



# Tsuru Island

James Card: Editor

## The Garden, the Plaza & Third Thursday



This year Third Thursdays will have a major part in promoting the Touchstone Project for the Plaza. The first event that Jim Card and John Clark attended was the Third Thursday of June and what a great time it was. The setup was on Main Street by Amiton Furniture. A snow cone machine was loaned by Gresham Ford. Free snow cones for everyone and a great display for the Touchstone Project. Jim and John collected the "bingo sheets", which required each participant to visit each business indicated on the sheet. The participant had to get a stamp for that location. Once turned in to the snow cone location, the bingo card was enter into a drawing for the gift baskets filled with prizes from local businesses, including the Garden. About 70 bingo cards were turned in.

Jim and John had so much fun working with the people from the downtown business groups. Of course this could not happen without a lot of kidding and humor with the kids and families stopping by for a free treat.

For a really wonderful evening, stop by the downtown area on the Third Thursday of each month through September. Enjoy an evening of fun and live entertainment, free cupcakes from Sugar Cube, a chance to win the gift basket(s) and best of all "THOSE FAMOUS SNOWCONES"

**5:30 to 8:00 pm, third Thursdays of each month.**



### Visitors to the Garden

The number of visitors to the Garden seems to increase each week as the weather continues to improve. It is amazing how many people visit for the first time. Some are coming from quite a distance; Beaverton, Hillsboro, Hood River and the Dalles.

A young couple were relaxing on the most easterly bench of the garden recently. They asked a few question about the park and stated they were new to the area. The lady was from Gresham and the gentleman from Los Angeles. They had stumbled onto the park during their visit.

Most visitors that travel a longer distance have the Japanese Garden as a destination. Those that live close are split into two sections. Some are making the Garden a destination. But most just *happen* to come upon the Garden even though they may visit the park somewhat frequently.

# The Gift

In the early 1970's a number of Japanese American Nisei became interested in doing a project at Main City Park. Many of these families were associated with the Gresham-Troutdale Japanese American League. Kazuma (Kaz) Tamura and others started the project now known as Tsuru Island Japanese Garden. The original garden was given the Japanese name for the crane.

The "Tsuru" crane is the Red-crowned crane only found in east Asia and is one of the rarest cranes on earth. It is also a symbol of longevity, luck, and fidelity. Check out the "Dance of the Crane" on the internet.

The Tamura family migrated to this area in the early 1900's, logging off and farming the current family owned farm-site. Kaz was born in Gresham in 1921 and attended Gresham high school and graduated from Benson High School. He had hoped to get involved in radio repair school after obtaining his ham radio certification. That all changed for Kaz and his family as well as their fellow Nisei, during WWII. The family was forced to leave the farm and were placed at the Minidoka Internment camp in Idaho. Three years later the family returned to the Gresham farm and continued their successful farming operation.

In 1944, Kaz and Helen Taniguchi were married and purchased a separate farm in Carver, Oregon, where they grew vegetables and bedding plants. They raised their two children Paul and Pamela (Oja) while managing both farms until the Tamura parents passed. Kaz and Helen were involved the Japanese-American League, the Epworth Methodist Church, and the Oregon Farm Bureau.

Tomiko Takeuchi was fortunate enough to obtain the original scrap book from the



**Volunteer Appreciation Picnic**  
7/10/2018 5-7 pm  
Hot dogs, burgers, music and fun  
Bring your own lawn chairs and blankets  
RSVP by 6/29 – 503-618-2469



early 1970's garden project. This album is on display at most Gresham Ebetsu Sister City Association functions and is available for private showings on request. Included in that information are pictures of the project, the landscape, the park and the surrounding areas. Kaz visited the garden in later years as shown by the Gresham Outlook. He was disappointed with the upkeep and maintenance of the garden. He attempted to get assistance from the City and the community to help maintain the garden without success. Unquestionably his main disappointment was from the lack of respect for the garden by theft and trash and vandalism. The volunteers of Tsuru Island are reminded of those same feelings whenever they come to work in the garden and see trash and vandalism. Kaz and others had hoped to undertake a refurbishment of the garden in the 1980's and 1990's, but little was accomplished.

