

leschinews

APRIL MEETING

Representatives from Seattle Parks & Recreation will join us at the upcoming April meeting! This is a great opportunity to find out what's going on with Leschi's greenspaces such as the new pier project as well as ongoing projects throughout Leschi's parks. Bring your questions!

Wednesday, April 2 at 7pm

Grace United Methodist Church, Lower Hall.

Doors open at 6:45pm.

722 30th Ave S, Seattle, WA 98144

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SAVE THE DATE

May 7

Come join us to hear from Stephanie Johnson-Toliver, the President of the Washington Black Heritage Society and Board Member at MOHAI.

President's Message

Hello Leschi Community!

It was wonderful to see so many of you at our March meeting. We were joined by District 3 City Council Member, Joy Hollingsworth, and her District 3 Director, Alex Altshuler. Joy presented updates about committees and projects and fielded a range of questions from the audience. If you weren't able to join us, please check out the article in this issue recapping the meeting.

We have great topics coming up. On April 2, we will be joined by a team from Seattle Parks and Recreation. We are requesting an overview of the pier project as well as updates about the budget, maintenance plans and volunteering. If you have a topic you want to make sure we address, please send it to us at leschicouncil@gmail.com.

On May 7, we will be joined by Stephanie Johnson-Toliver. She is President of the Black Heritage Society of Washington State and on the Board at MOHAI. May is National Historic Preservation Month and the Central District has a number of African American sites vanished and still here. Stephanie will speak about the significance that historic sites play to the character of our CD community.

Both meetings will start at 7pm at the Grace United Methodist Church. Doors open at 6:45pm, show up early to snag a cookie and a good seat!

I encourage you to read this month's editorial. Diane Snell is handing off the editorial baton of the *Leschi News* to a new leader, with the transition planned over the next 2-3 issues. Diane has been an incredible community leader in Leschi for many years, serving as a board member and editor of the *Leschi News*. She is passionate about doing what is right and advocating for all voices and perspectives. I have learned a lot from her and admire her greatly. I am hopeful that Diane will continue to participate on the LCC Board and share her experience and insights with us as long as possible.

We are happy to welcome a new friendly face to the LCC Board. Ritzy Davidson was born and raised in Leschi and we greatly appreciate that she has stepped up to ensure that we continue to deliver great content in this small and mighty newsletter.

We do have one vacancy on the current board. Allen Urness resigned and the position of Vice President is now open. We will hold a short election at the April meeting (we promise, it will be quick!) If you are interested in learning more about the position, please email us at leschicouncil@gmail.com. We do have one interested candidate so far.

I hope to see you around the neighborhood.

Ashley Martin
President, Leschi Community Council



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and visit our website: leschinews.com

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Please share with a friend.



MOVING TOWARD A FOND FAREWELL

We moved to Washington state in 1978 from Maryland between Baltimore and DC. We landed in Bellevue. As the years went by, we realized that we slept in Bellevue but really lived in Seattle with our penchant for live theater, opera and good restaurants. When we decided to move to Seattle as empty nesters, we explored the housing market in the lakeside communities as I still worked in Bellevue and would be commuting. We were attracted to hillside housing as it reminded us of San Francisco where we lived as newlyweds. We found a Leschi house made for books with empty bookcases in every room just waiting for our hoard and many windows for looking out at the garden; this was in the summer of 1989. Although we continued our theatre-going and restaurant-eating, we also enjoyed the walks in Leschi. It took a while to find the Leschi Community Council and the *Leschi News* but once we did, we were hooked! We had come from a planned “city” where civic involvement was encouraged, and it appeared that this was true here as well.



I became very fond of Art Mink, the editor of the *News* at that time and when he approached me about editing, I was flattered, but hated to lose Art. He taught me so much! There was so much more than just the writing; I had to learn the intricacies of the mailing process. Changes were made to the paper at the suggestion of readers: Culture Corner became a monthly feature and Art Critic Susan Platt began writing for *LN* (as I call it) and giving lectures and slide shows at our monthly meetings. And restaurant reviews became popular as more businesses came our way.

I have had much fun with the *News* and even got myself into a restricted press meeting posing as a reporter with a Press badge. But the time has come that I am unable to get around as much as previously and I need to pass the baton, so Leschi does not lose its paper.

I want to introduce Ritzy Davidson who was born and raised in Leschi. We are adding her to the masthead as Co-editor while she learns the ropes. Here's Ritzy!

AND A WARM WELCOME!

Thank you, Diane, for the introduction and warm welcome! The *Leschi News* would not be the incredible institution it is without Diane's hard work and dedication. Leschi is so lucky to have her, and I greatly appreciate and admire the impact she has left on the *Leschi News*.

As Diane mentioned, I was born and raised in Leschi and feel so lucky to have grown up here. There is nothing better than a slow summer day spent at Lake Washington that ends

with dinner on Jackson Street. Leschi is where I learned to ride a bike and its steep hills are perfect for sledding down in the winter. Seattle itself holds a very special place in my heart—the natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest is unmatched. That and the amazing opportunities in Seattle are what make the city and Leschi so wonderful. I so appreciate how the *Leschi News* shares information on upcoming events and ways to get involved locally. I want to continue to promote Leschi and Seattle events and share information about the neighborhood.



As an editor for my high school newspaper, I came to really appreciate journalism on the local scale. *Leschi News* provides such an important space for community members to share. I am excited to help contribute to the *Leschi News* to create a medium for our community's news. The *Leschi News* is one of the few neighborhood newsletters still in print. I want to keep this incredible piece of Seattle history flourishing. I currently work as a Political Organizer for a union, and it has taught me that the most powerful engagement occurs on the local scale. Opportunities to share like this, from community member to community member, create stronger networks and neighborhoods.

