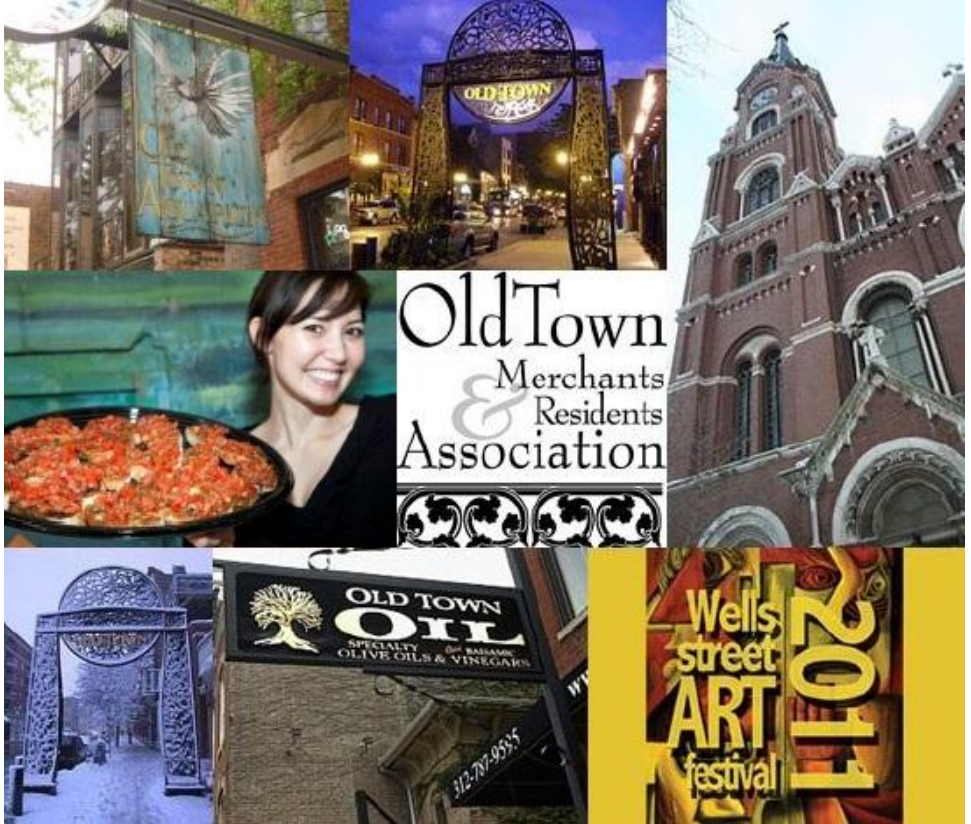




# Old Town Merchants and Residents Association



## 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

November 16, 2011



2010-2011

Old Town Merchants and Residents Association  
Board of Directors and Trustees

Officers

**Joseph Milito, President**  
Resident

**Tom Erd, Chairman**  
The Spice House

**Marty Sanderson, 1st Vice President**  
Trattoria Roma

**Mimi O'Brien, Treasurer**  
Resident

**Claudia Coleman, Vice President**  
Jumbalia

**Giulia Sindler, Secretary**  
Kamehachi

Directors

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Haberdash

**David Dattalo**  
The Fudge Pot

**Michael Javid**  
Old Town Gardens

**Dino Lubbat**  
Dinotto Ristorante

**Gary Niemand**  
Resident

**Chad Novak**  
The Fireplace Inn

**Maria Paonessa**  
Compagnia della Bellezza

**Mary Quincannon**  
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**Patrick Shaughnessy**  
Bigwells Technology

**Diana Silvius-Gits**  
Up Down Cigar

**Janice Kay Smith**  
A Women's Gym

**Jennifer Tremblay**  
O'Brien's Restaurant

**Laura Zalloni**  
Trattoria Roma

**John Blick, OTMRA**  
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**Kevin Barbeau, OTMRA**  
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Allan Ackerman, Resident | Jeff Bersh, Flight 1551 | **Walter Burnett, Jr., 27<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman** | J.C. Canales, Dinotto Ristorante | Vi Daley, Resident | Warren "Bo" Daniels, Resident | **Ken Dunkin, State Representative** | Judy Erwin, Former State Representative | Paula Fasseas, P.A.W.S. and North Community Bank | Randy Freiser, Accelerated Physical Therapy | Linda Gits, Gits Graphics | Angela Huntemann, North Community Bank | **Mattie Hunter, Illinois State Senator** | Harry Huzenis, Jameson Realty | Ferd Isserman, Past OTMRA President | Gertrude Kerbis, Lempp Kerbis Associates | Belle Kerman, Kerman & Associates | Agnese Milito, Orso's Restaurant | Frank Milito, Orso's Restaurant | Joey Mustari, Resident | Jody Nash, Fabrice | Ky Novak, The Fireplace Inn | Richard Novak, The Fireplace Inn | Peter O'Brien, MADO Management | Reenie O' Brien, Resident | Stanley Paul, The Stanley Paul Orchestra | Gretchen Reachmack, Resident | Frank Reda, Topo Gigio | Frank Reda, Jr., Topo Gigio | Ian Schakowsky, Old Town Aquarium | Jeffrey Siegel, Hygiene Solutions | Rick Uchwat, Zanies | **Jesse White, Illinois Secretary of State** | David Zimmer, Fleet Feet Sports



Dear Neighbors,

It has been a great honor to serve as President of the Old Town Merchants and Residents Association for these past two years. I am very proud of the many accomplishments of our organization and look forward with excitement at what is to come. As always, our accomplishments are only possible because of the continued personal, professional and financial support of the residents and businesses who are our Members.

