



Old Town
Chinatown
Neighborhood
Association

OLD TOWN CHINATOWN

CRIER

WINTER EDITION 2004

A Publication of the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association

Sisters of the Road Cafe Celebrates 25th Anniversary

This winter, Sisters of the Road celebrates its 25th Anniversary. Sisters' ongoing experiment in community building began in 1979 with goals that have not changed: the creation of a safe and welcoming environment for neighborhood residents, especially women and children, where nourishing meals are served either at low cost or in exchange for work, and where job training and employment experiences are available.



The rallying theme of the 25th Anniversary of Sisters of the Road is "Room For All at Our Table." An organization known to "walk its talk," Sisters believes that in order to solve the problem of homelessness, people with personal experiences with homelessness must be "at the table." This anniversary year is dedicated to developing leadership

from individuals who have experience with homelessness for the creation of long-term, innovative solutions to address homelessness, hunger, and poverty in our community.

Apart from running the busy non-profit restaurant at 133 Sixth Avenue, Sisters also is engaged in a ground-breaking research project. They have conducted some 600 interviews with those experienced in homelessness and poverty. "This research will provide

innovative information that will impact public policy on a national level," states Monica Beemer, Co-director of Sisters of the Road. "Working with those experienced in homelessness to find solutions has, to our knowledge, never been done to this degree in the United States. It is a pioneering project."

Welcoming Neighbors for a Quarter Century

by Genny Nelson

Sandy Gooch and Genny Nelson founded and opened Sisters of the Road Café on November 7, 1979. They rotated the restaurant jobs in two shifts: morning shift duties made one cook, dishwasher, food-and-hospitality waitress, cashier, and non-violence ambassador; afternoon shift was all of the above, plus janitor. The lead cook baked huge pans of cornbread, the recipe gifted by the Sisters of the Holy Name in Marylhurst; the aroma greeted each customer through the door. Large quantities of rice and red beans cooked on the stovetop. The afternoon shift could go from noon to midnight on days when the two- and four-inch rice pans had not been presoaked. Customers rode the rails, talked about hearing Boxcar Bertha laugh in the hobo jungle outside Yuma, and drank coffee with white bread in it. There were young women who danced at the Star Theater, the only job to which anyone would hire them. Old pensioners, new Vietnam Vets, battered women: the Sisters' regulars.

March, 1980, and Sisters had two additional employees. By 1983, management decided to have only one of them cook, the one who actually knew how. Utah Phillips always says: "In those early years they weren't coming in for what Genny called chili," so you know it was not she.

Sandy and Genny began learning from day one how to direct a non-profit and manage a business. They filled out IRS papers to become a tax exempt organization, and filed incorporation papers with the State of Oregon as a non-profit cooperative restaurant.

Sandy brought the food industry background; Genny brought philosophies of non-violence and gentle personalism. Both agreed that no one has a monopoly on the truth, so gifts, resources, wisdom, and strength would be shared by all, customers and staff alike. Sisters resulted from myriad conversations with homeless and low-

Continued on page 3

Community Partner Profile

Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association

Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center

by Saren Sakurai

From the late 1800s until 1941, Old Town Chinatown was known as Japantown. The Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center (ONLC), on Second Avenue between Couch and Davis, stands in the heart of old Japantown. Today the Legacy Center is home to the Japanese American historical record, community groups, school tours, and other neighborhood activities.

Japantown served as a hub for Oregon's Japanese, a place to trade goods and services for the recent immigrants living and working throughout the state. Japanese farmers from Troutdale, Milwaukie, Hillsboro, and Hood River brought truckloads of produce into the neighborhood to stock local grocers. The grocers traded the produce for Japanese staples such as rice, tofu, and soy sauce, which reached countryside farming families and laborers. A bustling community, Japantown was home to residential hotels, schools, temples, restaurants, dentists, doctors; over 100 businesses in all.

Perhaps Japantown would still be the neighborhood name today if not for the events surrounding World War II. The neighborhood's Japanese identity disappeared entirely as Japanese-Americans were forced to relocate to the Portland Assembly Center in May, 1942. After the war, and release of innocent immigrants, the Japanese-American community never regained its numbers or cultural influence. The glory of those pre-war days survives only as history.