I look forward to working with all of you to help foster a space for us to share history, opinions, news, and reviews focused on our beautiful neighborhood. If you have ideas for an article or want to share a piece of writing or art, please email NewsLeschi@gmail.com. I cannot wait to hear from you!

Many thanks to the monthly contributors, Diane Snell and Ritzy Davidson

Hi Neighbors,

Spring has sprung and busiest time of the real estate cycle is upon us.

Buyers anxiously await new inventory to hit the market after a very limited past 6 months.

Sellers hope stock market instability and general economic uncertainty won't keep buyers waiting in the wings.

These are difficult times in real estate. If you'd like to strategize how to maximize the sale of your home or bid and win the one you've been looking for, please reach out. I'd love to help.

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Scott Lennard is a real estate broker affiliated with Compass. Compass is a licensed real estate broker and abides by Equal Housing Opportunity laws.

Neighborhood and Beyond



CITY COUNCIL MEMBER JOY HOLLINGSWORTH ATTENDS MARCH MEETING

Seattle District 3 City Council Member Joy Hollingsworth spoke to a capacity crowd of 55 community members at the Leschi Community Council (LCC) meeting on March 5.

Federal Impacts

When asked about federal issues and their potential impact on City residents, Joy explained she would be attending the Federal Select Committee meeting on March 6th to explore how potential federal cuts could impact the City. The Mayor is working with City department heads to determine how much of their budget is impacted by federal funding. The plan is to be proactive and try to insulate the City from the federal cuts as much as possible.

Joy discussed the fear raised by the trans community about feeling targeted and how City school kids are scared about immigration enforcement. The City of Seattle has joined the lawsuit representing fellow sanctuary cities. She shared that the Seattle Police Department is not complying with ICE. The Federal Select Committee will hear from immigrant and trans groups to find out how the City can better support them. She reminded everyone the Mayor supports reproductive rights and gender affirming care. She shared that the City, County, and State will work together to protect the City.

Housing

A number of community members raised concerns regarding the City's Comprehensive Plan. Joy shared there are currently six appeals to the Plan being reviewed by the City Attorney's Office which means it's in a holding pattern and can't be actioned by City Council until those appeals

are addressed. Joy's focus is on Washington State House Bill 1110 (known as the Middle Housing Bill) since that requires action now. This bill requires cities to allow a broader range of housing types in areas traditionally zoned for single-family homes. The City needs to amend the bill (customize it so it works for the City) which will be followed by a public comment period for 30 days. For those on Joy's newsletter list, she will send out a memo with key points explaining the amendments once they're finalized.

Joy was questioned on why she said no to the maker's zone housing plan in SoDo. She felt the process was rushed and that it didn't address the impact to the Port and the maritime industry. She explained that 80% of the goods transported from the Port of Seattle are by truck. She also noted that the Port makes up 12% of the City's land and 30% of its tax revenue. While she is committed to affordable housing, she was concerned the housing plan would negatively impact the City's economy.

Transportation/Traffic Calming

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) released the first draft of its Transportation Plan including which projects it will focus on in the first year. She noted that SDOT's biggest priority in year one is maintenance and street repair. Joy said she would advocate for the Leschi traffic calming project to be included in the first year, but it might get pushed to year two. Joy offered to connect the LCC with SDOT to figure out next steps. Community members are encouraged to review the 2025 Transportation Levy Projects Delivery Plan for more information.

Focus for 2025

In the past, City Council was focused more on legislation but now is concentrating on constituent services. She is pushing for better front-facing interactions with

Parks, SDOT, and the Department of Construction and Inspections. She is urging departments to provide phone support rather than just email. She is pushing departments to stay in communication with the public and explain what's going on when concerns are raised. She encouraged those in attendance to use the Find It, Fix It app but to also send her office a picture of the issue so that they can help escalate it if needed. She noted that the City filled 25,000 potholes last year. She invited community members to reach out to her office if they are not getting the support they need.

Joy is focused on cleaning up the City including sidewalks, bike lanes, and parks. For help with Leschi parks and green spaces, she encouraged community members to email concerns to pks_info@seattle.gov which has a track record of being responsive. She committed to sending a member from her team to LCC's April 2nd meeting when Parks will be providing updates.

Joy encouraged the Leschi community to reach out to her office for support at d3help@seattle.gov or 206.684.8803. To receive her newsletter, go to: seattle.gov/council/hollingsworth.

-Nikola Davidson

IS IT TIME TO RENEW? CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL!

The Leschi Community Council has been making a push to get supporting members to renew their memberships through individual outreach. To date, over 70 letters have been sent out. Help save postage and resources by proactively renewing your membership! Not sure if it's time to renew? Check the date on the mailing label on the back of your *Leschi News* where it shows "Member Thru." Are you overdue? Not to worry! You can renew using the QR code on the last page or cut out the renewal form and send it in with a check. Thank you for your ongoing support!

-Nikola Davidson

DON'T FORGET: SIGN UP FOR EARTH DAY CLEAN-UP EVENT ON APRIL 26!

Earth Day is a great time to help clean up our neighborhood and restore our green spaces! Join us for our Earth Day Clean-Up event on Saturday, April 26 from 11:30am-1:30pm at Leschi South Moorage (150 Lakeside Ave. South). We'll provide food and refreshments to keep you fueled. One group of volunteers will pick up trash along Lakeside and Leschi Park. The other group will focus on removing invasive blackberries along the shoreline and replacing them with wood chips. We'll also provide tools and supplies (although feel free to bring your own gloves and tools if you prefer).