Our annual festivals continue to enjoy great success and bring visitors and positive attention to our area. We are working with the Commissioners of the Old Town Special Service Area #48 in their efforts to maintain, improve and market our neighborhood. Our advocacy work continues to secure the best interests of our residents and businesses. Our successes have allowed us to make sizable cash gifts to neighborhood not-for-profit organizations such as Franklin School, Near North Library and many others.

Community is the cornerstone of our organization. We are fortunate to include among our members residents and businesses which have made Old Town their home for many years. Our community is also one that welcomes and supports new members. I hope you will continue to attend the Socials and "Night Out in Old Town" events. Besides being a lot of fun, they allow us the opportunity to gather together in community.

I am grateful to all of the OTMRA Membership, Trustees, Board Members, Committee Chairs and our Office Staff who have worked tirelessly to make our organization the best of its kind in the City.

Sincerely,



*Joseph Milito*

**President  
Old Town Merchants and Residents Association**

# Old Town Merchants and Residents Association



As another year draws to a close in Old Town, we welcome several new faces, new businesses and new developments. What a great sign for the future of Old Town! The district has always been unique among Chicago's many neighborhoods and now it is transforming into the most vibrant and exciting destination in the city.

Through large-scale public events and intimate members-only activities, the Old Town Merchants and Residents Association is building a personal and inviting climate for all who visit, work or reside in Old Town. It is through community support and participation that the district grows stronger. For this reason, we applaud our existing members, extend our warmest welcome for those new to the Association, and ask you to continue sharing experiences with friends and family.



*Pres. Joe Milito Addresses Members at the Annual Dinner on January 27, 2011.*

The year started out with the **40<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner** on January 27<sup>th</sup>, at which over 150 OTMRA members enjoyed a delicious and decadent four-course meal at the Chicago Cultural Center. At the event, \$10,000 was donated to neighborhood organizations and charities, including Chicago Men in Action, Franklin Fine Arts School, the Near North Library Friends Association and the Lakefront Sculpture Exhibit. These great programs have been vital in building and bettering the Old Town community.