The ONLC's parent organization, the Oregon Nikkei Endowment, served as the organizational agent in building the Japanese American Historical Plaza. The Plaza, constructed as a permanent memorial to Oregon's Japanese pioneers, sits prominently in the Tom McCall Waterfront Park.

The Legacy Center first opened its doors to the public in May, 1998. Since then it has presented thirteen exhibits, from Japanese Pioneer Women to Baseball in the Japanese Community and Art from the Internment Camps. Its current exhibit features photographs of the Portland Assembly Center, where Japanese-Americans spent six-months before being sent to permanent internment camps in Idaho and Northern California.

The Legacy Center has outgrown its current space and will soon move next door into the Merchant Hotel at 121 NW Second Avenue. The Hotel is an historical landmark which once housed numerous Japanese-American businesses, including a barbershop, laundry, and a Japanese newspaper. By converting one of the ground-floor storefronts into a Japanese-American museum, the ONLC will return some of Portland's Japanese-American history to its original place.

The ONLC welcomes school groups and tours; with prior notice guides can be provided to relate first-person accounts of the experiences and events in both Japantown and the internment camps. For more information, or to arrange tours, call: 503-224-1458, or email: onlc@oregonnikkei.org. Join our mailing list by sending an email to: publicity@oregonnikkei.org

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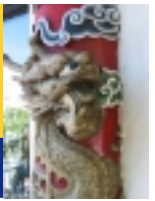
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Community Partner Profile



Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association

Central City Concern Building Services for the Heart of Downtown

Central City Concern's Building Services is a group of three growing businesses currently serving the neighborhood and clients throughout Portland. An employment creation project of Central City Concern, the nationally renowned non-profit, Building Services employs forty-seven people in quality building maintenance, painting, and janitorial services. These enterprises provide services to buildings owned or managed by Central City Concern (CCC), other Community Development Corporations, and the general public.

Central City Paint is brightening the face of downtown buildings. A licensed paint contractor, Central City Paint does commercial interior and exterior work. Besides servicing Central City Concern buildings, it also counts City of Portland, Portland School district, other non-profits, and private homeowners among its clients.

Central City Maintenance is a licensed commercial contractor that provides rehabilitation, remodeling, and general housing repair of low-income and market-rate residential housing units, and other commercial/residential properties. It does window replacement, dry wall, framing, minor plumbing and electrical work, plus general and finish work for building interiors.

Central City Janitorial provides timely, thorough and professional cleaning services to community organizations and businesses. It serves 25 buildings including Central City Concern residential housing, and other non-profit and commercial office space.

An important aspect of CCC Building Services is its role in the Workforce Development and Work Readiness programs of CCC clients. Most people heading down the path of self-sufficiency need additional training and support before they are ready for employment. By working for the CCC Building Services as trainees, individuals learn vital "soft" job skills, build a stable employment history in a marketable profession and earn strong references for future employment. As a state-certified Qualified Rehabilitation Facility (QRF), CCC Building Services strives to operate quality businesses and meet important social-economic goals

Founded in 1979, Central City Concern provides pathways to self-sufficiency. CCC believes that in order for a people to rebuild their lives they need access to housing, support services and employment opportunities plus be involved in building positive relationships with those who have had common experiences and can offer support.

If you would like to employ an individual or team for quality work, please contact Leonard Yoon, Building Services Director at 971-544-1637.

Sisters of the Road, *continued from page 1*

income Portland residents. Sandy and Genny listened intently to what they believed their community needed. Sisters takes pride in its place as a real, immediate, and concrete improvement in the lives of Portland's poor and homeless. Everyone, staff, donors, volunteers, and especially customers, declare that when hunger and poverty are eliminated, Sisters will still fill a role, as the best coffee house in town.

Genny became a grant writer in 1980, and still has a copy of her first grant request. "It makes me laugh at myself sometimes, and always humbles me." She began writing speeches and became Sisters' speaker's bureau in 1981, the year she became birthing coach for a customer whose baby had almost been born on the Café's old, green linoleum floor.