This particular piece of shoreline is part of the pier project (also known as the shore landscaping project) that Seattle Parks and Recreation will be providing updates on during the April 2 Leschi Community Council meeting. Seattle Parks has made progress with blackberry removal in this area but there is more to do, including removing the plants' roots to prevent them from coming back this summer.

This clean-up event is a joint venture with the Seattle SAKE Paddling Club, Friends of Street Ends, and Washington Water Trails Association. Support, tools, and supplies are being provided by Seattle Parks, Seattle Department of Transportation, and Seattle Public Utilities Adopt-a-Street program. If you have questions or need more information, reach out to nikola.davidson@gmail.com. To sign up, go to clubsake.com/events/272827.

-Nikola Davidson

STATUS REPORT ABOUT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

How are our parks? I've visited all seven of them in the last couple of days, and they are looking at their best as they do in early spring when the young buds swell and come to bloom.

The last year both challenged and rewarded our parks. In May, Powell Barnett Park was inundated by more than 120 asylum seekers from faraway places. We saw early that the Park could not provide sanitation for 120 people, particularly lack of enough toilets. We held a press conference, and within a week the Mayor found alternative housing under the roof.

In the spring and summer, Powell Barnett Park was graced with the addition of 18 trees, Flo Ware Park received three new trees, and Leschi Park received six new trees, thanks to City programs for enhancing the parks.



The news we'd rather we didn't have to report: In late July, the remains of a homeless camper were found in a thickly planted landscape bed, north of the comfort station in Leschi Park. The Community Council asked the Parks Department to address the public safety issue there by thinning the landscaping to provide better visibility. The thinning process is still underway at this writing.

Early in the year 2024, we learned of a landscape addition on the shore of Leschi Park. The landscaping was described as mitigation for the replacement of the breakwater for the marina. Would trees block the panoramic view that so many people enjoy? It took most of the year to convince the Parks Department to agree to limit plants to shrubs and ground cover, but there will also be a large benefit of an improved gravel beach.

Conditions for forest calming walks are better every year as trees and other native plants, added by volunteer park stewards, come to maturity. Try walking through the woods at Peppi's Playground, or the Leschi Natural Area, Frink Park or upper Leschi Park. Enjoy walks along the Lake by trails of north Madrona Park. Just driving along Lake Washington Boulevard through Frink, Leschi, and Madrona is a special joy.

The children's playgrounds at Flo Ware Park, Powell Barnett Park, Leschi Park, and Peppi's Playground are well-used and well-maintained. Also, the public boat moorages are rebuilt and looking very professional. The Club Sake Dragonboat club are frequent users.

-John Barber



TAKE A TOUR OF THE LESCHI LITTLE LIBRARIES!

I remember the first time I came across a Little Library in the neighborhood. It was in 2013 and located on 31st Ave S (it's no longer there). It was partially hidden, and I almost missed seeing it. This added to it feeling like a magic discovery and it stopped me in my tracks. After perusing the books, I marched home and announced that I needed to immediately create one for our street (31st Ave near Cherry).

At the time, I had inherited a 1970s, Northwest-inspired, wooden Barbie house made from a Sunset magazine template. I turned the upper level into a Barbie and Ken diorama complete with them sitting in vintage chairs and reading leather-bound, miniature books I had made. It was a big hit for two days until everything inside was stolen but I kept the lower floor as the library (with human-sized books) which enjoyed over 10 years of use. While it's been replaced with a less novel Little Library, it still gets quite a bit of traffic. Whenever I walk in the neighborhood with my daughter Ritzy, we always must stop at each Little Library in hopes of finding our next fiction fix!

As the weather warms up, it's a great time to take a tour of all 16 of our Leschi Little Libraries. Use this map to visit them all: tinyurl.com/mvpawmp6. If I missed any, let me know (nikola.davidson@gmail.com) and I'll get them added. For the Little Library with the best view, check out the one at 412 34th Ave which includes a bench, so you don't have

to wait to start reading! I also liked the one at 155 28th Ave for so faithfully matching the house behind it. For inspiration painted on the outside, visit the Little Library at 722 30th Ave S (check it out when you come to the next Leschi Community Council meeting!) For the coolest feature, look for the skylight in the one at 403 32nd Ave. It makes it easier to see the books during our darker days and I like its sweet painted flowers. Hope to see you at a Leschi Little Library soon!

-Nikola Davidson

VOLUNTEER WITH YOUR LESCHI COMMUNITY!

At the Leschi Community Council, our goal is to foster a strong community to make Leschi a great place to live and visit. We accomplish that goal through big and small support from volunteers throughout the community. Truly, no volunteer task is too small! A few open tasks we are looking for volunteers on include: updating our community kiosk by Bluwater once a month, helping us draft and send emails 1-2 times a month, or invoicing and following up with our advertisers (no selling required). Email us at leschicouncil@gmail.com if any of these interest you, or if you'd like to learn more about other volunteer opportunities. Every volunteer helps so much!

-Matthias Linnenkamp

APRIL UPDATE CENTRAL AREA SENIOR CENTER

Central Area Senior Center (CASC) kicked off the year with active health promotion endeavors, growing outreach efforts to members facing isolation and housing pressures, the rollout of new initiatives emerging from the Annual Retreat's priorities, and the continued strengthening of partnerships that support exercise, education, and community engagement is enhancing the center's work. CASC's leadership, staff, and volunteers remained dedicated to providing a supportive environment where members and those with health or financial challenges can thrive.

UW Nursing students, eight in all, continued their internships at the center on Thursdays to offer health surveys, health education, and blood pressure checks. They also created multiple short walking routes under the "SHARP" program, to expand the program's walking route options.

