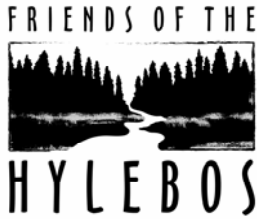


100 Federal Way Favorites



by [Chris Carrel](#) — last modified Jul 10, 2007 03:12 PM
Friends of the Hylebos

These are Just A Few of my Favorite (Federal Way) Things

Federal Way, the town that's hard to love. I've written before about Federal Way's [image problems](#). The typical outsider (and some residents) view is of a city that's not really a city, that's strangled by pavement and strip malls, where the chief activities are traffic accidents, violent crime and animal abuse (remember the Beamer goldfish affair?).

But, you know, I've lived here all my life, and if I don't love Federal Way, I'm really, really fond of it. Sure, it's easy to tease Federal Way for its quirks and eccentricities (remember the city slogan discussion: Federal Way: gateway to Milton), but there's a lot of great things going on in the city, and plenty to love.

So, I'm going to start listing those things based on my 42 years here. This will be my 100 **Things to Love About Federal Way** list. The list will include people, places and things. I'm going to create the list as I go, so I don't know in advance that there's 100, but my guess is I'll hit the century mark.

OK, here we go (and in no particular order):

1. [West Hylebos Wetlands](#). Well, duh.

2 [Poverty Bay Park](#). This 40-acre wooded shoreline/wetlands was my stomping grounds while growing up. It is full of marshy, springy wetlands, and well-forested. The shorelines are untouched and beautiful. The only challenge is that access to the shorelines means climbing down a steep cliff, on a primitive trail that was carved out by neighborhood kids like me.

3. [Celebration Park](#). It was controversial. It was expensive. Get over it. Celebration Park is a wonderful park. My family and I use it regularly for soccer, walks through the wetlands trail and I like to jog the trail when running the BPA trail. I always (weather permitting, of course) see families with young kids using the swings and play-features near the park entrance.

A few years back, I was at a softball tournament and overheard some out-of-towners gushing about the softball facilities. "I wish we had a park like this at home." Any facility that gets visitors so appreciative of our town is a gem. Celebration is a magnet and generator of activity near the downtown core and contributes greatly to the community's vitality.

4. Ted Enticknap. The Curmudgeon of the Hylebos is another community treasure. A bit crusty at times, but always funny, Ted keeps an eye on things in the community and quietly lets the right people know what needs to be done. He is one of the few people you can point to and say without him the Hylebos would've been lost. Ted was active in the Friends of the Hylebos all the way back to the beginning and really, has been keeping an eye out for the creek since he moved to Spring Valley in 1967. He was one of our first Stream Team volunteers and still faithfully does his monthly water quality tests. That's why we bestowed Ted with the [Lifetime Stewardship Award](#) at this year's Ruby Dance. Ted also keeps an eye on the city council and has attended just about every city council meeting since incorporation 16 years ago. A great activist and a great friend, Ted is a Federal Way original.

5. Tom Murphy. I haven't verified this, but I think that if you look up Leadership in the dictionary you'll just see a photo of Federal Way Public Schools Superintendent Tom Murphy. Tom has quietly and consistently improved Federal Way schools over the past several years, despite a host of challenges that would crush lesser superintendents, including state funding inequities, an often (shall we say) interesting school board, a highly mobile local population, low economic base, high student poverty rates, and a long history of poor public support for local schools (we're still feeling the effects of a string of failed school levies during the 1970s). Under Tom's tenure, the district has built a new high school and middle school, made the transition to a middle-school based system, set clear goals and made tangible progress on student achievement. Tom has also defined the agenda for rebuilding a number of old school buildings and garnering the most votes for a Federal Way Schools bond in our history (albeit in a failing effort, thanks to the ridiculous supermajority rule). All my kids are in Federal Way Public Schools and we've found the schools to have great educational opportunities for families willing to get involved and support their kids.

6. Federal Way Public Schools. See above. In addition to providing the future leaders and citizens of our community, the school district is cultural heart and soul of Federal Way and its largest employer. If FWPS sneezes, Federal Way catches a cold.

7. Federal Way Soccer Association. FWU has been providing quality soccer opportunities for Federal Way kids for decades. Each year, thousands of Federal Way kids, from the ages of 5 to 18, strap on their boots to play soccer at all levels, from recreational to elite, under the umbrella of the FWSA. All 3 of my daughters play soccer with FWSA. They've learned a lot about the game, made numerous friends from teammates, experienced the joys of victory in championship games and learned how to handle defeat gracefully (often more gracefully than the parents) as well as the countless life lessons that are found in team sports. The FWSA is a nonprofit organization run by a volunteer board of directors with a paid coaching director and a mix of paid and unpaid coaches.

8. H. David Kaplan. Dave Kaplan is a perpetual citizen involvement machine. Like Ted Enticknap, Dave is at every city council meeting and consistently provides thoughtful, civil public comment about city matters. He is also involved in a plethora of civic matters, from city commissions to nonprofit groups like our own (Dave is a long-time FOHW member).

9. [Marlene's Market and Deli.](#) Without the next 2 entries, I'd starve to death. I'm a salad lover and Marlene's has the best salad bar in the world, let alone Federal Way, hands down. Their deli is outstanding as well. And the best part, for those of us focused on staying healthy, it's all natural and mostly organic. Marlene's also has a wonderful produce section with organic and local veggies and fruits, an organic, whole foods supermarket, smoothies and espresso bar, and a wide range of supplements.

And Marlene, herself, is a Federal Way treasure in her own right. A wonderful lady, with a great sense of humor and a commitment to her community. Her store, in various incarnations, has been in the Federal Way area (there's also a Tacoma store) for 3 decades! I can still remember the first store (it was about the size of a closet!) in the old Federal Way Shopping Center. The thing I remember most is that when it opened, my family was introduced to wheat bread and the Wonder Bread was kicked to the curb. I haven't eaten white bread since.

