

SUNNYSIDE

Neighborhood News

May 2022

SUNNYSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

SunnysidePortland.org

board@sunnysideportland.org

Last Month's News.

This Month's Plans.

By Ash Hester, SNA President

We hosted our first hybrid SNA General Meeting for the month of April in-person at the Sunnyside United Methodist Church and on Zoom. We had a good in-person turnout and virtual attendance. A big thank you to the folks that showed up and tuned in. The SNA Board gave a high-level introduction to the Association's operations along with the Officer and Committee Chair reports to keep our local community informed. Then, we quickly dove into the Candidates forum to hold an in-person discussion with the City's Metro No.6 and Commissioner No.3 positions. The SNA hosted an engaging Q&A debate that covered the concerns of governance, housing, public safety, and community issues. A very lively and collaborative conversation was had by both groups of candidates and our neighborhood is grateful for their participation. We certainly look forward to hosting more public forums that bring information firsthand to the public.

SNA Board elections will be held at the June meeting on Thursday the 9th at the SE Uplift parking lot (3534 SE Main St). Join us for the elections to learn more about the opportunity. No previous experience is required and existing Board Members will help you navigate this role. It's a great way to get involved in your community, have a voice, represent your neighbors, and make a meaningful impact. Please join us for the May SNA General Meeting to ask questions and learn more.

Welcome to our newest committee lead, Jamie Smith, who will be partnering with the SNA to help manage the Land Use & Transportation committee.

We're very excited to have her support. We're still searching for a Newsletter Communications & Advertising Coordinator. If you're looking to engage with your community or get involved in a local civic service, we encourage you to learn more about this role. You can reach out to board@sunnysideportland.org for details.

Many thank yous to our recent newsletter donors. We greatly appreciate your generosity and goodwill. Please keep the support coming so we can continue to publish our local newsletter. The donation link is on the SNA website for folks who would like to contribute to the newsletter's expenses (sunnysideportland.org/donate-to-our-newsletter). We also have available advertising spots if you have a business or want to spread the word about something. We're still plugging along to reach our annual production costs of \$6,000.

May's meeting will be held virtually on Zoom on Thursday the 12th. Meeting details and the agenda will be posted on the SNA website (sunnysideportland.org) on Tuesday the 10th. The General meeting will be from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. with the Board Meeting directly after from 8:30 - 9:00 p.m. Please join us.

Upcoming Meetings

*Meetings are being held virtually.
Check sunnysideportland.org
in advance for a Zoom link & agenda.*

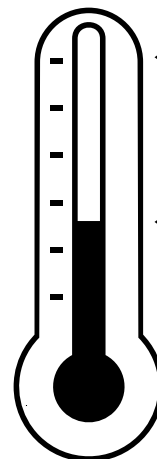
SNA Board and General Meeting

Second Thursday of the month
General Meeting: 7:00pm - 8:30pm
Board Meeting: 8:30pm - 9:00pm
(May 12, June 9)

SNACC Meeting

Third Thursday of the month
6:30pm - 7:30pm
(May 19, June 16)

Support Your Sunnyside Newsletter



◀ Goal: \$6,000

◀ Raised: \$2,685

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Sunnyside Neighborhood Community Cares (SNACC) Committee Updates

*By Emily McCadden, SNACC
Co-Chair, SNA Board Member*

The SNACC committee met in-person to discuss working with other neighborhood associations to support our houseless neighbors. We are hoping to attend Laurelhurst's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee meeting in May. We also reviewed the needs assessment findings and recommendations. Jes will be creating a summary of findings and recommendations which will be distributed to shower guests and volunteers. We also continued our conversation about other potential projects. We talked about the gap in services created when Beacon Village moved to Montavilla and a desire to replicate some of what they were doing last year. We hope to discuss with our shower volunteers what capacity people might have to provide

rides, assistance navigating services, and other support. We also discussed some potential ways we might optimize use of the showers – expanding to offer a mobile unit, setting aside time for walk-ins and having volunteers doing outreach during shifts to help facilitate people getting to appointments or coming in during walk-in hours. Many of the projects we discussed are long term. We also debriefed Monday's community listening session on the City budget, which Cole and Jes attended. They each gave testimony asking the City for funding for the Sunnyside Shower Project. We are going to reach out to volunteers to see who has capacity and interest to submit written testimony as well.

Being Prepared, and Maybe It's Enough

By Jan S Molinaro, Co-Chair, Sunnyside Prepared!