From January's Annual Retreat, CASC has a working "2025 Wish List" that highlights new event ideas and prioritize the capital projects currently being completed. These include expanded cultural celebrations and improved volunteer training. Staff are sorting these ideas by feasibility and prioritizing those that align with senior wellness and social engagement.

CASC will soon advertise and recruit a Program Outreach Manager and a Salesforce/Database Specialist to strengthen our community engagement, refine membership processes, and track program outcomes more efficiently.

There will be no April Green Dolphin on April 18. Facility upgrades will be occurring on this day. Staff offices are moving and upgrades to technology made.

- Dian Ferguson, Executive Director

LESCHI SCHOOL UPDATE

The Leschi PTA's Annual Giving Campaign is currently underway and as always we rely upon and greatly appreciate support from the Leschi community. At the same time, many members of the parent and family community are engaged in advocacy to push the Washington state legislature to support increased funding for all public schools including SPS. Please go to leschipta.org/donate to see how you can support our students, teachers and families.

On May 1 starting at 5.30pm, please join us in the school cafeteria for the annual Golden Grads Jazz Concert, featuring Butch Harrison and Good Company, to contribute to our family support fund and help improve housing stability and food security for Leschi families.

Will you be buying flowers for a special someone on Mother's Day? Please consider doing so through the SESEC Mother's Day flower sale. A portion of your purchase of beautiful flowers locally grown by Hmong farmers in the Skagit Valley will support Title I schools including Leschi in South and Central Seattle. You can pre-order at sesecwa.org/mothers-day-flower-sale-2/ and pick up flowers at Leschi Elementary on Mother's Day weekend.



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THANK YOU to BluWater Bistro and its patrons in the community for their tremendous support to our school. For the fourth year in a row, BluWater Bistro's fundraiser has raised \$10,000 in donations! The plan is to put these funds toward the cost of essential hourly staff and tutors at the school.

-Benson Wilder

LIFE AND TIMES IN LESCHI

Landslides in Leschi, Part 2

EARLY 20TH CENTURY SLIDES AND THE CITY'S PREVENTION EFFORTS

In late November 1909, residents from 32nd and Dearborn to 33rd and Judkins petitioned the City Council to “take some action at once with a view to restraining the slide which is mucking our homes – such slide being caused by the recent grading of streets in that district.” In response, a month later, the council passed an emergency bill to authorize “the driving of piles and the construction of bulkheads to stop the slides on 31st Avenue South between Lane Street and Judkins Street.”



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That didn't solve all the landslide problems, however. In April 1912, the council directed the Board of Public Works to remove slides on 31st from Dearborn to Norman and elsewhere in the area, and to construct rock drains in the same area.

Sometime before 1926, the city built a drainage tunnel in the divided portion of Lake Washington Boulevard South (also known then as 34th Avenue South), between Charles and Judkins streets, from the top of South Parkland Place (then called Parkland Way) to the southwest and south for a total of 517 feet. In the fall of 1926, a slide happened near the northern end of the tunnel.

That winter, a cave-in occurred nearby, near the median of the street. In the spring of 1933, a city engineer reported cleaning debris out of the collapsed tunnel. He inspected the tunnel to a distance of 289 feet but could not go further because it had caved in as far beyond as he could see. The tunnel had originally been built with lumber bracing, which by this time was badly decayed. The engineer was concerned that continued caving would damage the private properties above. He called for repairs and backfilling.

Much of the repair work was funded by the state's Washington Emergency Relief Administration, created in 1933 as the state's response to the Depression, and used laborers consigned to such work in consideration of their relief benefits. The federal Works Progress Administration later joined the effort. To control subsurface water, the project, and others like it, used interceptor trenches, finger drains, tunnels, footing drains, and horizontal drains.

The working conditions were described as miserable: “Working approximately 150 men who are inexperienced, underfed and unwilling, in trenches from 15 to 25 feet in depth where the saturated ground is moving and under unfavorable weather conditions, is a difficult construction project to handle. These crews are changing continuously, as the men are working off their relief payments. The work is done on a basis of six hours a day and five days a week.”

Later documents refer to another slide, along the Norman Street stairway from 33rd to 34th near the tunnel described above. In response, the city drilled numerous test wells and created gravel-filled trench drains in 1935 and 1936.

Seattle, though, has sometimes sabotaged its own efforts. In 2019, when well-known local jazz musician Ruby Bishop died, her property on 32nd near Norman, right in the middle of the 1898 slide area, was sold to developers. To build two new houses on the property, they illegally cut down a massive old cedar tree that had been sucking up the hillside drainage for decades; the destruction may well contribute to future flooding or earth movement. The city cited the perpetrators and issued a fine of over \$90,000, but later reduced it to \$20,000, as if to say that it wasn't really that important. Meanwhile, the two houses sold for about \$7 million, on land acquired for just over \$1 million. In Leschi, this is what affordable housing looks like.

Next month: landslides on Lake Dell

-Roger Lippman

The author writes monthly about Leschi history and his experiences over his 49 years in the neighborhood.



Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. Photo credit: New York Public Library Digital Collection

WHEN ALICE B. TOKLAS LIVED IN SEATTLE

A few years ago I attended a play at an off-beat Seattle theater named Alice B. Toklas, and mentioned to the doorperson as I left that Toklas was at one time a Seattle resident.

Toklas was famous, of course, as the life-long companion of Gertrude Stein. As a team, Stein and Toklas contributed to the cultural vortex of 1920s Paris. Their atelier at 27 Rue de Fleurus housed Picasso and Matisse paintings while serving as the meeting place for literary and musical giants.