10. [Poverty Bay Coffee Company.](#) Dan and Alice Olmstead are the geniuses behind Federal Way's only shade-grown coffee company. Poverty Bay Coffee also has a great sandwich and deli (I recommend any of the sandwiches, and I'm partial to the sausage lentil soup and salmon chowders). Do they care about the Hylebos? You bet. Dan and Alice have been enthusiastic supporters since opening the shop, contributing money, coffee to the volunteer events and the Ruby Dance. Hey, Dan even proposed to Alice at the West Hylebos Wetlands! Oh yes, and don't forget to try the Hylebos Creek Blend of coffee!

11. Big 'Burb, Small Town. Federal Way is the 8th largest city in the state, home to over 80,000 people and could soon top 100,000 with incorporation plans. And yet, it still retains elements of the small town it once was.

Small? You bet. In the early 1970s, Federal Way was the sticks. The boonies. Way out there. Despite the growth since then, and the mobility of the population, this still feels like a small town to me. I regularly run into people I know from junior high (Lakota, now a middle school, of course) and high school (Go Gators!) and friends of my parents who remember me when I was knee high. The downside of this is there are way too many people in this town who have dirt on me. The upside, though, is that these sort of connections - shared history - are what make a community special, stronger. And I think that's pretty unusual for a suburban community of our size.

In addition to the people, we also have a small but special rural core in the Spring Valley area of Federal Way. This neighborhood is a reminder of what Federal Way used to look like and provides a beautiful pastoral accent on our city.

We're going to continue to grow in the future, but let's make sure we hold on to our small town roots.

12. Madeleine Justus. Education is vital to a community's success and Federal Way is fortunate to have one of the nation's pioneer Montessori educators, Madeleine Justus, who founded the Spring Valley Montessori School, a private Montessori Pre-k through 8th grade school just south of S. 356th St. on Highway 99. Spring Valley is the oldest Montessori school in the state and has provided a rich and lasting educational beginning to thousands of children from Federal Way and surrounding communities over the past 50 years. Not only was Mrs. Justus my pre-school teacher, my three daughters attended the school as well. In addition to providing for the educational needs of area children, Mrs. Justus has spread the gospel of Montessori education - a child-oriented educational philosophy that features experiential based learning - through her teacher training courses and national and international organizations.

In addition to all these things, Mrs. Justus has consistently provided a wonderful example for her students and colleagues of a person living a dignified, ethical life. I doubt there are many who passed through Spring Valley who were not profoundly touched by her intelligence, wit and dignity.

13. Redondo and the Boardwalk. Yeah, I know Des Moines stole this from us, but it's still part of Federal Way's heart, and still heavily used by Federal Wayers. (note to city attorney: can we petition to get this back). Redondo was once a featured tourist and recreationalist attraction. Seriously. I have an old poster (1950s era, I'm guessing) billing it "The All Year Playground on Puget Sound."

The boardwalk (a Pete von Reichbauer project - more on him later) itself, is heavily used. Every time I drive by (even in bad weather) it seems there are people using the boardwalk. Walkers. Joggers. Couples on dates. Dog walkers. You name it. The board walk brings them out. I'm a huge fan of creating public walking spaces. Experience shows that if you build the walk, people will use it and the Redondo Boardwalk is a great example of that. It's a public space that creates opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors and each other. That's awesome.

Of course, Redondo also has the pier, which has been a favorite of fisherfolk for many years. I have a lot of fond memories of fishing off the pier with my grandfather and my dad when I was a little guy. Judging from the continued popularity of the pier, a lot of kids are making similar memories here.

14. [Great Blue Heron](#). One of my favorite bird species, along with [green-backed herons](#). You can find these majestic, long-winged, stork-like birds all through the Hylebos Creek Watershed and along the Puget Sound shoreline. They visit these areas in forage for fish, frogs and other critters they subsist on.

15. City Government. OK. This may strike some of you as a hard one to justify. We all love to bitch about government, big and small. And it's easy to score demagogic points by bashing government (despite this one, I reserve the future right to complain about the city!), but I'm going to throw this one out here: Our Federal Way city government is doing a pretty good job.

They're making progress on traffic improvements. The police department is doing a good job and enjoys public support. There seems to be traction on economic development, among other things. Basic city services function well, sometimes exceptionally. In the last month, I've needed to contact the city about three different issues (not related to Friends of the Hylebos). On each issues (police, parks and roads) I received prompt , professional responses within 24 hours. That's pretty good customer service. Ninety percent of the time, that's how the public views whether their government is doing a good job or not.

Now, the caveat is that there are huge issues looming (long-term budget imbalances, economic development needs would be examples) and a city government is always one bad decision or embarrassing council gaffe away from disaster, perceived or otherwise. However, I have to say that on a day-to-day basis the city seems to be doing a good job.

16. The Shoreline. As long as we're talking about Redondo, we should mention that Federal Way has an abundance of beautiful Puget Sound shoreline. Dumas Bay. Poverty Bay Park. Redondo. Puget Sound is one of the nation's great inland seas and we, in Federal Way, have a front row seat to it. One big problem is that access in many places is restricted by private property. The city could do quite a bit to explore ways to open access to some of this beautiful shoreline. In other places, just having preserved natural shoreline is good enough.

17. A Two-Newspaper Town. Federal Way has been graced with two newspapers for several years now. Most cities, short of the megalopolises, can't do that. In fact, it's an open question whether our big neighbor to the north will be able to continue to doing so. But the [Mirror](#) (which is kind enough, or foolish enough, take your pick, to publish this series) and the [News](#) keep on chugging. The result is, I think, a more vigorous discussion of issues, and more coverage of local people, personalities, high school sports and the like. That's a good thing for a city democracy and for the community.