Kaz passed away after a tragic tractor accident on the farm in October of 2009 and was preceded by Helen in August 2000. **What a gift to Gresham** and the community. Our thanks to Kaz and all of the original volunteers for giving us a place that we can enjoy, grow with and pass on to a future community. It is an honor and privilege to be a part of this project.

To continue fostering the Garden into the future for the next 50 to 75 years, an endowment program has been initiated. Donations to the Garden are placed into this fund. And the new program, "Touchstone" engraving, funds will continue to enable the upkeep of the Garden.

An area at the Ebetsu Plaza set aside for engraved messages on 8x8 bricks produced by John Clark and the portable CNC machine. To see more information how you can help keep this dream alive by going to [www.ebetsuplaza.com](http://www.ebetsuplaza.com) and [www.greshamjapanese garden.com](http://www.greshamjapanese garden.com).

## Celebrating the Garden

June 30, 2018 completes the 7th year the Japanese Garden was adopted. This spring has been amazing for the garden. New growth is on every plant and new fruits coming onto the plants for fall color. We saw hundreds of bright red berries on the holly and the nandina during the winter, and since been eaten by wildlife.

It is a reminder when looking at pictures from the first six years of all that has been accomplished and all of the volunteers that have participated. You can view these changes by going to the website, [www.greshamjapanesegarden.com](http://www.greshamjapanesegarden.com), which is maintained by Sue Hughes at Resolutions. While there check out the many pictures within the "interactive garden" which is maintained by Bill Peterson. When looking at the list and seeing something like "building the bridge". Also think about how many volunteer hours were given and how many months it took to accomplish the task. Seven years...think what will happen in the next 10 years.

There is a chance to glimpse at the maturity of some of the plant materials by looking at the plants that were original to the first garden 45 years ago. We are not looking for how big around or how tall the shrub or tree might get, but rather at the training of the shrub, tree, vine or ground cover. How well it has performed through pruning and training and general care. And not least of which is the roll that it plays with the rest of the garden. The volunteers will be looking at the trunks, the bark, the blooms, leaves and bloom colors, branch structure and vigor, and the textures, size, colors and shapes as they blend together with surrounding plants. Nothing in nature matches - it just blends and flows.

The Garden has been very fortunate to have been gifted materials and funds and use of buildings. Over the past years major projects were completed – building the bridge and pavilion, major trees have been planted, wonderful bonsai selections were gifted by Bentwood Tree Farm, large specimens plants donated by Ty Card, the new path in-front of the "Resource Center", Ebetsu Plaza, the greenhouse from Toni and Barry, the wood from the City of Gresham, taming of the grasses around the island, just to name a few. All of these projects were funded by donors.

The real challenge now begins to continue our efforts and to ensure that the garden will remain and continue to prosper for decades to come. it is necessary so that what happened over the past 45 years does not happen again. Sadafumi Uchiyama told Tomiko and Jim in the first 90 days of this journey that "if they like what they see, they will follow". The "garden endowment" funds will continue to enable the garden to flourish.



### CAMERA SEARCH

The answer to the recent vandalism is to invest into new cameras that have the same functionality as our current set. There will be efforts made to have cameras at the Resource Center and storage yard.

The process of researching grants is in process and hopefully will be obtained by the end of July 2018.

If a camera had been in place at the Resource Center it would have captured the theft of a very special tree in the plaza. The plant had to have taken 2 people to lift the pot and it had to have been hauled in a truck or van because of the size and configuration. We are also in communication with various departments in the City to discuss a volunteer program that would allow monitoring of the cameras. Also to create a neighborhood security group to walk Main City Park.

In the meantime, please acknowledge all the efforts John Harold puts forth to monitor the cameras. And for his research and communication with the camera manufacturer to resolve access issues. He also keeps in touch with the NET (neighborhood enforcement team) officers.