Alice was born in California. Her earliest years were spent in San Francisco where she attended private schools. As a child she travelled to Europe, while her family members established mining and mercantile businesses in Washington state. Her father's businesses — which suffered two fires — caused the family to move north in the early 1890s.

Alice attended Miss Mary Cochrane's School in Seattle. In her autobiography, *What is Remembered*, she wrote that Miss Cochrane "and her two sisters were the staff, and all these three knew was what they taught us." Alice Toklas' mother was an ardent gardener, and their First Hill home was ablaze with a variety of flowers. Alice recalled bouquets made up of Homer roses, hops, dwarf yellow pansies, periwinkles, and sweet peas.

A touching vignette was Toklas' memory of visiting a hop ranch in the Snoqualmie Valley. A young Native American woman came to their door and asked for a pair of shoes in which to bury her child. A friend of the Toklases provided a pair of small high-heeled white satin slippers.

Alice attended the University of Washington, which was then at the downtown site of the present Fairmont-Olympic Hotel. She described her only year at the University as "lively." Dances and parties on the shores of Lake Washington were highlights of her brief academic experience.

Just before the outbreak of the Spanish-American War (1898), Mrs. Toklas's poor health caused the family to return to California. Alice returned to Seattle occasionally, once to give a piano recital with her friend Elizabeth Hansen.

By 1905 Toklas had briefly met Gertrude Stein and her brother Leo in San Francisco. In September, 1907, Alice sailed for France. Her name will forever be linked with the Gertrude Stein circle, the Dadaists, and string of anecdotes surrounding Ernest Hemingway, James and Nora Joyce, Ezra Pound, Sylvia Beach, and others. Before all that a young Alice B. Toklas was an obscure, happy Seattleite.

~Junius Rochester



Junius Rochester, whose family has shaped the city for many generations, is an award-winning Northwest historian and author of numerous books about Seattle and other places. This article appeared previously in the *Post Alley News*.



Join your neighbors in picking up litter at Powell Barnett Park on April 20, 10am-12pm. Stay awake and energized with the provided coffee and pastry!

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Culture Corner

AI, REBEL: THE ART AND ACTIVISM OF AI WEIWEI

Ai, Rebel runs until September 7 at Seattle Art Museum; *Water Lilies Lego* opens March 19 at Asian Art Museum; *Circle of Animals: Zodiac Heads* opens May 17 at Olympic Sculpture Park.

First we see a tree bolted together from different woods. A poem by Ai Weiwei's poet father Ai Qing about trees: "One tree, another Tree, each standing alone and erect....". Accused of "rightism" his father was exiled to Xinjiang province in 1958 when Ai Weiwei was a baby. After twenty years they were released in 1976 with the death of Mao and the end of the Cultural Revolution. In the 2022 *Water Lilies*, Ai Weiwei makes a direct reference to that traumatic experience, with a large black area referring to the underground dug out where he lived with his family. The gnarled tree in this gallery symbolizes longevity and perseverance in adversity.

Ai Weiwei joined an early avant garde group in Beijing, then moved to New York City in 1981 for 10 years. Amidst his black and white photos from the East Village is the artist with Allen Ginsburg, who lived near him. Ai Weiwei spent a lot of time listening to the poet.

In the next gallery are his last large paintings of Chairman Mao and not far away *Safe Sex*, 1988, a Chinese Army raincoat with a condom coming out of the pocket. In New York he was impressed by Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol which is clearly seen in these works.

Then we see Ai Weiwei destroying or modifying ancient artifacts and remaking them as contemporary art. One extreme example is pulverizing neolithic vases and showing the dust in square glass containers. His most famous act is dropping a Han pot, but here he has painted them with brightly colored industrial paint. I feel discomfort with this act, as a lover of ancient pottery. He rendered handcrafted wooden Qing dynasty stools nonfunctional by removing a leg for example. Other sculptures are transformations are bicycles and stools arranged in abstract forms or a sofa and chair made in marble.

But these are gestures compared to his work after the earthquake in China in 2008 when he discovered that hundreds of children had died because of the poor construction of their schools. He traced them and honored



Tree, Wood, 2009-2010, with FOONG Ping, exhibition curator and SAM's Foster Foundation Curator of Chinese Art(in blue jacket) introducing the exhibition.

them, with students' backpacks formed into a huge snake and listing all their names on a huge sheet of white paper in the exhibition. Nearby is the rebar from the destroyed schools shaped into abstract sculpture.

His own detention in 2011 probably is a result of this project in which he recorded parents of children heartbroken with how they were ignored by the government. Or it may have been his huge presence on the internet, where elitism gives way to populism. We can walk into the recreation of the spare room in which he was detained. But the scars of the 81 days stayed with him.

Ai Weiwei moved to Europe in 2015, just as many hundreds of Middle Eastern migrants were trying to cross to Greece from Turkey. His long scroll depicts migrants

walking or jammed on vehicles, negotiating ruins or crossing rivers. Called the Odyssey, the title does evoke the travel of Odysseus multiplied by many hundreds of people.

As we approach the room at the end of the exhibition we see a giant Lego portrait of Ai Weiwei in a flash image, a photo he took as he was being taken into detention, here recreated.

The exhibition has other Lego pieces, but the most important given our situation today is the Mueller Report, the cover page and the first page, heavily redacted. This report on Russian hacking during the 2016 election tells us what was happening, as we think about our cozy relationship developing today with Russia. A marble surveillance camera is positioned in front of the report.

There is so much to see and experience in this exhibition! Don't miss the wallpaper loaded with symbols. Then take a look at the small zodiac heads here and stay tuned for my May column on the Olympic Sculpture park installation opening May 17.