Sensing that Sisters needed to grow on its own, Genny left as an employee in 1984. She returned as operations manager in 1988, and became executive director in 1990. After open-heart surgery in 1999, Genny shared the position with Steel Fixler, and two years later Monica Beemer made a triumvirate. Genny stepped down as director in July, 2003 to focus on Sisters' Community Organization Project, leaving the executive director responsibilities to Steel and Monica.

Sisters' recruits, educates, and trains both the previously and currently homeless. Community organizing empowers them; they speak with officials and hold them accountable, ensuring their voice is heard. This voice helps dictate change and strives to make allies within the community. Both housed and houseless members learn how to build and maintain an inclusive, direct-action organization. The result cannot be denied: Sisters of the Road Café has become a city icon and a friend not only to the homeless, but to the entire community it serves.

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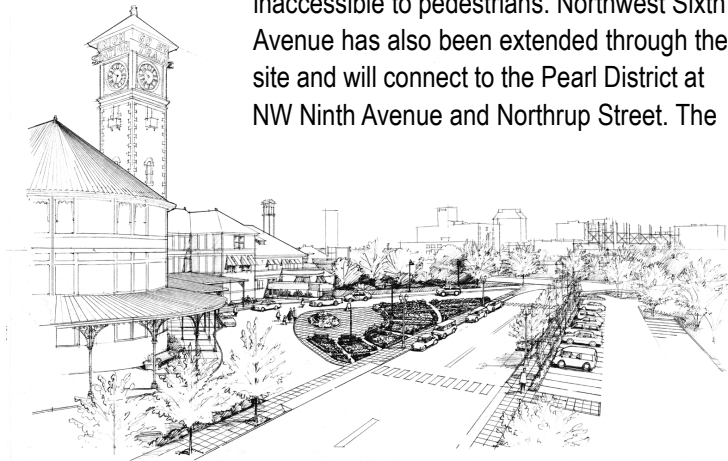
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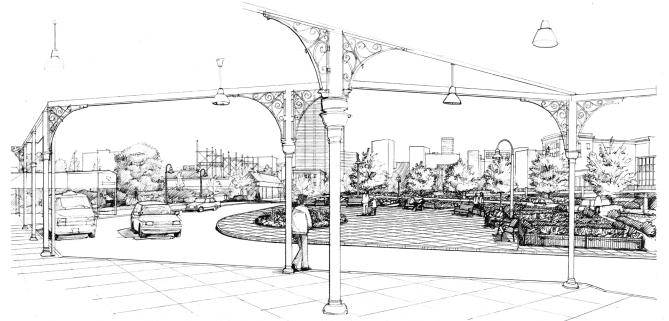
Neighborhood Improvements

Construction Completed On Union Station Improvements

Guests arrived via antique cars at Union Station on Thursday, December 19, to celebrate the completion of \$1 million in improvements to the city block in front of Portland's historic train station. The improvements allow better access to and from the station and improve the character and experience in front of the station through significant landscaping improvements and the installation of a forecourt plaza. The planting plan for the garden captures the spirit of the Victorian era, when the station was built. For many years the station's front yard consisted only of an asphalt parking lot devoid of landscaping and a small island turnabout inaccessible to pedestrians. Northwest Sixth Avenue has also been extended through the site and will connect to the Pearl District at NW Ninth Avenue and Northrup Street. The



Rendering looking south from the Broadway Bridge



Rendering looking south from the Station entrance

improvements were financed through tax increment proceeds from the Downtown Waterfront Urban Renewal Area.

Portland's historic Union Station was built in 1896 and remains Amtrak's premier west-coast station. The Portland Development Commission (PDC) purchased Union Station, the surrounding 31 acres, and parking lots in 1987. Since then, the PDC has spent some \$5 million on improvements to the station and its track. The city's Bureau of General Services manages the station and the 30 small businesses that lease space in the building's second- and third-floors.

For more information, contact Julie Rawls, PDC, 503-823-3294.

Royal Palm Gets a Regal Facelift

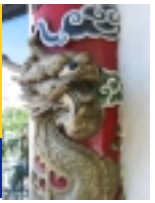
The Royal Palm, an Old Town Chinatown transitional housing site for the homeless and mentally ill located at 310 NW Flanders, recently completed an exciting internal renovation. Royal Palm, part of Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare's residential operations, opened its housing program in 1996. The renovation included asbestos abatement, new flooring in the drop-in center, repainting the first-floor, and kitchen improvements. The recent completion of the work was marked with a celebration and the hanging of model airplanes and mobiles made by a former resident.