18. The 317th Flyover Ramp. It's hard to wax poetic about a concrete highway ramp structure, but I love this new entrance/exit ramp to I-5. When I hit the freeway, I'm usually HOV'ing, so I can avail myself of the flyover ramp. It shaves 5-10 minutes off my time to the freeway. One note of caution, the ramp is a favorite site for the Washington State Patrol to sit and watch for speeders and HOV lane cheaters. I don't ever advocate exceeding the speed limit, but if you're one of those who does, or one of those who SOVs in the HOV lane, beware the 317th Flyover!

19. Federal Way Historical Society. Yes, we do have history here in Federal Way and we're fortunate to have a stalwart band of historical preservationists who are preserving that history for us and for future generations. Friends of the Hylebos is working with the society on the Historical Cabin Park near West Hylebos Wetlands and the group has a wonderful history of Father Hylebos (the namesake for our creek) as well as a host of other local people, places and issues. It's a great group. Check them out at www.federalwayhistory.org/.

20. Patrick Briggs. One of my favorite city employees. If you call the city manager or city council to complain, get information, or whatever, Patrick is likely one of the first voices you'll hear. Patrick is one of a number of city employees who are just a real delight to deal with: always professional and knowledgeable, and friendly and helpful, to boot.

21. [Pete von Reichbauer](#), also known as PVR. Pete is the King County Councilman representing the Federal Way area. Prior to joining the county council, Pete was a State Senator for the area. Altogether, he has been representing Federal Way for well over 30 years. Few politicians are as centrally focused on their communities, as von Reichbauer. Tap a community organization, and you'll find von Reichbauer's been involved. The landscape of Federal Way is dotted with projects that he's had his hand in, from the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center to the Redondo Boardwalk, to any number of parks that are going to be mentioned in this series. It's hard to imagine what Federal Way would be like without Pete's involvement over the past 3 decades. And while that speaks to his abiding interest in the community, it also underscores his considerable political skills.

22. [Skip Priest](#). No slouch at the art of politics, himself, Skip Priest has served as a city councilman, past Mayor, and now in the House of Representatives. As a city council member, Skip was a central figure in many of the policy debates and project lists that got Federal Way on a path to responsible growth. As a legislator, he has been centrally involved in defeating the proposed sex predator facility in Peasley Canyon, keeping the Boeing 767 production in Western Washington, and has emerged as a Republican leader on environmental and education issues. More than politics, though, Skip has been involved in any number of community efforts (including working closely with me for years on the Hylebos) from the Boy Scouts, the Chamber of Commerce, MultiService, Kiwanis. A lot of people talk about community, I have met few people, who roll up their sleeves and get involved to the extent that Skip does.

23. [Poverty Bay Park](#). I almost left this one off the list, because I really don't want it being "discovered." This 40+ acre, undeveloped forest includes many wetlands and a significant untouched shoreline on Puget Sound. What's special about this park? It's untouched and holds a diverse wetland and forest ecosystem, and is habitat for wildlife, including a nesting pair of bald eagles, great blue herons, deer, and others. And the shoreline is incredible. The undeveloped shoreline property provides a rare glimpse at native Puget Sound shore creatures. The park starts in uplands and descends 500 or so feet - the last 200, being a rather steep drop. There is a primitive trail that leads down to the beach, however, it is not maintained and often gets overgrown, or washed out. This visit is only for the hardy, or the foolhardy, as the climb (or, as I've done a few times, slide and fall) down the cliff can be a bit hairy.

24. Mike Park. Federal Way City Councilman and current Mayor, [Mike Park](#) is widely considered one of the sharpest budget hawks to have served on the council. His appointment in 1995, also marked the emergence of the Korean-American community as a major element of Federal Way. Park also represents the best of community government

representation, a hard-working businessman, who believes strongly enough in his community, to try to balance his role as an elected representative of the people of the city with the demands of being a small business owner. This was really brought home to me a few years back when I stopped by his dry cleaning business and found Mike studying the proposed city budget - line by line - at the counter in between dealing with customers.

25. The Commons. The Commons? Yeah, [the Commons](#). Yes, it's still and will always be Sea-Tac Mall to us old-timers (in Federal Way that means you can remember the farm that used to be there before the mall), and it still pales in comparison to larger regional malls, but the new owners have been investing a lot in refurbishing the structure and attracting new shops. It appears to be working. This Christmas, for the first time, in memory, I had trouble finding a parking spot at the mall. And after Christmas, it seems to me that there are more and more people shopping the mall. I think the The Commons is on the uptick (judging by the 4% increase in sales tax generated by the mall over the previous year) and that's good news for Federal Way. The Commons generates about 8% of the retail sales tax collected by the city of Federal Way.

26. [Tracey Eide](#). Another local politician who started out trying to improve her community, got elected, and kept on learning and serving the community. Along the way Representative Eide became State Senator Eide, and is now one of the most influential Senators in the Democrat-controlled State Senate. Fiercely devoted to serving her district, when Eide gets interested in an issue, she doesn't let go until she gets results.

27. Senor Taco. Ironically, an out-of-town friend hipped me to this hole-in-the-wall Mexican fast-food restaurant on Pac Highway just north of S. 336th. The menu is fairly straightforward, but oh, it's good. I've never been to Mexico, so I can't say it's authentic, but it's at least as authentic as some of the hispanic districts of Los Angeles I'm familiar with. The Senor Burrito, by the way, defines the term gut buster. In a good way.

28. Jim and Jeanne Burbidge. Few couples that I can think of have had as much influence to the good on this community than Jim and Jeanne. I'd really need another column to list all the things they've been involved in over the years - and they've been here since the late 1960s. Jim was for years one of the go-to dentists in the community (I think my mouth may have put at least one of their kids through college!) and has been active in Kiwanis, local theater, Friends of the Hylebos (where he is currently a board member), and is well-known as a member of the barbershop quartet. Jeanne, of course, has been a [Federal Way City Council](#) member since 1997 and has been involved in the incorporation effort, a number of arts groups, FUSION, and many, many more community efforts.

