

SUNNYSIDE

Neighborhood News

May 2025

SUNNYSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
SunnysidePortland.org board@sunnysideportland.org

News from the President

By Chris Waldmann, SNA President

Hi friends! This mid-April bloom-storm has me under the weather, despite how beautiful it is. So, I am going to keep this short. There are just a couple of important meeting announcements for May.

Remember the District Three Priorities Survey from SE Uplift that many of you responded to this past winter? The results are in! The team will be presenting the results in a webinar on Monday, May 12th at 6:30 p.m. We've already given our city council members a preview of the data and they were super excited to see what THE PEOPLE want! You can register for this webinar at tinyurl.com/yeta6bat.

Last call for the SNA Annual Elections on Wednesday, May 14th at 7 p.m. Please come out and help shape the future of your Neighborhood Association! You must be present to vote, but do not need to be there to run for a seat on the Board. As I've said before, serving my community on the SNA Board has been one of the most rewarding things that I have been able to do over the last few years, and IT'S FUN! If you are interested in running and/or want to learn more, please reach out to me at cjwaldmann@gmail.com. Even if you don't want to commit to being on the Board, come to the meeting and participate in hyperlocal democracy! Refreshments will be provided. (Democracy and donuts anyone?)

That's it for now. See you on May 14th!

Street Painting Submissions Needed

The Hawthorne Boulevard Business Association (HBBA) is seeking creative, engaging, and community-inspired designs for a street painting in the heart of a new seasonal plaza opening this summer on the north side of Hawthorne at SE 37th.

The plaza will include a gathering space, seating, street painting, landscaping, and a solar kiosk for phone charging. The project is funded by a grant from Venture Portland to the HBBA. More information is available at sunnysideportland.org/category/land-use-and-transportation

This street painting, similar to the one at 33rd and Yamhill, will serve as a unique and visually captivating addition to the plaza, encouraging people to pause, reflect, and engage. The plaza will be highly visible and will be experienced by pedestrians, event-goers, and visitors year-round.

Submissions are encouraged to consider the dynamic nature of the plaza space and the variety of people who will engage with it. Along with design submissions, we are also calling for naming ideas that reflect the essence of the plaza and its role in the community.

This competition is open to anyone, of all ages, seeking to make their mark on this exciting new addition to our beloved Hawthorne Boulevard—not just artists. Once design submissions and names for the plaza are received, HBBA and its partners will select the top design. In addition to bragging rights, the winner will be awarded a \$250 honorarium!

Upcoming Meetings

Location details and agendas are on Sunnysideportland.org.

May

May 7th: Sunnyside Shower Project Meeting 6:00-7:00 p.m. at the Church
May 12th: LUTC Meeting (Zoom only), 7:00-8:00 p.m.
May 14th: SNA Annual Meeting for Board Elections 7:00-8:00 p.m.

June

June 9th: LUTC Meeting (Zoom only) 7:00-8:00 p.m.
June 11th: SNA Board Meeting 7:00-8:00 p.m.

The winning design will then be painted on the plaza by members of the community during a neighborhood painting day in late May or early June (TBD date). Winning submissions will be publicized by HBBA and its partners, including the Sunnyside and Richmond Neighborhood Associations, PDX Main Streets, S2C2, and the City of Portland. As the winner, you will not be required to paint the design, but are welcome to join in the community painting.

Submissions are due by Sunday, May 11th at 6 p.m. and may be submitted to administrator@hawthorneblvd.com. For explicit design details, please go to: tinyurl.com/ycehakjy.

Please email administrator@hawthorneblvd.com with any questions.



Greg Bander at his Thai boxing studio.
Photo Credit: Dresden de Vera

Getting to Know Your Neighbors

By Dresden de Vera,
SNA Director-at-Large

Q&A with Greg Bander, Owner/founder of RingCraft

Greg Bander moved to Portland in 2009 and has lived in Buckman and now Lents. A fan of traditional martial arts, he began practicing Muay Thai in 2009. Also known as Thai Boxing, Muay Thai is a martial art that's known for its embrace of punches, kicks, elbows, knees, and "clinching" techniques. Wanting to share Muay Thai with others, he opened RingCraft in Sunnyside in January of 2020. RingCraft offers classes for all age groups and all levels of experience. You can take a foundational program with others or opt for private lessons with Bander or one of eight other instructors. "The training is done at a very high intensity," he says. "And it's done in a safe environment using pads and heavy bags, so people are able to practice techniques with full force and low risk of injury."

What brought you to Portland?

Greg: I graduated college at the University of Vermont, and I didn't know what I was gonna do with my life. I was dating a girl who I'd met studying abroad, and she was going to school in Salem and had a year

left. So I thought, "Well, I've always wanted to check out the West Coast. I'll just move to Portland." And then I stayed, and she left.

What was it about Muay Thai that spoke to you?

Greg: I had done a lot of traditional martial arts where everything was set up. It was like, "Okay, you're gonna grab my wrist." And then you'd grab their wrist and they'd say, "No, no, with the other hand." That sort of thing. Muay Thai is more of a live, dynamic thing. It's real combat, a real way to test to see if what you're doing works. No one's gonna tell you how they're gonna attack you before they attack you.