One of the many positive advantages of being a member in the Old Town Merchants and Residents Association is the opportunity to attend regular **Networking Socials** and **Nights Out**. The 2011 calendar year featured three members-only networking events at Declan's Irish Pub, O'Brien's Restaurant, and Adobo Grill. The open-invitation Night Out activities mixed dinner and drinks (Wells on Wells, Corcoran's Pub and Kamehachi) with entertaining shows at Zanies comedy Club and The Second City, and a wickedly funny performance of the Pulitzer Prize nominated "Becky Shaw" at A Red Orchid Theatre. Over drinks, hors d'oeuvres, or a show, guests meet informally with their neighbors. There have been more than a few collaborations that started with a spark of common interest at a Social or Night Out.



*Bob Gottfred, his daughter Jill, son Jim and guest Sarah Cristina enjoy a Social at Adobo Grill on September 8, 2011*



*Wells Street Fall Fest Attendees Sample Wines on September 10, 2011*

Summer arrived right on time and Old Town was there to greet it with the **Wells Street Art Fest**. The 2011 edition of the festival, now in its 37<sup>th</sup> year, was as busy as ever. More than 200 talented artists participated, showing off and selling their wares – from paintings to furniture to jewelry and more. The merchants along Wells Street served food and drinks to smiling crowds throughout and eight great bands – including American English and 10,000 Maniacs – put on amazing sets at the O’Brien’s stage.

Just as the Art Festival coincided with the start of summer, the **Wells Street Fall Fest** signaled its end. As one last opportunity to take in two warm, bright days on the streets of Old Town, the Fall Fest included two stages and 19 performers. Wells Street merchants, as always, provided delicious dishes and satisfying drinks, and a strong showing by regional artists and designers offered the attendees some unique items to peruse or purchase. The board and staff of Old Town Merchants and Residents Association appreciate the participation from the community, and the work done by the various businesses and agencies that helped coordinate the 2011 events. In particular, we would like to thank Special Events Management who continues to provide professional planning, service and support for both of Old Town’s major summer festivals.

The Old Town Merchants and Residents Association produces a steady supply of entertaining events for its members and for the neighborhood as a whole. Of course, some events are too big even for us to manage. Once again, Old Town and the Near North played host to the wildly popular **Chicago Air & Water Show** on August 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, and to the inspirational **Chicago Marathon** on October 9<sup>th</sup>. With close to two million attending the Air and Water Show at nearby North Avenue Beach, and a record 45,000 participants passing through during the Marathon, these two events provide amazing exposure for the area. We thank the businesses and residents of Old Town for going above and beyond to show how unique and friendly Old Town is.



*Marathon Runners Travel Wells Street on October 9, 2011*

2011 will round out with a new **Board Election** on the third Wednesday of November. Joseph Milito, who has served admirably as the President of the Old Town Merchants and Residents Association has reached the end of his term, and will now replace Tom Erd (of the Spice House) as Board Chairman. Elected successors take office beginning January 1, 2011. A slate of recommended officers and trustees will be nominated and voted on by OTMRA members.



# Major Developments

With new condos/apartments, offices and businesses all opening in Old Town and changing the streetscape and skyline, we're entering an exciting new time of physical and economic growth for the neighborhood. Two significant new projects – one presently under construction and the other in the early planning/community discussion phase – could prove transformative for Old Town and the Near North.

## 1225 N. Wells



*Concept Image for New Residential Development at 1225 N. Wells*

Construction continues at 1225 N. Wells near the former Tower Olds building. The site, overseen by Hines Development, will have a combined 16 stories with 250 rental units, two levels of indoor public parking and 30,000 square feet of ground floor retail space. Additional resident amenities include an outdoor pool, fitness center, green roof and conference space. The existing brick and terra cotta façade at 1241 N. Wells has been preserved and will be implemented into the new design, helping to retain Old Town's atmosphere. The project will also pursue LEED certification from the United States Green Building Council.

Representatives of the development expect a mid-summer opening for first-floor retail and a late-summer move-in for all tenants.

## Atrium Village



*Concept Image for New Residential Development on Division and Wells*

Community discussions continue on potentially transformative developments at the present Atrium Village location (between Wells, Orleans, Division and Hill Streets). Chicago-based Fitzgerald Associates Architects has drafted plans for four new high-rises (one at each corner) and anchored by a central public park with modern landscaping, water features and tiered park space. A combined 1,673 rental units are proposed, a portion of which will be allocated as mixed-income.