What does that mean for emergency preparedness? Well, it depends – it's all about feeling ready enough for any disaster. Earthquakes, extreme heat or extreme cold, loss of power, smoke from wildfires, downed trees and powerlines ... fill in the blank.

When I get on my soapbox about e-prep, I usually get one of two responses: "Yes, I am prepared enough." or "No, I haven't thought about it and I don't have the time to do anything about it right now, but thanks for the reminder."

Our choice to live in this most beautiful part of the world means that there are weather and climate-related issues to know about, and plan for.

Questions? Feel free to email me : jan@sunnysideprepared.com. Let's start a conversation. Wherever you are is the best place to begin.

Join the Reparations Underground Market

By Douglas Tsoi, RUMpdx Organizer

Two years ago, after George Floyd's murder, I felt angry and helpless about the continuing racist society we live in. I educated myself, marched, and vowed to make a difference. However, I felt there weren't concrete, practical ways to integrate racial justice into my daily life. That's why I created the new Reparations Underground Market (rumpdx.com).

The Reparations Underground Market (RUMpdx) is a Craigslist-style website for services, but instead of money being exchanged, it all goes to reparations. In each transaction, the Vendor chooses from eight different direct aid choices where half the money goes, and the Buyer chooses where the other half goes. Vendors volunteer their time and professional expertise – things like writing, editing, handyman services, and financial coaching. Buyers purchase what they normally need, but know all their spending goes to reparations.

If you want to integrate racial justice into your daily life too, offer your professional expertise and skills on rumpdx.com or buy something you already need on the Market. Either way, you are diverting some of your consumption towards justice.

We can emerge from crises, pandemic and George Floyd, either better or worse than before. It is up to us to choose. We didn't create the world we live in, but unless we actively do something, we will perpetuate it for our children. A more just and equitable world we want in our hearts is possible.

If you have questions about RUMpdx, email douglastsoi2.0@gmail.com.

The Leroy Blocks

By John Mayer, SNA Member at Large

Leroy Sly Scott, who passed away two years ago in May, now lives forever as part of our neighborhood. You may have known Leroy as a charismatic fellow who told a joke or sang a song from his stoop behind the Belmont Market. For years Leroy would sleep on (or nearby) his daytime throne on 34th Street before he got housing for what turned out to be his final year on Earth after 34 years of living outside. This stoop continues to be a place of gathering of all sorts of neighbors in Sunnyside. Now as you sip your coffee from Stumptown or walk your dog down to the playground, there is an image of Leroy there to greet you and to remind you that "All around the world, people are singing the same song." (A shortened version of this was Leroy's favorite expression, inspired by the Digital Underground song.)

The Portland Street Art Alliance and a group of local artists and community members came together last December to create a mural to honor Leroy. Thanks to artists Kyra Watkins, Caleb Ruecker, Sarah Farahat and Tammy MacKinnon

who together designed and painted the mural, and to Tony Booone, a community member and Street Roots vendor who helped out.

In the coming months visages of some of Leroy's friends and community will be painted above the Tao of Tea and "The Leroy Blocks" will be complete. If you would like to contribute to this entirely community-generated and community-supported art, please do so here: leroy mural.causevox.com. A big thank you to the Portland Street Art Alliance for their dedication, care, and skill in beautifying our neighborhood with the history of its neighbors.

Sunnyside Neighborhood Getting to Know Your Neighbors

By Cole White, SNA member at large

Q&A with Joe Witt, owner of Belmont Books

As I enter Belmont Books, store owner Joe Witt sees me, picks a book off the top of a stack and places it on the podium in the front of the store. Witt, who moved to Portland in 2003, has been, at various times, a singing train waiter, a KBOO reporter, and a bartender at Farm Cafe. He started selling books on a few shelves of his friend's indie record store, Mississippi Records. That grew into Belmont Books, where he maintains a collection of diverse and obscure titles in subjects ranging from classic literature to religious studies.

How long has your store been in Sunnyside?

Joe: Our official opening date was October 2nd, 2018, so this is coming up on year four.

Is this your first time owning a store?

Joe: Yeah, this is the first time. I got lucky that there was a space available and I was ready to go. So, kind of a luck thing for sure.

Luck? Or was there a little bit of personal planning involved?

Joe: I was selling books at my friend's record store for a while before that, but it was a coincidence that I was able to jump into this space.

That's really cool. That was a good way to get started, then, huh?