Then there's the physical aspect of it. It's pretty challenging physically. And when I started sparring, I was like, "I feel like I'm okay at this. Maybe I can actually get in the ring and test myself." And so it satisfied all these boxes of self-defense, physical conditioning, and competition.

What made you want to transition from being a practitioner to being a teacher?

Greg: When I started doing traditional martial arts, I looked up those old movies from the 80s and 90s like Karate Kid and Blood Sport. You see the master training the student, and I thought it would be cool to be that.

When I started coaching classes, I found that I had a knack for it. Students would come up to me and say stuff like, "Hey, I've learned more in the last two months training with you than I had in the previous six months to a year." That felt really good.

How were you different from other coaches?

Greg: At that time, I was training in a gym where the coaches hadn't been to Thailand, and I don't think they'd competed in Muay Thai, and I had done both. I was also obsessed with the sport. I was watching fights all the time, trying to incorporate things I had experienced or had seen done by people at the highest levels. I tried to teach those things in the way that I understood them. And I think that that resonated.

What, to you, is the difference between a hobby and an obsession?

Greg: I think a hobby is a thing that you do for fun. You get some enjoyment out of it, but when you're done doing it, you're done. People come to the gym, and they train and they enjoy it, and then they leave and

then they're not doing Muay Thai anymore. It crosses over into obsession when you go to the gym early, you stay late, and when you leave the gym you're watching videos on Muay Thai, you're reading books about it, you're thinking about it before you go to sleep and you're thinking about it when you wake up. Pretty much all of your free time is spent in that space.

What is it about the physicality of Muay Thai that dials people in?

Greg: It's like a presence – a state of being in the here and now. There's no thinking about whatever else you have going on in your life when your brain is struggling to maintain its oxygen levels. It feels freeing. That high intensity interval training doesn't allow you to be burdened by your outside life stuff.

How would you describe the culture of RingCraft?

Greg: I get a lot of feedback from people that they feel really welcome. They enjoy the community, they enjoy the space, and they feel safe. It's an inclusive space that's welcoming. You have your small percentage of people who are competing seriously, and then the vast majority of people who are just there to have fun and get in a workout. If they learn about the art in that process, that's great.

Why do you think so many people find their self-confidence through Muay Thai?

Greg: I think people are able to see that, "Oh, if I just come in, if I listen, if I work hard then I get better." There's data to support that I am capable of improving myself. The whole point of martial arts is that it's process oriented. There isn't necessarily an end place to get to. The goal is just to keep doing it and to learn. If you keep showing up, you are achieving the goal. And then on top of that, there is something to be said for the confidence you gain in feeling like you can defend yourself.

Who would you encourage to go to RingCraft?

Greg: Anyone who's interested in moving their body in a way that's empowering and non-traditional. Anyone who wants to be surrounded by a community of people who are gonna be supportive of you making mistakes, learning, and growing.

Why did you choose Sunnyside for your business?

Greg: It's a great neighborhood. I would attribute this location to why the gym is successful. We have so much visibility with foot, bike, and car traffic. We have other businesses nearby, and are also tucked into this residential area. Also, Hawthorne in particular is a destination street. It feels cool to be located in a part of Portland that people know about.

RingCraft is located at 4220 SE Hawthorne Blvd. You can learn more or sign up for classes at ringcraftmuaythai.com You can also follow the business at @ringcraftmuaythai on Instagram.

News From Sunnyside Environmental School (SES)

By Valerie Kahn, member-at-large and SES parent

Hello neighbors!

Thank you to everyone who came to the amazing Earth Day celebration! My family had a fantastic time celebrating the earth, and I hope yours did too.

Join SES For Our Annual Spring Gala on May 17th at Revolution Hall

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here to... celebrate!

Our school year is drawing to a close and you are all invited to party with us like it's 1985 on Saturday, May 17th from 5:30 - 9:00 p.m. at Revolution Hall's Show Bar. This year's theme is Purple Rain, so slip into your most powerful purple ensemble, throw on a raspberry beret, and prepare for a night of fundraising, music, and community. Costumes are not required but are very welcome.

This event is a cocktail party. It will include a silent auction, a live auction program hosted by the incomparable Bolivia Charmichaels, and live music by SuperWave PDX. We will auction items donated from the community as well as items made by our students. (To everyone who donated an auction item to us: THANK YOU!) Past auction items have included everything from getaways and fancy dinners to rock climbing gym memberships and handcrafted jewelry. Attendees will also be able to purchase spots on "party boards" – small, themed community gatherings or events. Past parties have included Dungeons & Dragons nights,

crafting events, movie parties, and cooking lessons. Having attended some of these events in the past they are very fun and I highly recommend them. Come meet your neighbors and learn a skill or enjoy a pastime together.

Can't come to the event? Our online auction opens May 1st. You'll find the link here: ourschool.auction/PURPLERAIN. There are auction items available for all tastes and budgets, so please check it out.