29. The [BPA Trail](#). Granted, it's just a strip of pavement under the BPA power lines. But the BPA Trail provides popular walking, running and biking activities in a community that was developed without much of a plan for trail development. By capitalizing on the public right of way under the lines, the city created a path that connects Celebration Park (almost downtown) all the way back to Northeast Tacoma (and there is possibility of connecting the trail with Pierce County regional trails in the future). From the Friends'

office, I can easily get on the BPA and get a couple of quick miles in. And if you want to ratchet up the workout a bit, there's always the huge hill near the Aquatic Center for a harder workout.

30. The [Multi-Service Center](#). This Federal Way-based social services nonprofit serves South King County with a basket of services that provide critical help to people down on their luck. The MSC provides food and clothing banks, housing assistance, literacy programs, employment training and many other services. The MSC's philosophy is not to just give people help, but to help them learn how to help themselves. In addition, CEO Dini Duclos is a tremendously skilled executive who gives back to the community by being involved in other important community causes and has served on the Parks Commission and Planning Commission.

31. Diversity (Racial and otherwise) and tolerance. Federal Way's population continues to become more and more diverse. The statistics say that whites make up 68%, with African-Americans at 8%, Asians a bit over 13%, Hispanics at 8%, multi-racial folks at around 5%. This wasn't always the case. I could pull out my Lakota Junior High annual from 1974 and show you a pretty homogeneous student body. While the population at Lakota and the surrounding community has grown much more diverse, since that time the interesting thing to me is the apparent tolerance of different skin hues and ethnicity that exists in the community. These just don't appear to register as significant issues for many people in Federal Way. In my daughters' schools, kids of different colors mix socially without comment. I never hear the sort of racially tinged comments that I used to hear when I was a kid. If not exactly a colorblind community, I'd have to say that Federal Way is on the right track. The community also seems to be fairly open and tolerant in issues of sexual orientation.

32. Federal Way Committee on Human Rights. The changes above all happened within my lifetime and were prodded, in large part, by a group that no longer exists. Believe it or not, in the late 1960s, Federal Way realtors would not sell houses to black families. As a community, we were as white as loaf of Wonder Bread (without the tantalizing light brown crust). When a visiting black family was refused entrance to the Marine Hills pool, local citizens, (including my mom, Kathy Carrel, and Jeanne Burbidge, and others) formed the Federal Way Committee on Human Rights to work for integration of our community. Their work resulted in Hal Booker and his family buying a house here in the early 1970s and opening up the community to accepting people of color. I'd venture that most American communities have dealt with racism in their past. I'm proud of the fact that Federal Way took racism head on with the FWCHR and defeated it.

33. Teri Hickel. Teri could make the list just for being Teri (probably the coolest soccer mom in the state) but she is also tremendously involved in the community. Teri has been organizing the Chamber's successful Advancing Leadership program for several years and served on the board of the Friends a few years back. She also has been a stalwart schools supporter and has been a key part of the campaigns to pass most of the school

levies and bonds we've voted on in recent memory. She also has that key quality that successful organizers have: it's impossible to say no to Teri.

34. Federal Way Parks Over-40 Soccer League. Federal Way is a soccer town. And believe it or not, there are a lot of old dudes who can still play soccer (Or like me, try our best). Fortunately for them, the Federal Way Parks and Recreation Department runs one of the best mens soccer leagues in the area, with divisions for the 30-overs, 40-0vers, 45-overs, and even the 50-overs. The quality of play ranges from "I can't believe he can still do that" to "Here's your wheelchair, sir," and I'm sure this league is one reason why local osteopaths and chiropractors are doing so well. I believe my over-40 soccer career is actually funding my physician's retirement. Good for him.

35. Dumas Bay Park. This hard-to-find park off Dash Point Road features some of the most beautiful shoreline vistas and natural habitat in the area. A short walk from the parking lot takes you downhill through a wooded area and onto a beach that opens up into a small bay. On a good day, you can take in wonderful views of Puget Sound and Maury Island, and a host of shorebirds that frequent the site. Dumas Bay also features some of the best eel grass habitat we have, providing key habitat and forage for juvenile salmon (from Hylebos and other systems) and other marine species.

36. Federal Way Parks Department. It's a sad political reality that parks departments - federal, state, county and city level - are the first to be cut when budgets get crunched. And Federal Way's Parks Department is run supermodel lean. Yet our parks system contains excellent parks, maintenance gets done (though not as quickly as it could with more staff), we're opening what looks to be a first-class community center, and the department offers a wide range of activities for Federal Wayers, young and old alike. I can personally think of a number of new things I'd like to see out of the department, but for what they have to work with, the current system serves the city well.

37. Metropolitan Market. I have a two-fold appreciation of the Market. First, it's an incredible grocery store with products you can't find anywhere else (when I have a craving for chocolate-covered sunflower seeds the world's best pork loin panini, this where you find me). Second, it's just down the street from my neighborhood, so emergency grocery trips don't require a long jaunt. I can walk to the store if I want. And the anchor of the Market has revived the Dash Point shopping village.

38. Adelaide Park. Granted, this isn't one of the Puget Sound Region's great parks. It's a little neighborhood pocket park on the edge of the Adelaide School Campus. Inside the park's forested canopy, a gravel trail runs through the park. There's a tennis court, a big toy facility for kids, and a horse riding enclosure (now, mostly a dog run). I used to frequent this park with my kids, but they're too big for the big toy (and without them with me, I don't dare get into the swings anymore). Now, it's become one of my regular running routes with the gravel trail making a nice substitute for the knee-shredding pavement of adjacent streets. I see lots of families, though, still using the playground for their young kids.