In October, the Old Town Merchants and Residents Association – at the request of 27<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Walter Burnett, Jr., -- hosted a public forum at Walter Payton Academy. Interested residents of Atrium Village and Old Town were shown conceptual plans for the development and the various changes to the streetscape, infrastructure and traffic patterns in and around the site. Over 100 community members participated in discussion about the project's potential impact.



## New Businesses

Old Town is only as vibrant as the street-level businesses that give it life. Over the past year, several businesses have decided to relocate or start up in Old Town. With the additional retail of 1225 N. Wells and other projects still in discussion, we expect next year to be even busier, as more vacancies are converted into unique restaurants, shops and venues.

### Restaurants/Shops

It's been two banner years for the sweet-toothed among us – first came the opening of Kilwin's Chocolates and Ice Cream (1405 N. Wells) in 2010 and now we have **Pinkberry Frozen Custard** (1533 N. Wells) which began dishing out its famous "swirly goodness" sweet treats in early September. Pinkberry reinvented frozen yogurt when it launched in California in 2005. Since then, the brand has skyrocketed in popularity, with over 100 franchises spread across the country. This is the second location in Chicago.

**Kamehachi Japanese Restaurant and Sushi Bar**, a long-time favorite in Old Town, has moved into updated digs at 1531 N. Wells. Kamehachi opened the doors for a VIP party on Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, followed by the grand opening the next day. Kamehachi's management will continue as tenants in the former location at the corner of Wells and Schiller.

### Venues



*A look inside The Second City's new Up Comedy Club, opening December 1, 2011*

Club officially opens on December 1<sup>st</sup> with comedian Brian Posehn. Shortly after, the debut of *The Second City's History of Chicago* will be presented.

**The Second City**, a proving ground for talented comedians of today and generations past, is expanding its space in the Piper's Alley building with its new **UP Comedy Club**, a 300-seat two-tiered cabaret-style venue. The club, which replaces *Tina & Tony's Wedding*, will feature full dinner service during shows, with a focus on Chicago specialties. The full lineup will be forged from popular national standup comics, homemade revues, improvisational and family programming. The UP Comedy

In a public meeting on August 16<sup>th</sup>, Diana Martinez, President of The Second City, revealed business details that projected an injection of more than \$2.8 million dollars into the economy of Chicago and, specifically, Old Town. Approximately 80 new positions are currently being filled. The staff and management of The Second City are very excited to have the capacity and capabilities the new UP Comedy Club provides.



## Ward News

### Welcome To Our New 43<sup>rd</sup> Ward Alderman, Michele Smith



*Michele Smith,  
43<sup>rd</sup> Ward Alderman*

On April 5<sup>th</sup>, the 43<sup>rd</sup> Ward Aldermanic Seat – previously held by Vi Daley – was won by Michele Smith after an energetic election process. One month earlier, the Old Town Merchants & Residents Association invited leading aldermanic candidates Smith and Tim Egan to debate in a public forum at the Franklin Fine Arts Center. More than 150 members of the Old Town community attended and listened as the candidates outlined their goals and strategies for Ward 43. The candidates then fielded questions read by forum moderator Terry Sullivan. On election night, Michele won by 220 total votes.

Alderman Smith has a history of community engagement and prides herself on being open and honest in her work for Ward #43. She previously worked in the United States Attorney's office and then as an attorney in the private sector. Prior to becoming the ward's Alderman, she served as a Ward Committeeman. In this position, Smith hosted a "Future Development of Lincoln Park" forum and formed the "Clark Street Task Force" to tackle the issue of vacant storefronts. In her first year as Alderman, Smith continues to engage her constituents with enthusiasm and direct communication.

