Extensive documentation of best practices, program design guidelines, and manuals for community facilitators are available free of cost. There are over 300 Weed and Seed neighborhoods in the US, including four in Portland, one in Eugene and one in Burns-Piaute.

For full information about Weed and Seed visit www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/

Association Committees and Neighborhood Meetings

Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association Board of Directors. Meets first Tuesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 PM at the Port of Portland Building, 121 N.W. Everett.
Contact: Howard Weiner (howard@calsk8.com)

OTCTNA Joint Land Use & Design Review Committee. Meets first Tuesdays from 3:00 to 4:30 PM at The Port of Portland Building, 121 N.W. Everett.
Contact: Paul Verhoeven (paul@saturdaymarket.org)

OTCTNA Public Safety Committee. Meets first Thursdays from 11:30 AM–1:00 PM at Central City Concern, 232 NW Sixth Avenue.
Contact: Howard Weiner (howard@calsk8.com)

OTCTNA Communications Committee. Meets last Mondays from 4:00-5:00 PM at Northwest Resource Credit Union, 221 NW Second Ave.
Contact: Carol McCreary (carolmccreary@comcast.net)

Old Town Chinatown Visions Committee. Meets second Wednesdays from 11:30 am - 1:00 PM at Central City Concern, 232 NW Sixth Avenue.
Contact: Mark Riesmeyer (mark@centralcityconcern.org)

"As I See It" A Personal Perspective

by Ted Occhialino, Old Town Chinatown resident

When my wife, Amy, and I moved to Portland in July, 2002, we had some idea what to expect: lots of rain, friendly people, and plenty of coffee shops. Tourist books explained all of that. We spent our first year in Portland living in the Nob Hill area, just off NW 23rd Avenue. With our lease coming up, we decided to make a move; go into a new neighborhood, get a new perspective. After searching by car and on foot, we discovered the Old Town Chinatown neighborhood, tucked away in Northwest Portland, often overshadowed by its Pearl District neighbor to the west and downtown to the south. Unlike when we moved to Portland, we had no idea what to expect the first time we explored Old Town Chinatown. The neighborhood showed us so much that we decided to stay.

7:30 am, Sunday, September 14, 2003. Amy and a group of her friends begin the co-ed 5K Run for the Cure on Front Avenue, overlooking the Willamette River. Most people drove to the race. They searched for cheap parking and fought through traffic. We walked, just a few short blocks from our new home. We walked past restaurants, bars, a MAX stop, the Classical Chinese Garden, and the Portland Saturday Market. We walked because we live in the Old Town Chinatown neighborhood, and we are close to everything.

When we tell our Portland friends that we moved to Old Town Chinatown, their first question invariably is, "Why?" They remember a rundown neighborhood where they occasionally stopped by for Chinese food. They did not take the time to explore, because they have not given the neighborhood another chance; in their minds, Old Town Chinatown is what they remember from childhood, when their parents warned them to stay clear. After visiting with us, walking the neighborhood, noting the construction, the small businesses burrowed into the improving building facades, they wish they had not stayed away for so long. Not everyone knows about our neighborhood's revitalization. More people should, and they will with the right word of mouth.

Our neighborhood has made great strides in the last several years, and continues making more. Portland has risen in national consciousness and status to become a "Destination" city, and Old Town Chinatown is becoming a "Destination" neighborhood. We boast a trove of great restaurants, shops, community service centers, nightspots, and galleries. We offer visitors everything from vinyl records and compact disks to hair salons, live plays to new skateboards. But the neighborhood still suffers from an image problem. Not everyone trusts our neighborhood, and are often unaware of Old Town Chinatown's treasures.

We owe it to ourselves to get the word out, to invite people to come back to Old Town Chinatown and look around. Old conceptions are difficult to shed. People need to see for themselves just how exciting the neighborhood has become. If you live or work in the neighborhood, spread the word. Let's all encourage friends and family to have a visit. Our friends never ask us "why" again after they have been here once. They only ask when they can come back. We tell them they are always welcome, and always will be.

All submissions to "As I See It" must be about topics directly related to the neighborhood and are subject to editing. Publication is not guaranteed and all submissions become the property of the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association's Communications Committee. For submission information, please contact Ted Occhialino at topdx@comcast.net.

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Key Old Town Chinatown Studies can be downloaded from the Internet.

The Conceptual Design Review for MAX on the Portland Mall is available at www.tri-met.org/improving/tmall.htm. TriMet Community Affairs at 503-962-2150 can answer questions.

Updates on the Big Pipe project in Waterfront Park are available at www.cleanriverworks.com/index.html or call 503.823.7740.

The Waterfront Masterplan of Portland Parks and Recreation is posted at www.parks.ci.portland.or.us/waterfrontpark/masterplan.htm.

All past and current documentation on the 3rd and 4th Ave Streetscape Plan is available at www.trans.ci.portland.or.us/Projects/3and4Ave/default.htm

The website of the Portland Development Commission includes complete documentation of the Old Town Chinatown Development Plan as well as information on the Storefront Improvement Program and fact sheets on various projects. http://www.pdc.us/pubs/dev_serv/old_china.asp

Neighborhood Association Chair Recognized for Service to Community

OTCTNA Chair Howard Weiner has received city-wide honors for his efforts on behalf of Old Town Chinatown. On August 5, Portland Police Commander Rosie Seizer recognized Weiner at a brief ceremony during National Night Out in the North Park Blocks. On July 30, Commissioner Randy Leonard, who holds the city's Public Safety portfolio, named Weiner Block Captain of the Year. In May, Weiner was awarded the Chief's Forum Community Policing Problem Solving Award for his innovations in police-community dialogue in the neighborhood.

