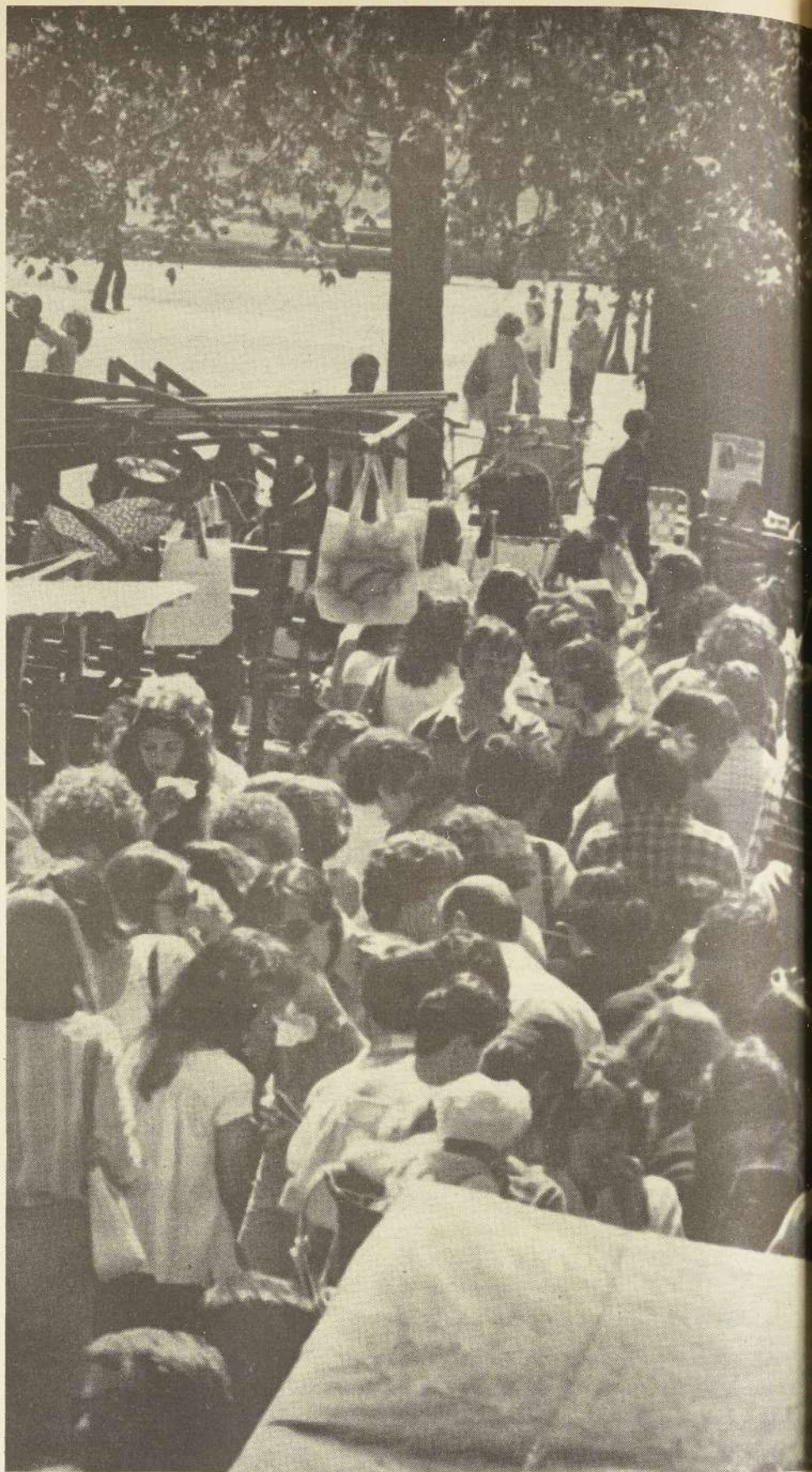


# Young and old attracted to Saturday Market in tradition of 'olde worlde fares'



By Jim McCaffrey  
Of The Print

For those of us lucky enough to live in the Portland area the spirit and festivity of open air markets are again being brought to life every weekend at the Saturday Market.

Do you remember growing up with the ancient tales of the Arabian Nights? Aladdin probably found his lamp in some bazaar or market so customary in those eastern and near eastern countries.

Sinbad, like most of the Persian sailors, set out to bring back gold and silks and other fine ware to sell at the open air markets in hopes of quick fortune.

Circuses of acrobats and jugglers used the markets as forums to display their talents in hopes that people would throw money in appreciation. Musicians also came to markets to entertain.

Just as important, people came to these markets to see and learn about other people and the treasures and cultures of other lands. Fine foods and clothing were sold at the market and people with an eye for artistic quality in furniture and household utensils rarely went away disappointed.

The market was visited by king and peasant alike and rarely did either leave empty handed. Market days were an event that created great excitement and anticipation in households much as Christmas creates similar feelings among many modern households. The markets were another Mecca to trade, and crafts people who were able to distribute and display their wares at little cost to themselves.

The rich cultural heritages were most adequately expressed in these markets, thus providing the opportunity for the exchange and enrichment of ideas. The markets then attracted poets and philosophers, teachers and students, madmen and religious folk all there to participate in the market festivities.

Market places were an important means that the great religious leaders used as a tool to help spread their ideals. Both Jesus and Buddha could both be found doing much of their teachings in market places.

For some reason it is hard to imagine a modern Jesus preaching in Washington Square or a



modern Aladdin finding a cheap lamp in Lloyd's Center, for that matter.

For many areas the market place is still the exciting open forum that it always was, but the pressures of modern living are rapidly decreasing them even in the far east and Arab lands.

Located downtown underneath the Steel Bridge in Northwest Portland, the Saturday Market is a collection of artisans, craftsmen and entertainers gathered together to display and sell their work. People from miles around come to see the sights and enjoy the entertainment.

Others come to enjoy the fine cooked food and tasty desserts served by many of the merchants. The open air setting provides the perfect spot for blending the bright colors and luscious smells with a mixture of people from all areas and walks of life. Surrounding the Saturday Market is a collection of fairly recently renovated shops and restaurants which are some of the most interesting in Portland.

Woodcarvings, paintings, photographs, pottery and clothing can be found amongst a collection of other displays too numerous to mention, but as unique as the people who take the time to make them. At the Saturday Market mimists can be found entertaining alongside a Greenpeace booth where people are being asked to help prevent the slaughter of whales.

At the market "madmen" are free to preach and musicians free to play. The market is an acknowledgement that often the old ways can be better. More important the market still is a place to have fun, learn of other cultures (and more about your own) and participate in the creative exchange of ideas and creativity that were so important to so much of the world for so long a time.



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