The exhibition provokes us rather than allowing us to sink into admiration. Each phase of his work represents a challenge about the meaning of authenticity. Ai Weiwei defies us to think about that through his constantly changing media and subjects. After his traumatic childhood, it is not surprising that he is willing to strip away obvious meanings and challenging us to look deeper.

-Susan Platt, PhD

www.artandpoliticsnow.com

LESCHI ARTISTS FEATURED IN STRANGE TIME ART SHOW

Soil Art Gallery is located at 112 3rd Ave South in Pioneer Square. First Thursday is April 3 from 5-8pm, otherwise the gallery is open in April every Fri-Sun, 12-5pm.

Leschi artists Melissa Winstanley and Max Cerami are exhibiting pieces in the upcoming show *Strange Time* in the Soil Art Gallery from April 3-27 in Pioneer Square. The gallery shows novel timekeeping devices alongside poetic representations and commentaries on time. In the March edition of *Leschi News*, we focused on Melissa's piece titled *Flower Clock* (see photo) which uses the opening and closing of flowers to tell time.

Max has two pieces in *Strange Time*. The one featured in the photo is called *Lambda* (co-created with Capitol Hill artist Tristan Huber). *Lambda* is a clock that shows no demarcation of hours on its face but a single division of light and dark toned woods. As the clock's hand traces the oblong shape of the face, it shows where this moment falls within the current day-night cycle. The hand crosses from light to dark wood at the same moment the sun passes below the horizon. It then tracks slowly along the dark wood just in time to cross back into the light wood section with the next sunrise.

In Leschi, summer and winter daylight hours differ by almost 8 hours—knowledge of how to maximize one's exposure to this brief whisper of winter sun is critical to mental health. To capture and display this information, a small onboard computer coupled with a GPS chip updates the speed the clock hand travels over the light and dark portions

daily. Because of its construction and programming, *Lambda* can be hung anywhere in the world and will automatically show the viewer the correct length of day and night. For more information and artwork, go to maxcerami.com.

-Nikola Davidson



Melissa Winstanley's "Flower Clock"



Max Cerami's "Lambda"



Seeking Sustenance...

APRIL SHOWERS US WITH GREAT WINE

Happy Spring Leschi! Spring is here, along with fresh cut grass, baseball rainouts, and more pink wine than we know what to do with! Following is a Hot-7 list of top wines that we loved throughout Washington Wine Month in March, along with a couple of imports not to be missed! Cheers! Enjoy!

Pink!

2024 Kind Stranger Rose Columbia Valley \$15

This vintage is 62% Mourvèdre and 38% Grenache, it's bone dry wine is classically pale Provençal style rosé with bright crispness. Notes of strawberry, watermelon rind, fresh tarragon, and citrus blossom abound. –Winemaker notes

White!

2023 Fernlands Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough \$13

Exceptionally aromatic, exuding vibrant aromas of zesty lime, gooseberry, and a hint of box hedge. The generous palate delivers flavors of juicy tropical fruit and citrus, underpinned by herbaceous green bell pepper. The lively Marlborough acidity provides a clean, invigorating finish. –Winemaker notes

2022 Lagriöth Estate Chardonnay Lake Chelan \$30

This neutral-oaked Chardonnay has a distinctly tropical and vanilla profile. There's delicious weight on the palate that showcases banana and is joined by pineapple on the midpalate. Starfruit acidity provides lasting spark to the finish. –Winemaker notes

Red!

2023 Domaine Bosquet Malbec Argentina \$13

In the nose, it presents intense aromas of blackberry with notes of red and blackcurrant and plum. The mouth highlights notes of ripe plums with soft and elegant tannins. –Winemaker notes

2022 Involuntary Commitment Columbia Valley \$18

A project from winemaker Will Camarda. This medium body wine exhibits dark fruit, herbs, earth and hints of tobacco. Flavors of cherry, red currants and spices shine through. This wine is fresh, youthful and ready to drink, though will cellar nicely through the next 5 years. –Winemaker notes

Frichette Reserve Red Mountain \$49

This wine is a blend of five varietals that showcases soft tannin, bold fruit, aged in French oak barrels. Ripe strawberry and toasted vanilla on the nose with ripe blackberry and mocha notes on the palate. –Winemaker notes

2015 Anthony Cellars 5 Vineyards Proprietary Yakima Valley \$65

Opens with wonderful aromas of blackberry, cherry, strawberry jam, coffee and molasses. From there, the wine melds these varied fruits and spice notes into a dessert and candy confectionary, which lead me to think of a strawberry-rhubarb crumble meets crème brûlée. –Winemaker notes

–Kenneth Benner

Kenneth Benner, a Seattle area native, is a trained chef and has worked in such restaurants as Barbacoa, B.O.K.A. Kitchen + Bar, and Dahlia Lounge. Ken is the wine buyer at Leschi Market. He has a passion for learning, a meticulous palate, and a tenacity for searching out the best for his customers while offering some of the most highly coveted wines in the area. His monthly column is intended to inspire and explore new choices in wine, learn about wine with his readers, and share his knowledge and experience in the wine world. Check out the latest at LeschiMart.com or request to be added to email updates at wine@leschimarket.com.

EAT YOUR WAY DOWN JACKSON

This column highlights the many restaurants lining Jackson Street beginning in Leschi at Jackson and 31st Ave. S. and down to Rainier Ave. Jackson Street offers a wide selection of food choices from pizza, international, barbeque, sushi, pub food, soul food, before hitting the mecca of great Asian restaurants in the ID. Join me as we take a short drive, walk, bike or hop the 14 bus to check out nearby spots.

