



## Coffee City

Melissa Allison tracks Seattle's — and the world's — caffeine addiction.

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### Coffee wrap: Starbucks spent \$740K on lobbying last year, Le Whif, and an old hand takes a swipe at 'third wave' coffee

Posted by [Melissa Allison](#)

A few things I didn't post while sneezing my head off this week:

- Remember that **rooibos espresso** I mentioned [a while back](#)? Inner Chapters Bookstore & Cafe in South Lake Union/Cascade ordered some, and they're using it to make everything from Mexican mochas to soy cappuccinos with honey and cinnamon, and -- if you even remotely like tea -- the stuff is tasty.
- "The current state of specialty coffee retailing **bugs the hell out of me**," coffee veteran Kevin Knox writes on his blog, [Caffeinated Calm](#). Knox was in charge of coffee quality for Starbucks from 1987 to 1993, then a coffee buyer for Allegro Coffee in Boulder, Colo. The post includes great historical notes, like how appalled [George Howell](#) was at Starbucks' dark roasts during a Seattle visit in 1990, but mostly it's a criticism of the too-cool-for-you coffee community. "What I see in the coffee offerings of most of the so-called '[third wave](#)' roasters is an approach to retailing that at its worst is both solipsistic and narcissistic," he writes.
- Coffee consultant Sarah Dooley e-mailed to say that **Rosettas for Relief**, a latte art competition last month to benefit Haiti, **raised \$2,375.97** in Seattle. Andrew Milstead of the Urban Coffee Lounge had [the winning pour](#).

- Starbucks **spent \$740,000 lobbying** in Washington, D.C., last year, [according to OpenSecrets.org](#). One person, Lori Otto, did most of the work, but a cadre of lobbyists at K&L Gates also pitched in. About \$190,000 was spent in the fourth quarter on foreign trade, corporate accounting issues and other matters, according to a report filed with the House clerk's office, [AP said](#).
- If the charms of Facebook, Twitter and your Android phone lose their luster, check out what the marketing wizards at Foursquare have cooked up: It's a partnership with Starbucks that gives customers -- free coffee? free Wi-Fi? No! **A barista badge**, whatever that is. [The New York Times blogged](#) about the arrangement, which goes beyond letting the world know what you had for breakfast and how it's sitting. With Foursquare, you can broadcast where you are, and get a barista badge after "checking in" at five separate Starbucks shops. Frequent customers will get rewards, Starbucks' Chris Bruzzo told the Times, but it might be something "more meaningful" than free coffee -- like invitations to special events, photo sharing or online reputation scores.
- The New York Times also wrote [a nice piece](#) on efforts by Counter Culture and other roasters to bring **better flavor to decaffeinated coffee**.
- "The KICK of coffee without the cup!" is the promise from Le Whif, a new coffee from Paris that you inhale rather than drink, the [Chicago Tribune reported](#). To be clear, **you breathe Le Whif through your mouth**, so it's not cheap cocaine. The brainchild of a Harvard professor, it debuted in New York and Cambridge, Mass., this week.
- The Tribune [also reported](#) that **Costco is no longer roasting** coffee at one of its Chicago locations. Who knew they roasted anywhere?
- [Someone drove](#) from London to Manchester -- almost 200 miles -- in a **car powered by coffee beans**.
- Because of the name, I feel like I should mention that **it's Coffee Party weekend**. On Saturday, thousands of people around the country will gather at coffeehouses and other locations [to craft an alternative](#) to the Tea Party movement -- or a lot of alternatives. At the [Coffee Party web site](#), you can plug in your zip code and find a meeting nearby. Looks like events are planned at Cafe Allegro in the University District, near Urban Coffee Lounge in Kirkland and at Starbucks' Roy Street Coffee and Tea on Capitol Hill.