39. The Barber Shop. Funny how some things in life come full circle. I'm now getting haircuts in the same place I used to get haircuts in when I was five years old. David St. John opened The Barber Shop a few years back in the same location as the barber shop that had been there since forever (which is when I was five, according to my daughters). David and his stylists, Amanda and Crystal, have built a sizable clientèle, but still accept walk-ins. There's a reason FW Mirror voters have selected The Barber Shop best barber shop 3 years running. And David is a great guy, who even though he is probably the polar opposite of me politically, has a great sense of humor on political discussions. He calls me the only Democrat he'd vote for. I'll call him the only conservative I'll let cut my hair!

40. Traffic. As in, it's not that bad here. No, seriously. Take a drive down Meridian Avenue on the South Hill about 5 PM and then tell me Federal Way's got bad traffic. As a soccer dad, I get to visit a lot of other communities, particularly suburbs and comparatively speaking our traffic doesn't rate as badly as a lot of other communities I've been to. Yes, there are times of the day I avoid S. 320th and 99, but get some perspective. It's not that bad and the city's improvements are making a difference.

41. The Federal Way Community Center. I've got to admit, I was skeptical about the [community center](#). It seemed way too expensive and I felt there were higher community priorities. But I was wrong. The center is an amazing multipurpose facility for the public. And the city has put the emphasis on the multi. There are features for kids of all ages, adults and seniors. The pool facilities are outstanding with a lap pool and a huge activity pool with plenty of features (including a slide I'm just dying to go down). There's the rock climbing wall, of course. Basketball court. Jogging track. Weight room. And the facility hosts a wide range of activities and classes for the population. Barely a week after it's official opening it's suffering the highest of compliments. My kids were complaining that it was too crowded.

42. John Hutton. FW Parks Recreation Supervisor. There's a lot of fun happening in the Federal Way Parks system and it comes down to the city's gregarious and loquacious recreation supervisor. Hutton is responsible for managing the athletics and various classes the parks department operates for kids and adults. Hutton is a true believer in the importance of athletics and recreation activities and he does his job with a great sense of warmth and humor. In fact, talking to John is like a stand-up routine in itself, laced with wisecracks and self-deprecating humor.

43. Seth Bynum. A reporter and editor with the Mirror's competing paper, Federal Way News, Seth is one immensely talented photographer and nature writer. He contributes regularly to the Friends' [Blog from the Bog](#) with observation, photos and video. His photo work is online [here](#). Seth has a great eye for capturing wildlife, particularly birds. What's remarkable is that he has writing skills to match his lenswork. His photos are on sale at his website, and your wall could do worse than have one of his stunning visuals grace it.

44. Sign Code. I'm not a huge fan of nitpicky government regulations and Federal Way's sign code has at times been pushed well beyond its original mandate of cleaning up the

visual mess that was "downtown" FW. But, you can't argue with the fact that the code has indeed cleaned up to a large extent the eyesore that used to be Highway 99, littered with a mish-mash of junky neon signs and flashing readerboards, all trying to outcompete the other for everyone's attention. Thanks to the sign code, our "downtown" area actually suggests a place you might want to stop and shop at, rather than a run-down trailer park you'd like to speed past.

45. Federal Way Boys & Girls Club. I would've grown up to be a bank robber if not for the opportunities presented by the [Boys & Girls Club](#) to get involved in sports. OK. I made that up. I was probably never on a path to a life of crime and most of the BG&C clients probably aren't either. However, the club makes a huge difference in the lives of our local youths who participate in the plethora of activities offered by the club, learning life lessons in sports, and also getting a chance to do what kids are supposed to do: have fun. The BG&C offers a much wider range of activities today than they did in the Seventies (back then, we were focused on learning the new sport of basketball. Oh, I fondly remember the old peach basket-hoops), including computer games, art classes, homework assistance. And they have the relatively new [EX3 facility](#) and teen center over by Truman High.

46. Tom Pierson and the [Federal Way Chamber of Commerce](#). Tom is another local boy, a TJ grad, who has stayed in the community and risen to a leadership role as the CEO of the Chamber. Since taking the job, Tom has transformed the Chamber into a local powerhouse, an effective organization for representing business interests in the city and a valuable networking tool for businesses. The Chamber as it is today is effective at not only advocating business interests to the city, but also in working with the city to get things done for its constituents (this is harder than it sounds. It's much easier to pound the table than use political judo to get government to do the things you'd like it to do. Under Tom's leadership, the Chamber has greatly increased its membership. Tom also understands community and the Chamber does a fine job of linking business up with the community to work for a better Federal Way.

47. Bob Roegner. My favorite ex-mayor of Auburn. I promised not to write about my board members, but I'm going to bend that a little here and write about Bob as everything but. After retiring from a long, distinguished career in government, Bob and his wife Jan located to Federal Way and Bob chose to lend his wealth of experience to a number of local efforts, such as the Boys & Girls Club, FOH, among others. Having someone with Bob's experience involved in community groups is little bit like having Yoda on your Jedi Council (I apologize for the horrible metaphor. That's what you get with amateur lists like this). Plus, he is now gracing the Mirror with his incisive view of local politics in a regular column.

48. The Capital One Bog. This isn't its real name (it probably doesn't even have a real name), but there is an ancient bog (bogs are formed on the timescale of thousands of years) squeezed between the northbound I-5-320th offramp and the former Capital One building. You wouldn't know it's there and it's almost impossible to find. But this ancient garden of bog laurel and Labrador tea and snowy white lichens survives improbably

amidst the surrounding concrete and traffic, standing as a beautiful reminder of the natural world that once dominated South King County.

49. Tom and Karen Vander Ark. In looking back, it's amazing just how much some people were upset by the hiring of Tom Vander Ark, a former business executive to lead Federal Way Schools in the 1990s. Despite Tom being treated unfairly in some quarters, the Vander Arks have stayed in, and stayed committed to Federal Way, since Tom moved his work downtown to the Gates Foundation (and now the [XPrize Foundation](#)). Tom and Karen have been involved in a number of community causes. Karen has been a key player in the Federal Way Education and Communities in Schools Foundation, is a former member of my board, and is a trustee with Highline Community College. These days I'm hearing a much better recognition of the many good things Tom accomplished in his tenure with the district. There's no doubting what Tom and Karen have accomplished as activists in the community.