### 27<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Walter Burnett, Jr. Enters Fourth Term



*Walter Burnett, Jr.,  
27<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman*

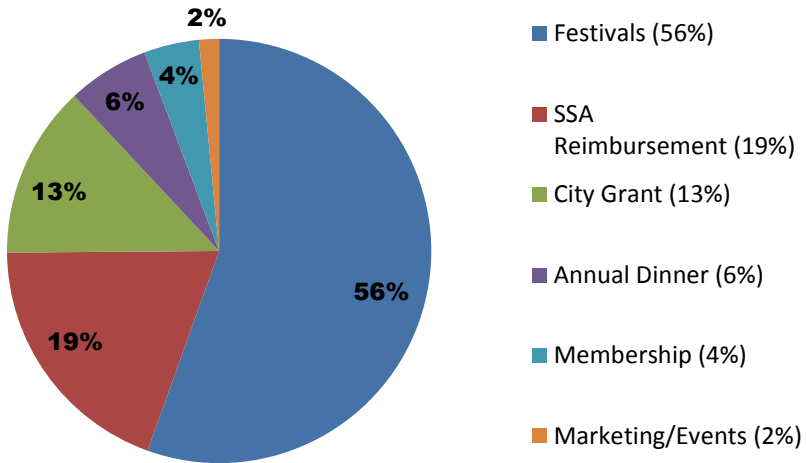
**Walter** Burnett, Jr. is now in his 4<sup>th</sup> term as the aldermanic representative of the 27<sup>th</sup> Ward after winning the April 5<sup>th</sup> Aldermanic election. He continues to take an even-measured, thoughtful approach in community issues.

Alderman Burnett has tasked the district's leaders to strengthen the community and improve the quality of life for everyone who works, lives or visits the 27<sup>th</sup> Ward. One such effort is the **Near North Unity Program**, a project designed to engage the district's residents and break down divisive physical and psychological barriers. NNUP consists of community stakeholders, business leagues, youth groups, churches, residential representatives and academic/athletic organizations.

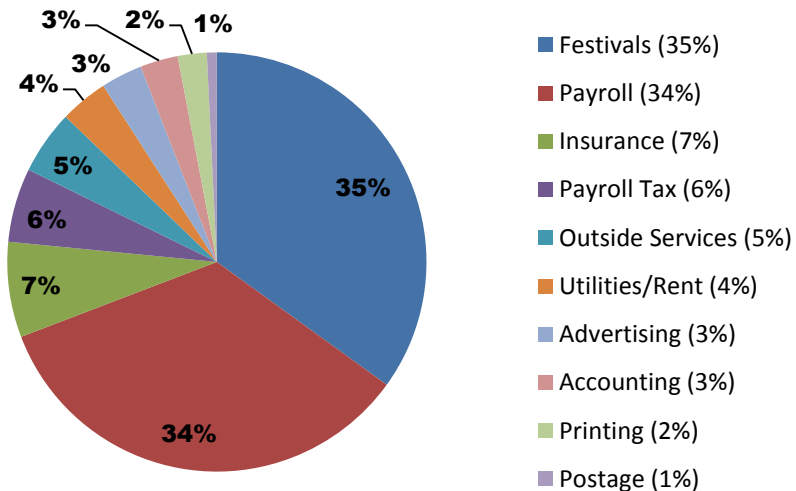
After a successful inaugural year, during which NNUP rolled out the Seward Park Jazz Series and the Chicago Men In Action basketball tournament, the group will now attempt to fully connect the neighborhood through a community website on which organizations can lead discussions, post event information and coordinate plans. The Old Town Merchants and Residents Association participates in NNUP planning and will be helping maintain the new Near North community web portal.



## 2011 OTMRA Revenue



## 2011 OTMRA Expenses



# Special Service Area (SSA) #48 – Old Town

Special Service Areas are local tax districts that fund expanded services and programs through a localized property tax levy within contiguous areas. The enhanced services and programs are in addition to those currently provided through the City.

SSA-funded projects typically include but are not limited to: public way maintenance and beautification; district marketing and advertising; business retention/attraction; façade improvements; and other commercial and economic development initiatives.

SSAs contract with local non-profits to manage the investment in the communities. Mayoral-appointed SSA Commissioners for each district oversee and recommend the annual services and budget. There are currently 42 active SSAs in Chicago.