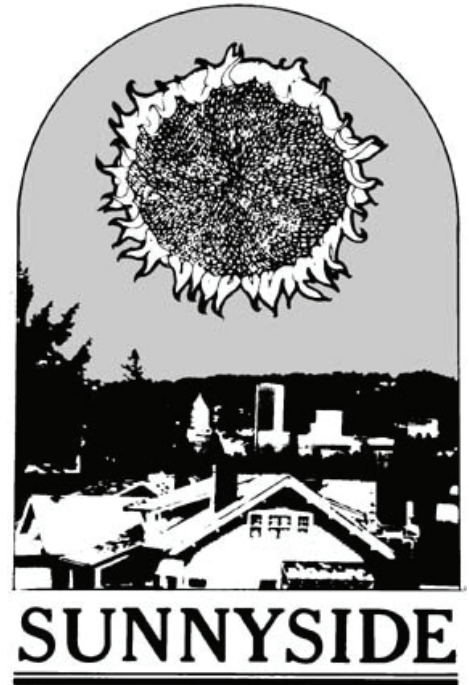
Finally, there will be a variety of Gala games. We will be playing wine ring toss (if you throw a ring around a bottle of wine it's yours), plinko (drop a chip down a pegboard and win a prize), and heads or tails (compete with others to guess the outcome of repeated coin tosses). There will be a costume competition and the winner will receive a gift certificate for \$100 of tacos at ¿Por Qu No?

Tickets are at ourschool.auction/PURPLERAIN. We have three ticket levels: Standard Plus Ticket (\$110) that covers all costs for one person and a donation to make the experience accessible to all; Standard Ticket (\$60); and Reduced Ticket (\$35) that covers some costs for one person to attend, with the remainder covered by donations from Standard Plus Tickets and PTSA funds. Please purchase at whatever level works for you. All tickets include a bidder number, one drink ticket, one complimentary heads & tails game entry, and dessert.

All of the money raised directly supports the school's garden & sustainability program, the music program, and student field trips. These programs are funded in their entirety by money raised by the PTSA and receive no financial support from PPS. Thank you for helping us allow our students to experience gardening, music education, and learning experiences outside of the traditional classroom.

This is an adults-only (21 and up) party so please leave your children at home. We hope to see you there!

Have questions about SES? Email sunnysideenvironmentalnews@gmail.com and maybe I'll answer them in a future column!



The Sunnyside Neighborhood News is published monthly by the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association.

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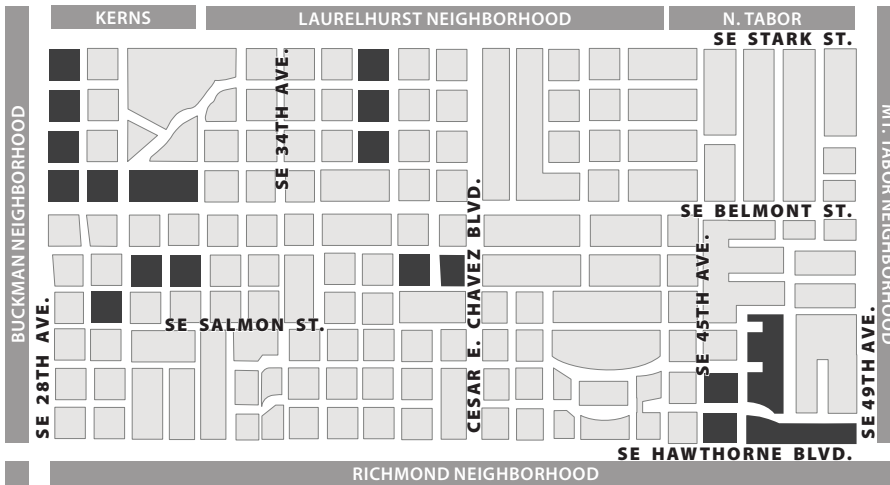
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Any opinions expressed, unless specified, are not necessarily those of the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association or its board. **Sunnyside residents are welcome to submit articles for consideration that concern neighborhood issues, by emailing newsletter@sunnysideportland.org.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

Sunnyside Neighborhood 'Gap Map'

Live near any of the blocks marked in black below? We need your help!
 Contact fergrex@gmail.com to volunteer for our delivery service.

Delivery help
 needed here



SES PTSA presents Sunnyside Environmental School

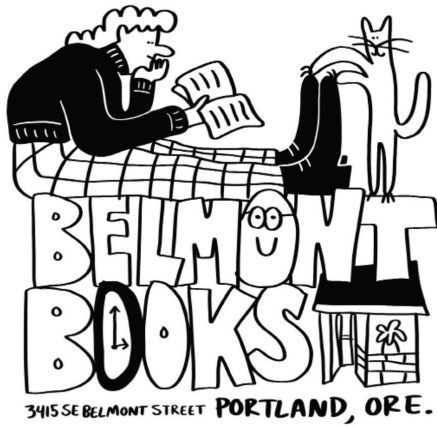
SPRING



Purple Rain: SES Spring Auction & Celebration

Sat. May 17, 2025, 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
 Revolution Hall's Show Bar, 1300 SE Stark St.

ourschool.auction/PURPLERAIN



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