50. FUSION. Like any other community, sadly, Federal Way is no stranger to homelessness. Fortunately, we have Peggy LaPorte and the good folks at [FUSION](#), who since 1993 have been providing transitional housing to homeless women and their children. FUSION also provides resources to help women get back on their feet and provide for their children.

51. Hylebos Creek. I haven't mentioned this yet? Unbelievable. Of course, this is part of my everyday work at Friends of the Hylebos, conserving and restoring our local salmon stream. Hylebos Creek is Federal Way to me. As early as I can remember I was playing around (and in) the stream. It's where I first saw wild salmon - and I couldn't believe that the huge coho spawners I saw actually belonged in my city. When I was growing up, Hylebos was one of the most productive small salmon streams in the Central Puget Sound Region. Much of the remaining stream, wetland, forest habitat and native wildlife in our area is centered around Hylebos. The Friends and thousands of locals are working to protect and restore it.

52. Bingaman Pond. This is a little known, but beautiful little bog wetlands in unincorporated King County near Thomas Jefferson High. A former World War II-era cranberry bog, the county bought it and preserved it in the 1990s. Its trail takes park visitors along the bog and Bingaman Pond and through a 2nd growth forest that is remarkably healthy despite the intensive suburban development around it. How did this jewel come to be preserved? It was one of the first projects Pete von Reichbauer took on when he joined the King County Council, responding to the requests of local residents like Lyle Lindblad.

53. [Friends of the Hylebos](#). I guess I've got to put a plug in for my group, while still trying to be objective. If you want to hold on to the important and beloved green spaces in your community, you need a group that focuses those efforts, and that's what [Friends of the Hylebos](#) does. Our big project, the Hylebos Creek Conservation Initiative, will create an unprecedented open space corridor along Hylebos Creek, from the West

Hylebos Wetlands to the Hylebos Waterway. That's good for the community and for the native salmon, birds and other wildlife.

54. [Rainier Audubon](#). This is another group that's been working on the local environment for years, providing environmental awareness, birding and other nature trips in the South King County area. [Rainier Audubon Society](#) volunteers are also often on the front line, volunteering in hands on projects and participating in shaping local environmental policy.

55. Mt. Rainier. Sure, its not in FW, but there are many vistas of our region's totemic volcano that are absolutely astounding.

56. Wildlife. Due to the relatively large areas of habitat left in FW, we still have interesting native wildlife here that enrich our community. No, I'm not counting the suburban wildlife like coyotes, possums and crows. I've personally seen deer, beaver, river otters, Douglas squirrels, short-tailed weasels, and foxes. If we hold on to the natural places on this list, and others like them, we can perhaps keep wildlife a part of our growing community.

57. Bald Eagles. Several times I've had the surprise of having a bald eagle fly past one of my windows at home, or roost in a tree in our neighborhood. There is a pair that nests in nearby Poverty Bay Park. These majestic, powerful birds are an amazing sight to behold. Once endangered, they are making a comeback and learning to tolerate areas where humans are. We're lucky to have several of these iconic great birds live in Federal Way.

58. [Dash Point Park](#). I can remember when Dash Point was the *only* park in Federal Way. We now have many parks to choose from, but this 398-acre park with more than 3,000 feet of shoreline and a forest trail to explore, is still one of the best. There's a lot to choose from here, including one of the few urban camping options available.

59. The Capital One Bog. Not it's real name; in fact, it probably doesn't have a name, but there is an ancient bog (bogs are formed on the timescale of thousands of years) squeezed between the northbound I-5/S. 320th offramp and the former Capital One building. You wouldn't know it's there and it's almost impossible to find. But this ancient garden of bog laurel and labrador tea and snowy white lichens survives improbably amidst the surrounding concrete and traffic, standing as a testament to the natural wetland wonders that once dominated this part of South King County.

60. Thais Bock. This former piano teacher has forgot more about birds than I will ever know. Thais has been a long-time Rainier Audubon Society volunteer (and Friends' activist) who has been very active in teaching countless residents about local bird species and working to protect important bird habitat like Dumas Bay and the West Hylebos Wetlands.

61. View Cliff and other neighborhoods. Good cities are made from good neighborhoods and FW's got its share. I've been lucky to live in the View Cliff neighborhood since I was a child. You know how they say it takes a village to raise a child? View Cliff was blessed with wonderful, generous families that watched out for the other kids in the neighborhood, including me. And while some of the originals have left and new people have arrived, it's still the kind of street where everyone knows everyone else, stops by to catch up on news, and is ready to help their neighbors.

62. Indochine. I can't believe I haven't mentioned this yet. Hands down, my favorite restaurant. This family-owned Thai restaurant has a menu as deep as Puget Sound, and everything on it that I've tried has been outstanding. Word to the wise, though, don't put soy sauce in your won ton soup.

63. Greg Fewins. To call the city's Assistant Director of Community Development unflappable may be an understatement. Fewins is a consummate professional, who is as calm and steady as they make them. He knows the city code better than anyone I know (and if you've tried to read a municipal code lately, you'll know that's saying something). Fewins is the first call I make when I need to understand FW land use issues and he's always replaced my confusion with a working understanding of the code.

64. St. Francis Hospital. While I've been blessed that our family hasn't had many reasons to visit a hospital, (3 births and 1 gruesomely sprained ankle account for our four trips to St. Francis), I'm grateful we have a modern hospital facility in our city. Before the advent of St. Francis and the many medical practices that sprouted up around it, hospital visits and most special medical needs meant a drive to Auburn, Tacoma or Seattle.