Joe Witt, owner of Belmont Books.

Joe: Yeah, you learn a lot about what sells and what doesn't and you're able to make some dumb mistakes. He was really generous.

Have the tastes of Portland changed?

Joe: Yeah, there's definitely been changes. But, you know, it's subtle. It's all anecdotal, for the most part. How much of the slice of the Portland book market do I have? Only a very small percentage—less than 1%—I'd imagine. So, what I think is going on is not necessarily going to be super accurate.

Do you live in Sunnyside?

Joe: No, um, that would be nice. I live near Franklin High School.

What do you like most about the neighborhood?

Joe: I like that it has some economic diversity. It's got a diversity of businesses.

What would you change about it, if you could? Any real problems with the area?

Joe: [Pause.] Well, there are... It's a neighborhood, I mean. It's a community. So there are people who are, kind of, not super helpful and not doing much except sitting at the bus stop all day, yelling, getting drunk, and... You know, it's pretty hard for me to come down on most people. I don't personally enjoy them but they're part of the neighborhood too, for better or worse.

Ya, I've seen the guys that hang out over there and they're a specific breed. Not all homeless people are like that.

Joe: I don't even know that they're homeless guys. I mean, they show up pretty regularly and just hang out there. It's not the same people every day; it's different groups and the mix has changed over time. People move on and go somewhere else to be annoying.

I like that there are people on the streets. It's good that people are walking around. It's great that we have H Mart now. People come through here and go there. It's good that the economy's improved and people are out doing things again.

I'm a little worried about the end of Covid restrictions. Specifically, we don't really

have any in this state, compared to other countries. You know, people not having to wear masks, I think there's a little bit of a danger around people being very complacent.

It's a nice neighborhood. I'm glad we have a lot of older businesses. I'm glad we have landlords who aren't hustling all the time trying to get every last dollar out of things. It's great that instead they want to have a diversity of businesses and let people keep working, and other businesses they've had for a long time.

It's a weird little time capsule in Portland that I like a lot.

*Witt produces the book that he had previously taken off one of the stacks, **The Unvarnished Gospels**. Precognition, I can only assume, because when he produces the paperback, it's exactly what I want. I was merely surprised at the time, but now I wonder if some magical force has been harnessed.*

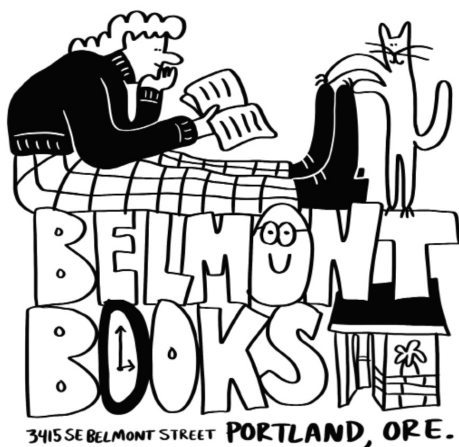
Was there any beginning event that led you to bookselling?

Joe: I think bookstores are important. I grew up in Oklahoma, and where I lived didn't have many bookstores, just a few. I always found that really frustrating and depressing. Having sought out reading material I saw a diversity of viewpoints. I always found it frustrating when you couldn't get a broader range of ideas. So I try to have a broader range of ideas here, and I stand up for freedom of speech, making sure that people feel represented. I think that it's more interesting when you see things you don't necessarily agree with, at a bookstore, than when you see the same things you already picked up at a mall at the airport.

What do Belmont Books and Powell's have in common and how do they differ?

Joe: Well, we both love books. I think that's the big one. No I think, really, the big thing is size. And, there are certain parts of the market I don't go out of my way to serve—what I would term airport fiction. But, you know, this is a good place to buy that kind of thing because when I do have it, I'll put it out for \$1.

Belmont Books (3415 SE Belmont St.; 503-236-0437) is open from 12-6 p.m. every day. To see what's new, follow Belmont Books on instagram at @BelmontBooksPDX or stop by to ask Joe for his recommendations.



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specified, are not necessarily those of the
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or its board. **Sunnyside residents
are welcome to submit articles
for consideration that concern
neighborhood issues, by emailing
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**Deadlines are the 15th of the month
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Sunnyside Neighborhood 'Gap Map'

Live near any of the blocks marked in black below? We need your help!
Contact dianadeumling@gmail.com to volunteer for our delivery service.

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needed here**