The historic hotel, credited as the first to accept African-American guests, was listed as the Hotel Royal Palm in the 1914 city directory. It boasted of hot and cold running water and private baths; all for a mere 50-cents a day. Today, the Royal Palm contains 30 single-room occupancy beds and another 20 shelter beds for people with mental illnesses. In addition to 24-hour professional staffing, the Royal Palm also offers three meals a day, a drop-in center open to both residents and non-residents, medication

monitoring, and group programming. For more information, please contact Mark Schorr at 503-238-5204.

3rd and 4th Avenue Improvements Move Forward



Neighborhood Improvements

Final Plans Underway

Designers are working on the final detailed drawings for the construction of the Old Town Chinatown 3rd and 4th Avenue Improvements, approved by City Council in 2002. According to project co-manager Ellen Vanderslice of the City of Portland Office of Transportation, final plans are halfway complete.

Construction of the improvements is scheduled to begin June, 2004. Projections suggest completion in 16-18 months. Funding for the \$4.5 million project comes from the Portland Development Commission.

"We are very sensitive to the potential impacts of construction on businesses in the area," Vanderslice said, "especially with construction in two summers. We'll do everything we can to keep disruption to a minimum." Work will be done one avenue at a time. The City plans visiting area businesses this winter to hear specific concerns and issues.

The project covers NW 3rd and 4th Avenues between Burnside and Glisan, and cross streets therein. Lloyd Lindley, urban designer for the project, will include a great deal of finish detail. NW Davis and Flanders Streets between 3rd and 4th will become Festival Streets, designed to be closed temporarily for neighborhood events; new sidewalks, trees, and streetlights are also in the design.

Any questions about the construction project may be addressed to Ellen Vanderslice at the Portland Office of Transportation at 504-823-4638.

Marketing Old Town Chinatown

The Portland Business Alliance has taken the lead in developing a marketing plan to promote and maintain access to Old Town Chinatown businesses affected by the streetscape construction. While collaborating with PDC and PDOT, The Alliance will help launch the first phase of the plan, which potentially may include a lunch bus program to showcase area restaurants, creating a business directory in both Chinese and English, and a neighborhood walking map.

Any questions about the marketing campaign may be addressed to Jodi Jordan and Ashley Heichelbech at the Portland Business Alliance at 503-224-8684.



Improvements Project Catalyzing Redevelopment

The launch of the Streetscape planning process over a year and a half ago continues to stimulate a variety of private redevelopment efforts along NW 3rd and 4th Avenues. Businesses and property owners realize what an improved streetscape can do in attracting business and enhancing the entire neighborhood.

A number of the recently completed projects have received financing through various programs offered by the Portland Development Commission's (PDC). More than 26 individual buildings benefited from PDC's

Storefront Improvement Program in the past year. According to PDC records, the past several years have seen a total of \$25 million work of development activity in Old Town Chinatown. Of special note are the new housing projects, which include the recently-opened Pacific Tower at Fourth and NW Flanders and the new construction of the Union Gospel Mission building at Third and W Burnside.

Business and property owners may wish to take advantage of an additional program offered by PDC to encourage private development. The Development Opportunities Strategy (DOS) is designed to assist property owners and tenants with pre-development activities such as architectural planning studies, building inspections, engineering reports, market assessments, environmental studies, financial analysis and the like. PDC will reimburse up to 80% of these pre-development expenses up to a maximum of \$12,000 per proposed project. DOS funding is currently available for the Chinatown area bounded by NW Glisan, Fifth, Burnside and Second.

David Davies manages Development Programs at PDC and is available to answer questions on benefits and application procedures. He can be reached at 503-823-0409. Information about the DOS program is also available on the PDC website at www.pdc.us/dev_serv/default.asp.