65. John Metcalf. John moved to Seattle a few years ago, but I thought that he belonged on the list by dint of all that he has done in the community over the 4 decades or so he lived and taught here. A teacher at TJ and Decatur High School (where I had him for History and French), John has seemingly been involved in every worthwhile community cause here since the late 1960s, from racial integration to cityhood. He also spent many, many hours helping immigrants from Southeast Asia (where he taught during the early 1960s) get established. He can be overly formal (to call him old school is an understatement), but beneath that exterior lay one of the sharpest wits and warmest human beings who ever lived in the 98003 zip code.

66. Federal Way Police. It's sometimes all too easy to forget about those who protect public safety, particularly when crime generally seems under control. The tragic death of Officer Patrick Maher in 2003, however, was a reminder of the risk that Federal Way's finest undertake every day in the course of doing their jobs and the quiet everyday heroism involved in protecting and keeping the peace in Federal Way.

67. South King County Fire and Rescue. Again, easy to overlook the brave men and women who respond to fire and other emergencies. Particularly since we don't seem to have a lot of fires in FW. However, our fire department is highly professional and capable and ready when needed. In December, we had a scary reminder of the importance

of the fire department when a neighbor's house caught on fire. The fire trucks were there within minutes and got the blaze under control soon enough to save the structure.

68. East Federal Way. AKA unincorporated King County, the residential east side of Federal Way has always been our wild cousin, a part of Federal Way geographically but culturally distinct and resistant to coming under the political structure of the city. Now, it looks like much of this area may be annexed in the not too distant future if its residents approve, raising our city's population to close to 100,000. Come on, East FWay'ers. Join us.

69. New Lumber and Hardware. My dad was a skilled carpenter and as a boy I accompanied him on countless trips to New Lumber and Hardware near Federal Way High School. While he didn't pass down the carpentering genes to me, I still love to frequent NLH (they likely benefit from this, as my lack of carpentering skills translates into more trips and more purchases). We have lots of lumber and hardware options in Federal Way, but New Lumber still offers selection and good prices and its the only hardware store in town that reminds me of old Federal Way.

70. Skateboard Park. The only time I ever tried skateboarding, I learned the meaning of the term "face plant," and gave up the sport forever (I have similar near-death experiences with ATVs and motorcycles. It's a wonder the courts don't brand me a danger to myself.). Nonetheless, I'm glad the city parks opened the skateboard facility at Steel Lake Park, where better boarders than I ever was can hone their skills. Skateboarding is hugely popular activity for kids and the park reflects that with a seemingly never-ending crowd of kids boarding and hanging out.

71. Groundwater. Do you ever think about where our drinking water comes from? Well, Federal Way is blessed with an abundance of water wealth in the aquifers below our feet. Federal Way's groundwater is some of the purest water available (so, don't waste your money on bottled water) and also provides critical base flows to Hylebos and other local creeks. Historically, most of FW's drinking water was taken from the ground. As population grew, though, that became impossible to sustain and in recent years, Lakehaven Utility District has switched many parts of the city over to Green River water, delivered through Tacoma's pipeline. Less of our groundwater ending up in our taps, means more stays in the ground, feeding local wetlands and streams critical water supplies that sustain the beautiful natural environment in FW.

72. Steel Lake Park. For the longest time, this was THE park in the city (back when we were the hinterlands of unincorporated King County). It was a kid's delight. Swimming. Fishing. Picnicking. Swings and the ultimate in Darwinian playground equipment, the carousel. The bigger kids would get this going as fast as possible, while the younger ones would hold on for dear life. This was where I first learned how to fly...and land in a tuck and roll. Sadly, our litigation-happy society has replaced this killer with a tamer, though much more multipurpose big toy with swings, ropes, bridges and slides. Today's kids are probably happier, but their grips are undoubtedly weaker.



This is a photo of my older brother and I on the carousel. You can tell from the look on his face that he is thinking that if he gets it going fast enough, he will no longer have to share a room with a younger brother.

73. Bill Morton. For the past 10 years, this retired Boeing engineer has been a key volunteer with the Federal Way Police Department, helping drive police vehicles to be serviced (This saves the police department money that would go to paying officers or staff drive the vehicles. The savings results in more dollars to core officer duties). Bill was also deeply involved in the Friends of the Hylebos, serving on our board for several years, and is one of the most enthusiastic guys I know.

74. Federal Way Kiwanis. Federal Way has a noon and morning Kiwanis group that are involved in many, many hands-on efforts in the community and raise money to support causes, including the local schools and providing scholarships for local students, supporting the Multi-Service Center clothing bank, and local Boy Scouts.

75. Kiwanis Salmon Bake. Just because I save salmon for a living doesn't mean I don't like to eat salmon (not to worry, I get mine at the store, not out of Hylebos Creek). And the annual salmon bake is a great place to get excellent barbecued salmon, mix with a good group of people, and raise funds for the Kiwanis and the many causes it supports. The salmon feed has a fixture of Federal Way summers since I can remember and as they say, anybody who is anybody is there.

76. Federal Way Education and Communities in Schools Foundation. I'm a firm believer that literacy is a critical skill for both succeeding economically and enjoying life with an active and healthy mind. Thankfully, Federal Way has an excellent organization dedicated to supporting our local schools and helping our young people learn reading skills. The [FWECSF](#) raises money for literacy programs at its excellent annual Literacy Breakfast, provides support for at-risk students, a leadership program for young men of color, and a mentoring program for the critical middle school years. School districts can't do the job alone. It takes community support. Thankfully, we have that here in Federal Way with organizations like the FWECSF.

77. The International Baccalaureate Program at TJ. Federal Way Schools does a bang up job of offering a wide range of educational programs at the high school level. The IB program offered at TJ is one of the best, providing an intensive, not-for-the-faint-of-heart academic program designed to prepare kids for excellence in college. My oldest daughter is just finishing the program this year, and while there's definitely a Darwinian element to the program (there's a wash-out rate to this rigorous program), kids that graduate with an IB diploma are as prepared for college as you can get.

