

SUNNYSIDE

Neighborhood News

December 2023

SUNNYSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

SunnysidePortland.org

board@sunnysideportland.org

News from the President

By Chris Waldmann, SNA President

Happy Holidays, Sunnyside! I hope this special time of year finds your family full of light, warmth and joy. In that spirit, please come out to our neighborhood's celebration of the season at the annual festival of lights on Peacock Lane! The displays will be up from December 15th–31st. The first weekend is car-free. The cocoa booth will be serving up warm drinks and there will be plenty of cheer to go around.

Onto the SNA news...

We had a busy November General Meeting! First, we had representatives from both of the Portland Police Bureau precincts that serve Sunnyside. Here are a few things that we learned: the Traffic Enforcement division is back; there are continuing staffing challenges (there's a backlog of students at the Police Academy in Salem); and the East Precinct's very successful Stolen Vehicle Operation has led to a 30% reduction in stolen vehicles so far in 2023. (For data on crime stats, police staffing numbers, etc. see portland.gov/police/open-data). It has been a long time since we had police officers join us and we are excited to renew our relationship with PPB. We will have regular updates from them at General meetings going forward and hope to bring in other public safety agencies as well, such as Portland Street Response, so that we can all be informed on the best ways to keep ourselves and our neighborhood safe.

Next was a presentation from Multnomah County and their architecture team about the exciting changes that will be coming to the Belmont Library. The expansion

will more than double existing space and provide new opportunities for learning and engagement. You can read more about the plans in Hannah's write-up below.

Finally we heard from Cascadia Action about the fight to clean the air that we all breathe here in Portland. Unfiltered diesel engines and industrial pollution make Portland's air dangerous, particularly for people with asthma or other respiratory problems. Because of our proximity to the river and the prevailing west-to-east winds, Sunnyside is right on the edge of some of the worst of this particulate pollution. Cascadia Action is asking us to sign on to over 10 letters drafted by other neighborhood associations and civic groups to fight those responsible for this pollution and to bring cleaner air to everyone. The Board will be voting on support for these letters at our December Board meeting, so please be in touch (board@sunnysideportland.org) if you have opinions on this issue. We will also appoint a liaison to Cascadia Action to help in this cause.

On the continuing efforts to make Cesar E. Chavez safer for pedestrians and transit users, there have been a couple of developments. First, the traffic diverter that I mentioned last month was installed at Chavez and Taylor in mid-November. This will prevent left-hand turns at this intersection – a leading cause of crashes at that spot. Second, after hearing from Sunnyside resident Mary-Ann Schwab about the inadequate time provided by the walk signal at Taylor (five seconds of solid light, 10 additional of blinking), the SNA reached out to PBOT to inquire about extending those signals, to better ensure safe crossing for those who may not move as quickly across the wide, busy street. PBOT reported back that the signal call-boxes at both Taylor and Main are slated

to be upgraded this winter. In light of community feedback and understanding the constituencies for these lights (e.g. bus and library users) PBOT will examine the light timings during the replacement project with an eye towards increasing the walk time. While this is not a done deal and we will have to continue to hold PBOT to its Vision Zero commitments, it is a positive "signal" for pedestrian safety. I'll keep everyone posted as further developments occur.

That's it for now. Have a wonderful holiday season and we will see you in 2024!

Upcoming Meetings

Check sunnysideportland.org for location details and agenda.

December

Dec. 7th: 6:30-7:30 SNACC Meeting

Dec. 14th: 7:00-8:30 Board Meeting
(No General Meeting)

Dec. 28th: 8:00-9:00 LUTC Meeting

January

Jan 11th: 7:00-8:30 General Meeting,
8:30-9:00 Board Meeting
(No SNACC or LUTC Meetings)



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Email Hannah at hannahmwallace@gmail.com for more info!

Donate to Sunnyside Shower Project Here:



Winter Clothing Drive Dec 9th

We will have our fourth annual Winter Clothing Drive for our houseless neighbors on Saturday, December 9th in the basement of the Sunnyside Methodist Church at 35th and Yamhill. Volunteers will be on hand to collect donations from 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

We especially need clothing donations for all genders of pants, shirts, sweaters, coats, new underwear, socks, shoes, hats and gloves as well as sleeping bags, tents and other warm layers. We are not accepting children's or formal clothing.

If you are not able to drop off your donations on December 9th, we can arrange a pickup. Please contact Diana Deumling at dianadeumling@gmail.com. Thank you!