For more information about the
3rd & 4th Avenue Improvements Project

contact:
Ellen Vanderslice, Project Manager

(503) 823-4638 ellen.vanderslice@pdxtrans.org

Our Community Our Neighborhood

News & Events

Portland Development Commission Votes to Extend Urban Renewal Area Plan

A four-year extension on the Downtown Waterfront Urban Renewal Area Plan was narrowly approved by the Portland Development Commission Board of Commissioners on December 17, 2003. The Board also voted unanimously to support the issuance of \$42 million in additional bonds. In the words of Chairman Matt Hennessee, "PDC needs to finish what we started in building a healthy downtown." Following review by the City of Portland's Planning Commission, the City Council must make the final decision on the plan extension and the bond issue.

The PDC decision follows testimony by members of the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association and other stakeholders at a November 19 public hearing and through email. Of the nearly 30 citizens who testified at the hearing, all agreed that 30 years of investment by PDC and its private, public, and non-profit partners have contributed toward the removal of blight and the revitalization of Portland's downtown core. Metro, Multnomah Educational Service District, the Port of Portland, Tri-Met and Multnomah County all sent letters of support for the extension.

PDC serves as a catalyst for, and a participant in, a collective, public effort to focus attention and resources in blighted or underused areas to stimulate private investment and improve livability. PDC currently manages ten active urban renewal areas within the City of Portland. If you would like more information on the proposed extension, contact Christine Egan at 503-823-3795.

Central City Concern Opens New Business

Starting in 1999 Central City Concern began opening business enterprises in order to create worksites for its clients. Today, CCC has six such businesses including its latest, Second Chance Hotel Motel Sales located at 439 SE Grand Avenue. CCC leased the building and obtained six floors of furniture, house wares, and accessories through a partial purchase/donation from the building's owner. The store is open seven days a week. CCC will be liquidating the existing inventory at 50% off to the public. For every \$1.00 spent at CCC's stores, 92.5 cents goes to support Central City Concern Programs. For more information about Hotel Motel and other CCC business enterprises, please call Paul Yauch at 503-380-3141.

March for the Dream of Martin Luther King Jr.

The life and philosophy of Martin Luther King Jr. are celebrated every January by Sisters of the Road Café. The 12th Annual MLK March took place Monday, January 19, 2004. The procession began in two separate neighborhoods and joined at the Convention Center statue of Dr. King. The NW neighborhood march left from Sisters of the Road at 133 NW Sixth. The NE neighborhood march began at the Emanuel Hospital Lorenzen Conference Center located on NE Graham Avenue. The celebration at the Conference Center focused on Dr. King's views on poverty and inequality and his antiwar activism. The 2004 March celebrated the persistence of those who advocate peace and social change through non-violent political & social activism.

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News & Events

New Site Chosen for Fire Station #1

Plans are shaping up to build a new Portland Fire & Rescue Station #1 on the block that lies between NW Couch and Davis, Naito Parkway, and NW First Street. Portland's flagship station, currently located south of Ankeny Plaza, will be integrated into a new mixed-use complex.

The Station Advisory Committee (SAC), under the leadership of David August, spent over a year researching site options that met criteria of public safety and the ability of the Fire Bureau to perform its duties without compromise. SAC then recommended the new location to Fire Chief Wilson and Commissioner Sten. One advantage of the plan is that vehicles and crews of Station #1 would not have to be dispersed during construction, as would be necessary if the current site was retained.

Still at issue are the willingness of the current owners to sell the property at a price the city is willing to pay and the requirement that the station be completed by 2007, in accordance with the terms of a 1997 bond issue. According to August, Old Town Chinatown stakeholders will be involved in the discussions about the use of the site and every effort will be made to resolve conflicts between the neighborhood's desires and the Fire Bureau's needs.

Construction along NW Couch Sewer Line to Begin Mid-March

A major upgrade of the neighborhood's sewer system is scheduled to begin in mid-March at NW 3rd and Couch. Work on the long-awaited project is expected to last until September 2004.

The City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services will circulate a flyer to owners and tenants with project details and a schedule. Construction will extend from Burnside up NW Third Avenue to NW Couch and continue west across the North Park Blocks on Couch. There will be open excavation on NW Third between Burnside and a point north of NW Couch. Then the project will use "trenchless" excavation methods from the middle of the 300 block to a point west of NW Eighth Avenue. There will be no open excavation across Fifth, Sixth, or Broadway.

