

Local News

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The Wing Luke Museum has a lot to celebrate

The Wing Luke Museum holds its annual fundraiser; a drag comedian presides over a wedding show; and Mayor Mike McGinn didn't even see what almost hit him.



Nicole Brodeur

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The Year of the Snake signifies steady progress and attention to detail — two things in abundance at the annual fundraiser dinner of the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience on Saturday night.

I started the night in a quiet, museumlike room filled with art and other items to be auctioned. Within a half-hour, it was elbow-to-elbow and louder than fireworks on the Chinese New Year.

There was a lot to celebrate. Just last month, “The Wing” received a National Park designation that could bring it more national exposure — and funds.

Executive Director **Beth Takekawa** said the night was a chance to raise money for the museum's youth programs and celebrate what the museum does every day.

For starters, The Wing represents 26 different Asian ethnic groups, Takekawa said, “And it's not easy. Some have warred with each other and are warring now.”

Ah, but peace reigned at the Sheraton.

“There's a lot to celebrate,” said board co-chair **Ellen Ferguson**.

Gei Chan, one of the first Asian Americans to design clothes for the mass market, walked around with her husband, **Matt Chan** — the man who brought “Hoarders” to American TV.

Uwajimaya CEO **Tomoko Matsuno** chatted up artist **Ken Taya**, who designed the store's new, horoscope-themed shopping bags.

Washington state Attorney General **Bob Ferguson**, in a crooked tie (“I was playing with the kids”), told me that **Wing Luke** was an assistant attorney general for five years, starting in 1957.

Was he any good?

“Based on his success overall in life,” Ferguson said, “I believe he was.”

Rick Sundberg, the principal designer of The Wing's current space, called it “the closest to me” of all his projects.

“It was one of those projects you don't want to end,” he said.

Hedgebrook founder **Nancy Nordhoff** perused the wine to be auctioned, and **Jamie Ford**,

author of “The Hotel at the Corner of Bitter and Sweet,” about the Seattle immigrant experience, kept a close eye on a Koi painting — and his blended family of six kids, who flew in from Montana for the event.

Ford was looking forward to a presentation by **Kip Fulbeck**, an artist and filmmaker who showed his portraits of “hapa,” or mixed-race people, from his book, “Mixed: Portraits of Multiracial Kids.”

(“I’m a total fanboy,” Ford said of Fulbeck.)

Fulbeck moved his son’s birthday party up a week to be at the dinner.

“I believe in what the museum does,” he said. “It concentrates on personal stories.”

Marriage market

“I’m working really hard to stay PG-13,” **Lily Armani** told me as we stood in the center of last weekend’s “One Love Marriage Showcase” at the downtown Olive 8 hotel.

Organizers called the drag comedian to reign over the rooms of vendors offering the state’s bumper crop of same-sex sweethearts everything from catering to wedding coats to insurance for long-term care.

Armani oversaw the onstage engagement of **Vanessa Bryant** and **Renee Rodak** of Auburn (Vanessa got down on one knee with a ring Renee had picked out six months ago, not knowing when she might get it.)

Armani — who is auditioning for the next season of “RuPaul’s Drag Race” — offered a little advice to them, and to lovebirds everywhere: “Make sure the person you’re going to marry is someone you want to fight with.”

Beauty *and* brains, that Miss Lily.

Mayor’s close call

David Brotherton started the week by nearly taking out Seattle **Mayor Mike McGinn**, who was biking to work at City Hall on Monday morning.

“I damn near pulled out right in front of you,” the communications consultant wrote to Hizzoner — and Phinney Ridge neighbor — on Facebook. “I mean it was, like, really close. I’m not sure you were even aware this had occurred. But for all the obvious reasons, I am VERY relieved that you and I are both now sitting safely at our desks, and not somewhere more dramatic.”

The moral? Now that the weather is warming up, the sun is out and bright morning glare limits visibility, cars and bikers need to share the road with “supreme care,” Brotherton wrote.

“No one wants to hit a biker,” he said. “Especially not the mayor.”

(Hey. I heard that. I nearly ran him down in Belltown last fall, no joke.)

I called Brotherton to follow up. He said McGinn identifies as a Greenwood guy, not Phinney, and that the near-hit occurred at North 59th and Phinney.

“He was wearing a helmet and his book bag and his red coat,” Brotherton said of McGinn. Sounds like he almost took out Harry Potter.

To his credit, McGinn responded to Brotherton’s post with this clever bit: “All good points David!

We all need to look out for each other.”

Considering he now has at least five people gunning for his job in the fall, McGinn should definitely make the most of each day he’s sitting safely at his desk.

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