Belmont Library Renovation Update

*By Hannah Wallace,
SNA Vice President*

Did you know that the Multnomah County library system is the fourth busiest in the nation? Or that the Belmont Library has more items on hold than any other branch in the county (3,000 at any one time)? I didn't. We learned this and more at our November General meeting. Katie O'Dell, Multnomah County Library's Capital Bond Deputy Director, gave us the big picture on the 2020 bond, which will both modernize the existing library system and help renovate libraries like our beloved Belmont branch. The updates include a centralized sorting center, a technology system called Automated Materials Handling (AMH), and access to more than 1.6 million items. The renovation of the Belmont Branch—which will happen in fall of 2024—will more than double the current library's size. (There will be a second floor, but the building's footprint will also get slightly bigger.) The expansion will allow for an increase in the number of materials—in both English and Spanish—and will add additional spaces for people including a teen lounge, an upstairs reading room, more flexible program space and possibly an outdoor terrace. Jeanie Lai, one of the architects from Bora Architects, shared the current sketches (the design is still being hammered out) and said that they are taking cues from the neighborhood, keeping the library at a residential scale. There will be a new entrance (still on the Cesar Chavez Boulevard side of the street, but further north), more bike

parking (closer to the building), and a more generous 15-foot right-of-way—with a wider sidewalk and trees planted close to the curb. The community was asked to fill out a survey (812 people responded), and there have been three interactive workshops for the community so far. Check multcolib.org/expanded-belmont-library for updates including future public meeting dates.

Newsletter Delivery Help Needed

Want to meet your neighbors and get some steps in? Join the newsletter delivery team! Each month, about 60 dedicated volunteers deliver the neighborhood news to every household and business in Sunnyside. When a volunteer moves away or gives up their route, we add these blocks to the "Gap Map". On the back of each issue you'll see where we currently need delivery help. It's easy and it's fun. It doesn't take much time and the newsletters will be delivered to your door. Most routes cover one or two blocks and take about 20 minutes. If you're interested, please contact Diana Deumling at dianadeumling@gmail.com.

Thanks to all the volunteers who bring this newsletter to our doorsteps!

Getting to Know Your Neighbors *By Devin Boone, SNA Member*

Q&A with Louis Pearl and Jetty Swart

How did an accomplished accordion player and singer from the Netherlands and "the Amazing Bubbleman" from San Francisco meet and find their way to Portland? Jetty Swart (her stage name is Jet Black Pearl) and Louis Pearl (who your kids may know simply as The Bubbleman) are a creative power couple who have lived in Sunnyside since 2014. We talked to them about how they met, what they love about Portland, and how one becomes a bubbleman.

Where did you meet?

Jetty: We met in 2009 at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. I had a friend who was performing there and I went to visit her.

Louis: I was performing there. I had lunch at a little terrace outside and I had just done two shows in a very hot theater. I was hungry and tired and there were no empty tables. There were three women sitting at a table for four, and I said, "Is anybody sitting in that seat?"

Jetty: I said, "I don't see anybody, do you?" My friend started selling her show to

Louis, but instead we all ended up going to his show the next day.

Louis: And I selected Jetty out of the audience and put her in a bubble...and now we're married.

How did you choose Portland?

Louis: We got married and Jetty came to my house in Sebastopol. And I loved my house. I had two acres, a redwood forest in the backyard, and a hot tub in the forest. But Jetty was from the Netherlands. She's a European city dweller.

Jetty: Yeah, I want to go on my bike to a store.

Louis: She said, I'll move to America to live with you, but I'm not ready to retire. So we decided to sell my house and move closer to San Francisco. And here we are, because once you start looking in San Francisco, it's crazy. We looked for 18 months and made 13 offers – all over the asking price. We finally got an offer accepted on a house in Oakland, but I found out there'd been two shootings there in the last year, so I just nixed it. And we came to Portland.

But why Portland?

Jetty: I had been to Portland a couple of times. Do you remember Myspace? One day, this accordion guy wrote me a message: Hey, if you're ever in the United States, come to Portland and visit me. And so I did. Every time I'd visit Louis in San Francisco, I would come to Portland because I liked it. I thought: this is a good town—lots of music going on.

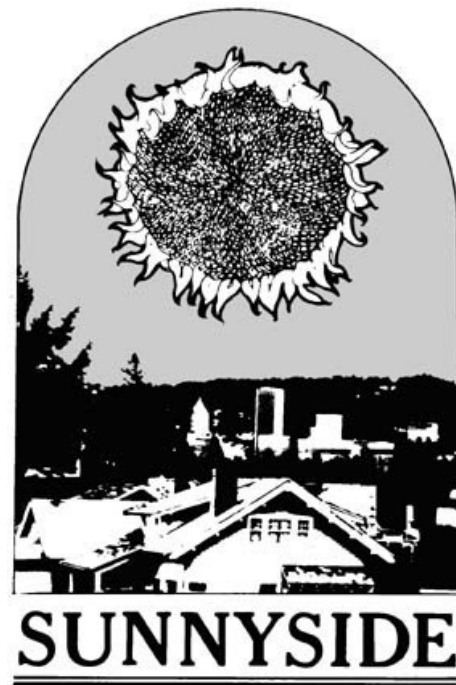
Louis: I love it. It's taken me ten years, but I really love it here. Jetty got me into riding bikes a lot. I always rode a bike, but living with a Dutch person—I'd say I'm going to the gym and I'd get in the car and she'd go, "You're driving to the gym?" It makes no sense. So now I ride my bike. During the pandemic, I couldn't go to the gym, so I would just ride up to the top of Mount Tabor—it's a haven. I love that park on top of the mountain.