Block Captain Program Invites Participants

Speaking at the September 3 General Meeting of the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association, Samantha Kennedy, *Crime Prevention Coordinator for Downtown*, outlined the Block Captain Program. A number of those present filled out applications and will join the program following a background check.

The local Block Captain Program supports neighborhood, business, and residential watches and other Community Crime Prevention activities. A Yahoo-based centralized communications network allows members to report concerns and participate in solutions. In addition to individual Block Captains, participants in this network include the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, Portland Police Bureau, *Portland Patrol*, Oregon Liquor Control Commission, Central City Concern, Portland Parks and Recreation and government agencies that deal with addiction, mental health, aging, and disability.

If you are interested in getting to know your neighbors and making Old Town Chinatown a safer place contact Samantha Kennedy at 503-224-7383 or samanthak@portlandpatrol.com

Central City Concern Begins Work on New Housing Projects

Central City Concern has purchased the former Biltmore Hotel on 5th Avenue at Everett and is converting it into 78 SRO (single resident occupancy) units. Construction has also begun on a new 180 unit building on the NE corner of West Burnside and NW 8th Street. Central City Concern is a private, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that has been providing solutions to homelessness in the Portland metropolitan area since 1979. Today it is the largest employer of formerly homeless individuals in the city.

Fire Bureau Offers Neighborhood Emergency Teams Training

The Portland Fire Bureau offers training to potential members of Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NET). Teams consist of at least 20 citizens trained to provide emergency assistance in their own neighborhood for 72 hours following a disaster, such as a severe winter storm or major earthquake. In any calamity, neighbors are first on the scene and ordinary citizens are typically responsible for 80% of rescues performed in a disaster situation. However, training is needed to keep those Good Samaritans from becoming victims themselves.

Participants attend seven 3.5-hour sessions of NET Basic Training and complete a four-hour certification exercise at the end of the course. Those interested in the free training should request and complete application forms. Call 503-823-4614, or email rjacky@fire.ci.portland.or.us. Register early as courses fill up quickly. Portland Fire & Rescue currently has over 1000 NET members and certifies about 130 new volunteer annually.

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Mid-Autumn Festival and 3rd Anniversary of Classical Chinese Garden

China's second largest festival was celebrated in Portland September 6. Portland's Mid-Autumn Parade & Fair, organized by the Portland Chinese Times and Oregon Vietnamese Community Association, took place in the parking lot between NW 3rd and 4th Avenues. The annual event features traditional food, performances, music, and fun for everyone. On September 12, the Classical Chinese Garden continued the celebration at their 3rd anniversary party, "Mooncakes and Pomegranates." The event featured music, hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and, of course, mooncakes. The Garden hosts a number of events throughout the year. For more information, visit http://portlandchinesegarden.org or call 503-228-8131.

Bocce Brings Relaxed Competition to North Park Blocks

As anyone can learn Bocce, this modern version of a very ancient game is helping build cross-class community on the North Park Blocks. Rules adapted from the United States Bocce Federation are posted at the courts, which are maintained by local bocce activists in cooperation with Portland Parks and Recreation. Those interested in playing may borrow sets of bocce balls at no cost from Park Kitchen at 422 NW Park Avenue and Caffe Allora at 504 NW 9th Street. Formed in June with four teams, the Bocce League Federation of Portland now numbers fourteen four-person teams. In order to respond to community demand for Bocce on rainy winter evenings, the League is seeking temporary use of an indoor space 45 feet by 65 feet. Call Bill Marinelli at 503-244-8558 if you can suggest a suitable venue.

Zimmerman Community Center Launches Fall Program

The Zimmerman Community Center (ZCC) has announced a number of courses and special events, in addition to its many ongoing activities. In a new partnership with Portland Community College, ZCC is offering classes in poetry writing and Spanish language conversation. The popular course "Fitness Over 50" is carried out in partnership with OASIS.

ZCC special events for fall include a used book and CD sale on October 11 and the photography exhibit "Capture the Spirit" from November 6-8. For more information call 503-224-4636, visit www.zcommunitycenter.org or stop by 915 NW Lovejoy Street.

OTCTNA Hosts Meeting with Congressman Blumenauer

On August 7, US Congressman Earl Blumenauer was in the neighborhood to meet with Portlanders and listen to their views on what the city needs. The Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association hosted the event at the Port of Portland Commission Boardroom for all the neighborhood associations on the west side of the city.

Get Involved in the Neighborhood!

Welcome to our new neighbors in the Skidmore Historic District! Membership in the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association is open to everyone who lives, owns business or property, works, or volunteers in the neighborhood. Everyone is encouraged to attend board meetings held the First Tuesdays of each month from 4:30 to 6:30 pm at the Port of Portland, 121 NW Everett Street. Consider serving on an OTCTNA committee; information is on page three. And please introduce yourselves by signing in on our web site: www.portlandalliance.com/otct/association-join.asp Request to have your organization's web site linked to the OTCTNA site. Finally, we invite you to contribute to the *Crier*, our quarterly newsletter. Please submit short news items, "As I See It" opinion pieces and letters to the editor to Ted Occhialino at topdx@comcast.net. We also can place your business-card sized ads for $50. The deadline for the winter issue is December 15, 2003.