Sushi on Jackson

KF Sushi, 2506 S. Jackson, open Mon-Sat from 11am to 9pm, closed on Sunday. There is seating inside at counters and table seating in a heated enclosed patio. In the summer there is outdoors patio seating. Soft drinks, lemonade and a variety of sake, beer and wine are available. Happy Hour is from 3pm to 6pm daily.

KF Sushi on Jackson features traditional Japanese cuisine with a Northwest inspiration. After reading *The Kamogawa Food Detectives* by Japanese author Hisashi Kashiwai, I was eager to try KF and discover the restaurant's take on fusion of flavors. The book is a twist on detective stories as the mystery being solved is the uncovering lost recipes to dishes which hold an emotional connection clients want to understand. I was ready to unlock my memories of wonderful food I had while traveling in Japan.

Just as the restaurant in *Kamogawa Food Detectives* is tucked away in an alley, you can enter KF through a passageway between two buildings giving a feeling of a food adventure about to begin. Once inside we were greeted at the take-out counter and shown to a warm enclosed dining porch. Twinkling lights and bamboo screens enhance the warmth of the wood tables and the simplicity of the Japanese aesthetic of the room.

Our first task as our type of food detectives was to get through an extensive menu that offers a variety of options. From many kinds of sushi rolls to sashimi, bento and poke, the menu seems boundless with even the possibility of ordering Omakase, the chef's best choice of sushi.



...in the Wilds of Seattle

I was grateful to have a neighbor and my husband help me to not get overwhelmed with the extensive list. I settled on the Hamachi Bento (\$17) which included edamame, a delicious calamari salad, 2 lightly breaded shrimp tempura and 8 pieces of Hamachi (yellowtail fish) roll. The sauce decorating the top of the Hamachi was a bit too spicy for me but fortunately the variety of dishes we ordered led to trading of bites.

My companions each order from the “Feast at Best Value” which comes in three sizes from \$29.50 for a large, medium \$21.50 and small \$16.50. Our neighbor ordered the small (\$16.50) and choose a classic roll and 3 nigiri from the menu, she thought her Shrimp Tempura with potato crisps and tempura flakes was delightful. My husband ordered the medium which came with the Black Widow premium roll of soft shell crab which he enjoyed. He found the medium size was plenty to satisfy his hungry appetite. Each dish came with a small bowl of wasabi, decorated as a flower, for dipping.

The prices of other items on the menu seemed very reasonable given the high cost of dining out these days. Appetizers are \$6 to \$12, two pieces of nigiri (raw fish on rice) \$9 to \$13, 3 pieces of sashimi (raw fish) \$14-20, and poke and salads \$9-18. I look forward to returning and trying some of the premium rolls (around \$18) which have intriguing names such a Caterpillar Roll, Wildfire Crisp and Lake Washington Roll.

While the interior of the dining room has a serene feel, the background music was loud and a wild range of genres. There is a large television, but the sound was off. As the restaurant emptied, they fortunately turned the music down.

-Mary-Carter Creech

WARM STAFF OF MINNA MEDITERRANEAN MAKE THIS RESTAURANT A HIT!

On a blustery, rainy day in January I visited the warm, brightly-lit casual eatery, Minna. Serving Mediterranean and Middle Eastern food, the restaurant opened January 6th on 2522 East Cherry Street (just west of MLK). The friendly owner, Imaney Hussein, previously ran the hookah lounge in the same building but “wanted to do something different” with opening up the restaurant. Chef Abdul (from Egypt) and Assistant Chef Sami (from Morocco) are both passionate about the food they serve. Their warmth and appreciation for customers was clear as they welcomed folks to the restaurant and as they talked about their love of cooking for others.

Minna features the classic staples of falafel, gyro, kebabs, and shawarma which are available as sandwiches or plates. Abdul noted that their vegan dishes are very popular with Americans. Their falafel is based on the traditional Egyptian recipe which he said is commonplace in Egypt but that “no one knows about



it here.” He gave me a small, round falafel ball to try which was garlicky and crunchy (and delicious!) He couldn't share details on what makes it special because it's a secret recipe! He also explained how they prepare their gyro meat is unique and more like what you'd find in Egypt. I noticed it has more of a tomato base than gyro you would typically find here. I liked how the sandwich I tried used a flatter, crunchier bread while still offering the softer, thicker pita for their plate options. Their menu features the sides you would expect including hummus, baba ghanouj, spanakopita, Greek fries, and more.

While checking out the restaurant I noticed that Abdul was generous in offering samples to customers, especially to kids (use that to your advantage!) Also generous are the serving sizes, with my friend and I both needing to box up our plates. For dessert, they have 12 flavors of ice cream, including the very difficult to find, old school, pink peppermint that has green and pink mint candies in it (personal favorite). They also serve homemade baklava with a generous layer of pistachios.

Minna is open 12-9pm daily and soon will be offering online ordering. For those who want to pick up orders, simply call 206.577.8021. To check out their menu, go to minnamediterranean.com.