Jetty: And the houses. I love the houses—all the Craftsmans with all the colors. And the Goodfoot. And then the neighbors we got to know during the pandemic, because we would do shows.

Louis: Jetty was doing little lawncerts here on our front lawn. People would close the street and we'd bring chairs and tables and bottles of wine. We have a neighbor who is a world-class jazz pianist (Gordon Lee, a



Jet Black Pearl and Bubbleman.



Q&A subject in Nov. 2020), who was doing concerts on his front porch. The same people would come, so that's how we got to know a lot of people... Normally, I'm touring all the time, but during the pandemic we were just here. We went back to our roots and started busking. We'd go out on 28th and Ankeny and she'd play music and I'd make bubbles and put the hat out.

How has the American audience received your music, Jetty?

Jetty: In the beginning, I'd mostly play the French standards. That's not what I did in France, but I thought it would be more accessible for people here because my original songs were in French and there's nothing as annoying as playing a funny song in front of people who don't laugh. So I fell back on the repertoire that people imagine when they think of French music, and people liked it. Then I started writing in English and I got a whole new repertoire eventually.

Louis, how does one become a professional bubbleman? Did you apprentice with someone? Are you self-taught?

Louis: I was a toy inventor. I made this toy—I had this bubble pipe in 1980 that made bubbles like that [extends hands wide]. Back then there weren't big bubbles. I couldn't sell the toy to any shops, so I went to Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley and I just started blowing bubbles. And people loved them.

How many people in the world have your job?

Louis: At my level, there's only a couple. But now there's thousands of people doing bubble shows. When I first started, there were maybe three.

When you say at your level, you mean able to be fully self-supporting through bubble income?

Louis: Oh, there's a lot of people who are self-supporting through bubble income. But doing theater shows...

Packing theaters?

Louis: Packing theaters, yeah. Only a couple.

Devin Boone is a writer and reporter living in Sunnyside. She recently launched her own Substack, The Portland Stack, which tells stories about housing, the homelessness crisis, public safety, and the social contract. Her first story, about why it's taking so long to get people housed, has the feel of a Chutes and Ladders game (as the housing process sometimes feels like a Chutes and Ladders game)—with beautiful illustrations by artist Ian Patrick. You can find it at portlandstack.substack.com.

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Newsletter Coordinator: Eric Miller
Editor: Gloria Jacobs
Layout: Andy Prince

Delivery Coordinator: Diana Deumling

Chris Waldmann President
Hannah Wallace Vice President
Kendra Hansen Treasurer
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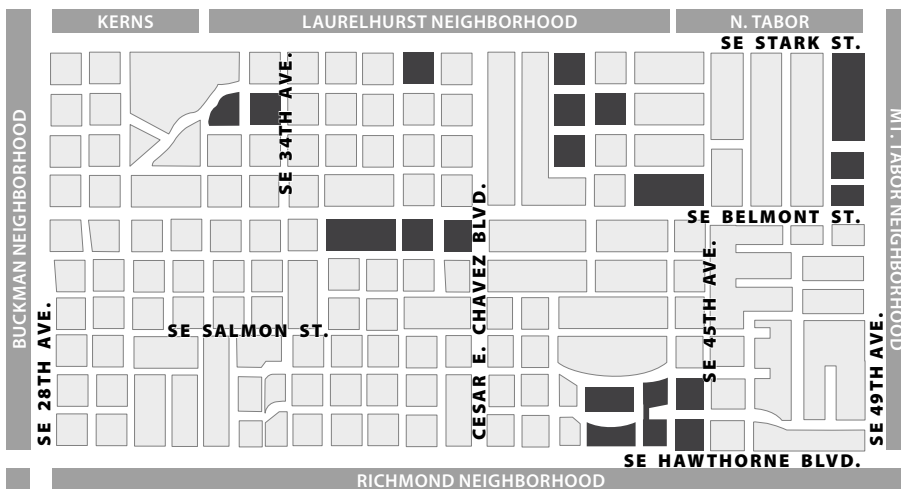
SunnysidePortland.org
c/o SEUL, 3534 SE Main, Portland, OR 97214

Any opinions expressed, unless specified, are not necessarily those of the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association or its board. **Sunnyside residents are welcome to submit articles for consideration that concern neighborhood issues, by emailing newsletter@sunnysideportland.org. Deadlines are the 15th of the month prior.** Many wonderful volunteer Sunnyside residents distribute the Neighborhood News.

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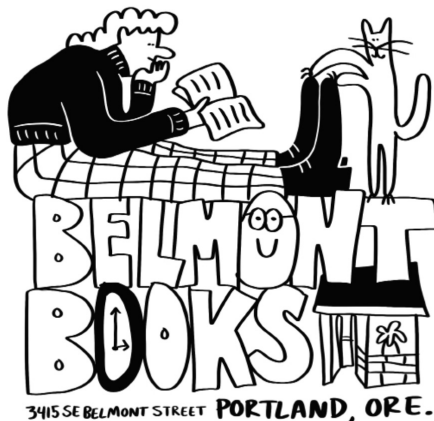
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