For more information contact Bob Cynkar, Community Relations Specialist at the City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, at 503-823-7898 or ROBERTCY@BES.CI.PORTLAND.OR.US.

Zimmerman Program Has Something for Everyone

This winter the Zimmerman Community Center offers an array of choices. Align body and spirit with regular Yoga, Tai Chi, or QiGong classes. Take Spanish Conversation, Life Drawing, Bellydance, or three courses in Gay and Lesbian Relationships through Portland Community College. Drop in Friday evenings for Creative Outlet or join the Knitting Club or the Supper Club. First Friday Flicks continue, with free movies at Umpqua Bank.

ZCC offers free WiFi Internet and access to a computer workstation. In hopes of initiating a Community Garden on unused land near I-405, ZCC is recruiting members for a Community Garden Planning Committee to meet once a month.

ZCC is a non-profit community based organization committed to building healthy and sustainable communities in collaboration with residents, workers, businesses, and social institutions. ZCC provides the place and programs to connect people in the River District. 915 NW Lovejoy, Portland OR 97209.

Phone: 503-224-4636 or email: www.zcommunitycenter.org

PDC

PORTLAND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

For more information about
Development Programs for Businesses
contact:

David Davies, Project Manager

(503) 823-0409

daviesd@pdc.us


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OLD TOWN CHINATOWN CRIER

A Publication of the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association

Block Captain Carl Roberts Receives Reward

Alertness, quick thinking and a tip to the police by Block Captain Carl Roberts resulted in the recovery of stolen property in November. Roberts was recognized for his action by a representative of Pacific Power who presented him with a check for \$100.

A resident of Old Town Chinatown and a community activist, Roberts serves on the boards of both the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association and Sisters of the Road Café. He is one of eleven volunteer Block Captains in Old Town Chinatown. Block Captains support neighborhood business and residential watches and other community crime prevention of the Portland Police Bureau. Those interested in joining this program that is making our neighborhood safer may contact Samantha Kennedy of the Portland Patrol at 503-224-7383.



Carl Roberts shows off his reward and the recovered property.

The Crier wishes its readers a peaceful and productive New Year

Published by the Old Town Chinatown Neighborhood Association (OTCTNA) with the support of the Portland Business Alliance and our advertisers, the Old Town Chinatown Crier appears quarterly.

Please submit short news items, 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 spring issue is March 15, 2004.

Membership in OTCTNA is open to people who live, own businesses or property, or work or volunteer in the neighborhood. Board meetings are the First Tuesday of each month from 4:30 to 6:30 pm at the Chamber of Commerce, 221 NW Third Street.

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 third floor conference room of the Chamber of Commerce, 221 NW 2nd Ave. Everyone is welcome! Contact: Howard Weiner (howard@calsk8.com)

OTCTNA Joint Land Use & Design Review Committee. Meets, as required, first Tuesdays from 3:00 to 4:30 PM at the third floor conference room of the Chamber of Commerce, 221 NW 2nd Ave. If you have issues to bring before the committee, 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. The public is welcome at this brown bag lunch meeting. 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. If you'd like to share your views or join a dynamic group of volunteers, 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. The public is welcome at this brown bag lunch meeting. Contact: Mark Riesmeyer (mark@centralcityconcern.org)

Chinatown Welcomes New Year's Celebrants

Hundreds of visitors are expected in Chinatown to usher in 4701, the Year of the Monkey, which begins January 22, 2004. On Saturday January 24, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association will host their annual New Year's celebration with lion dancing, entertainment and a traditional eight-course dinner. The event takes place at the Great China Seafood Restaurant on NW Fourth Avenue. Finally, on February 7, the community will celebrate the Lantern Festival.

The Chinese Classical Garden features a bountiful schedule of events. Sunday, February 1 is "Bring a Parent Free Day;" tickets are half price on Saturday, February 7, when community members make lanterns for the festival that evening. The works of renowned artist David Lee will be displayed for a month in the Celestial Hall of Permeating Fragrance at the Classical Chinese Garden from January 22. Local shops and galleries in the neighborhood will also feature special exhibits.