SSA #48 Old Town contracted its initial set of services in 2011. All service contracts go through a formal RFP (request for proposal) process and all RFPs are posted on the Association's website in the SSA #48 section. Services contracted during 2011 include:

- District-wide sidewalk/street-cleaning | CleanStreet - [www.cleanstreet.com](http://www.cleanstreet.com)
- District-wide snow removal/de-icing | Tim's Snowplowing - [www.timssnowplowing.com](http://www.timssnowplowing.com)
- Enhanced fall plantings | Old Town Gardens – [www.oldtowngardens.com](http://www.oldtowngardens.com)
- Enhanced holiday decorations | Old Town Gardens – [www.oldtowngardens.com](http://www.oldtowngardens.com)
- Administrative/Operational Costs | OTMRA – [www.oldtownchicago.org](http://www.oldtownchicago.org)
- Annual Audit | Ruzicka and Associates – [www.ruzicka.com](http://www.ruzicka.com)

Sidewalk and street cleaning occurs on Saturdays, Sundays, and Wednesdays from 7:00am to 10:00am. Snow removal began on November 15<sup>th</sup> and runs through April 15<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the Commission of SSA #48 Old Town is currently in an RFP process for three sets of services including: Painting of street elements in the SSA district; Lighting Design for the Old Town gates and historical markers; and the Annual audit. Links to the RFPs can be found online at: [www.oldtownchicago.org/old-town-special-service-area](http://www.oldtownchicago.org/old-town-special-service-area)

The Commission of SSA #48 consists of nine volunteer residential and/or commercial community members: Barney Flanagan; Linda Gits, Don Klugman, Dino Lubbat, Gary Niemand, Peter O'Brien, Mark Proesel, Mary Quincannon and David Stone.

The boundaries of SSA #48 are the north side of North Avenue from North Park to LaSalle, the south side of North Avenue from Orleans to LaSalle, and both sides of Wells Street from North Avenue to Schiller. Commission meetings are held on a quarterly basis and follow the protocol of the Illinois Open Meetings Act. All SSA #48 Commission meetings are open to the public. The first meeting of 2012 will be held on January 9, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. at O'Brien's Restaurant, 1528 N. Wells.

If you would like to learn more about SSA #48 Old Town or the City's SSA program as a whole, please visit the Old Town Merchants and Residents Association website, or contact the office at 312-951-6106. Walk-ins are welcome at the OTMRA office located at 1520 N. Wells, Lower Level.

# Old Town Merchants and Residents Association



## Membership Information

The board and staff of the Old Town Merchants and Residents Association would once more like to thank its members for their passion and involvement this year. We look forward to your participation in 2012 and urge you to contact our office with your thoughts/ideas on how to make your membership even more valuable.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining the Association as a member, please visit [www.oldtownchicago.org/membership](http://www.oldtownchicago.org/membership) or stop by the OTMRA office for a hardcopy of the Membership Application. Benefits of membership include:

- ❖ **Networking activities:** Interact with other OTMRA members at bi-monthly Socials, Night Out events, Business Forums, Grand Openings, and the Annual Dinner.
- ❖ **Communication:** Inform and be informed with regular email newsletters, print materials and social networking platforms.
- ❖ **Marketing:** Members are given multiple marketing opportunities during the year including the banner program, group marketing, internet visibility and special event publicity.
- ❖ **Community Building:** Old Town is, first and foremost, a community that is made special by the people who work and live here. A membership with OTMRA is our way of putting those people together to work on common goals, achieve collaborative visions and strengthen the district from within.
- ❖ **Sponsorship:** Business members receive discount vendor rates for festivals and events put on by the Association, giving them a chance to reach out to thousands of potential new customers visiting the district during the Wells Street Art Fest and other regular events.



*OTMRA Members Tom Erd (The Spice House), Alderman Michele Smith, Reenie O'Brien, J.C. Canales (Dinotto Ristorante), Thomas March and Marty Sanderson (Trattoria Roma)*



*The 2011 Annual Report was written and produced in-house by the board and staff of the Old Town Merchants and Residents Association.*

***Old Town Merchants and Residents Association***

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