-Nikola Davidson

LESCHI COMMUNITY COUNCIL

LESCHI CC BOARD MEETING 3/13/25, 6PM
AT DOUGLASS-TRUTH LIBRARY

Attendees: Ashley, John, Matthias, Max, Nikola

Agenda

• **2025 initiative check in:**






- Leschi News (Diane)
 - Shared timeline and content needed
- Membership (Nikola)
 - Ongoing member renewal campaign is showing success!
 - Discussed the need for board members to spread the word and recruit subscribers and volunteers
- Meetings (Ashley)
 - March meeting debrief
 - Great meeting! 55 attendees and good energy across the group.
 - Ashley to follow up with Alex and Joy on open items.
 - April - Parks
 - Discussed agenda for meeting
 - Nikola will write the meeting recap
 - May - Historic African American sites in the CD - Stephanie Johnson-Toliver
 - Need to activate marketing, invite other neighborhoods
- Parks (John)
 - Shore landscaping update (related to pier project)
 - All permits are approved, including approval for a shrub landscaping of the Leschi Park shore (only one tree in the design next to the entry to the marina).
 - Next step is to start three projects -- electrical utilities that includes trenching across Lakeside Avenue; underwater cleanup of the Lake shore; and landscaping. Expecting this work to be underway this year. Landscaping may be the latest start, after October. Landscaping will be by the Seattle Conservation Corps; the other two contracts will be advertised and awarded to private contractors.
 - Earth day event (Nikola)
 - Sat 4/26 11:30am? (Nikola to confirm) - spearheader by the dragon boat group
 - Ashley to work on coffee and food donations from local businesses
 - Leschi Natural Area (Nikola)
 - Doing a walkthrough with Parks on 3/14

- ArtWalk (Diane)
 - Planning to take a hiatus in 2025 and revisit in 2026. Opportunity to revisit the goal and format of this community event. Still working on connecting with Janice.
- Traffic Calming (Max)
 - Max is not able to lead this initiative, but would support it. He will see if anyone on the committee is interested in leading this.
- Treasurer’s Report (Matthias)
 - Will send out this weekend
- **New business:**
 - Ashley appointed Nikola to the Community Chair position
 - Discussed content for next email
 - Discussed local business partnership
 - Nikola is organizing business information. We will identify the right time to engage with the businesses and build stronger relationships with them.

	Income	Expenses	Balance 2/28/25
General Fund			
Ad Revenue	\$1,346.00		
Dues	\$1,208.59		
Donations	\$267.02		
Reimbursement			
Insurance			
Printing and postage		(\$1,620.84)	
Room Rentals		(240.00)	
Other Income & Expenses		(\$174.48)	
Totals	\$2,821.61	(\$2,035.32)	\$17,132.93
Restricted Funds			
ArtWalk			\$1,641.28
Cherry Street Corridor			\$635.76
Flo Ware Park			\$686.53
Friends of Powell Barnett			\$1,068.06
Friends of Street Ends			\$4,017.22
Frink Park			\$1,979.43
King Street			\$1,270.00
Leschi Gateway Project			\$51.03
Leschi Natural Area			\$6,345.39
Officer Brenton Fund			\$2,527.27
Steve Shulman Memorial			\$65.00
String of Pearls			\$2,130.38
W. Vaughn Memorial Fund			\$1,200.00
Wading Pool			\$3,006.13
West Sheridan Street End			\$371.65
Whitebear DreamCatcher			\$201.64
Total Funds	\$2,821.61	(\$2,035.32)	\$44,329.70
thereof in short-term CD's			\$33,557.67
Cash			\$10,772.03
Certificate of Deposit (Brenton)	\$83.46		\$11,705.42

Support your community by joining the Leschi Community Council!

The Leschi Community Council works with the community to make Leschi a great place to live and visit. Your financial support helps bring this mission to life. As a supporting member, you help the LCC:

-  Host monthly meetings to connect you with local officials, organizations, artists, activists, and historians
-  Organize neighborhood events such as the annual ArtWalk
-  Coordinate volunteer efforts with local causes such as parks and public safety
-  Deliver the **Leschi News**, Seattle's longest running neighborhood newspaper
-  Maintain our website, leschicommunitycouncil.org

All donations are tax-deductible, LCC is a nonprofit 501(c)(3).

Annual supporting membership: \$35 family \$25 individual \$15 student/low income

I'm making an additional donation for LCC _____ (amount)

PAYMENT OPTIONS:

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Mail this form with a check to:

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Seattle, WA 98122-6538

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Leschi News advertising rates:
business card, \$35; 1/4 page, \$70; 1/2 page,
\$140. Contact Matthias Linnenkamp at
leschitreasurer@gmail.com to advertise to
your community.

leschinews

The next Leschi News deadline is **APRIL 21**. Mail all articles, comments, letters, advertisements and membership dues to this address:
Leschi Community Council, 140 Lakeside Ave Suite A #2, Seattle WA 98122-6538
or email Ritzy Davidson at newsleschi@gmail.com

Leschi Community Council is a participating member of the Seattle Community Council Federation.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- » **April 1**
April Fools' Day
- » **April 2, 7pm**
Leschi Community Council meeting featuring representatives from Seattle Parks & Recreation
- » **April 10, 6pm**
Leschi Community Council Board meeting at the Douglass Truth Library meeting room
- » **April 11, 6-9:30pm**
The Power of Creativity Gala: Coyote Central's annual fundraising event. 101 South Jackson Street, Seattle, WA 98104
- » **April 15**
Tax Day
- » **April 19**
2025 Spring Egg Hunts with Seattle Parks and Recreation: Yesler Community Center from 10:30-11:30 a.m. for ages 5 and under; Garfield Community Center from 10:30am-12pm for ages 1-13
- » **April 20, 10am-12pm**
Litter cleanup at Powell Barnett Park. Coffee and pastries provided
- » **April 22**
Earth Day
- » **May 1, 5:30pm**
Golden Grads Jazz Concert: A fundraiser for housing and food security for Leschi families featuring Butch Harrison and Good Company at the Leschi Elementary School Cafeteria
- » **May 1**
International Workers' Day

Join us on Facebook: LESCHI or see our website: leschicommunitycouncil.org or leschinews.com