78. Dry Cleaning Station. Owner Cindy Ducich didn't just give my daughter her first job, she runs a friendly, customer-oriented store that offers environmentally-friendly dry cleaning at a good price. Wow. With three of my FW Faves in the Dash Point Shopping Complex I can get a haircut, drop off my dry cleaning, and get the groceries all in one stop!

79. George Pfeiffer. The long-time Federal Way soccer coach and sports field advocate is one of Federal Way's authentic personalities. George seems to know something about everything and seems to have a funny story about everything. He's been coaching and training youth soccer players for a quarter of a century in Federal Way as a volunteer and has the sort of gregarious personality that kids love. As a volunteer with Federal Way Soccer Association and the Parks Commission, he has been involved in just about every soccer field project in the city.

80. 99 Bottles. A beer store. Brilliant! If you're a zythophile (and I have been known to indulge an ale or two from time to time), then this store in the new Northwest Crossings complex is paradise with bottles. The concept is simple, bring the best specialty beers to beer lovers (aka zythophiles) with a store that specializes in just beers and ales. Yes, you can find some high-priced ales at your local supermarket, but [99 Bottles](#) is like McLendon's Hardware of beer. If you want it, you can find it here.

81. Opportunities for Public Involvement. Say what you want about local Federal Way government agencies, but there are plenty of opportunities to get involved. If you don't want to run for an office, there are numerous involvement opportunities with local government commissions (that make recommendations to the city council) and boards, as well as with a host of excellent nonprofit organizations working on everything from economic development to environmental conservation. You can complain about your community, if that's your bag of tea. But there's no excuse to not getting involved in and making this a better place to live. Remember, if you're not part of the solution...

82. Community Identity and Pride. This one is very much linked to the previous item. Why do people get involved in the first place? Because they recognize the place they live as a community, a valued place that they need to participate in the care and maintenance of. As I talk to people around FW, I am hearing a more distinct sense of community and pride emerging in the place where they live. FW'ers are volunteering for community organizations like the Friends, the Chamber, participating in commissions and even running for office because of this awareness.

83. Pat and Margery Godfrey. Long before I got know the Godfreys when Margery joined the Friends' board, I wondered who the couple was picking up trash on Dash Point Road between the Metropolitan Market and Lakota Village. The long-time FW residents have been taking it upon themselves to make their corner of FW more attractive and healthful by cleaning up the trash on their daily walk. If more of us followed this example (and if less of us dumped trash out our car windows) imagine the change that would bring about.

84. City Manager Selection Process. Referring back to #81, the city council did a great thing last year, when they were searching for a new city manager. They convened a broad representative group of citizens to help evaluate the finalists. The public had a couple of chances to meet and question the finalists in public forum. Then, the citizens panel, of which I was a member, interviewed the finalists and presented their thoughts on the candidates to the council, adding to the council's own interview process. The council may well have chosen Neal Beets without this public process, but in doing this, the council showed its concern for the interest of its citizens, and I think, got very valuable input from citizens who are active and involved in all aspects of the community. Not to be underestimated is the message that this very public process gives to new city manager candidates - that council respects the views of its citizens.

85. Teachers. Yeah, I know this is kind of a generic item, but there are way too many excellent and caring teachers in Federal Way Schools to name them all, and teachers are too important to the community to not include them. My hat's off to Federal Way teachers (especially, to those that survived me!) Teachers are vital to the quality of the community and even one can inspire and change a student's life. I think of Decatur's Betty Payne who switched on the light in this former Gator's head that led to my jumping into a journalism career and a life-long love of the art of writing. (while talking about teachers I have to give a shout out to the lovely ladies at the Lakota front office who day after day handle an endless stream of students, parents, sick kids and have to deal with parents like me). It's more than just teachers that make the schools run and help improve the lives of our children.

86. Trees, lovely trees. Contrary to popular notion, when you get past the downtown zone, Federal Way opens up into a landscape of surprisingly plentiful native trees. Douglas firs. Western red cedars. Maples. Even the rare Sitka spruce. Federal Way is not the lowland forest it was in the 1970s, but it still has a beautiful forest component. And if we do a good job of conserving what's left as the economy grows, we'll leave the next generation a beautiful environment and high quality place to live, work and play in.

87. Douglas Squirrels. We used to see these chirpy and cute native squirrels all over the FW. But as we lost more and more of the forests made up by #86, the Dougs were displaced by their nonnative, East Coast cousins, the Eastern gray squirrel (AKA, the tree rat). But in several forested areas, including the West Hylebos Wetlands, where there remains sufficient forest canopy to favor the Dougs, these little guys still scamper about gathering cones, eating skunk cabbage and loudly castigating the wayward human who intrudes on their territory.

88. King County Weyerhaeuser Aquatic Center. Another Pete von Reichbauer project, the aquatic center is one of the most regionally recognized swimming facilities, drawing national youth swim meets, NCAA meets, and the Goodwill Games in 1990. In addition, to providing opportunities for community swimming, the great room hosts a number of

community events, including the Friends' 3rd annual Ruby Dance Stewardship Dinner (September 22nd, check our [website](#) for details!).

89. Lyle Lindblad. One of the most fascinating people I've met in Federal Way, the Star Lake resident is a World War II veteran, who worked on General Douglas MacArthur's staff in the Philippines and in post-war Japan. Lyle participated in a huge chunk of American history and has the stories to tell from it. After retiring, Lyle has dedicated countless hours to preservation and care of Bingaman Pond (#52) in his neighborhood.

90. The School Safety Zone at Lakota Middle School. After the 317th flyover (# 18), you're going to start thinking I'm developing a traffic fetish. Initially, I wasn't going to list this one, but today while driving my kids to school I was happy to see that cars were slowing down to 20 miles per hour on 312th in front of the school crosswalk. For years, too many cars whistled by dangerously as kids walked to school, often ignoring the crosswalk, making getting to school a risky proposition for some. Over the past 18 months, 3 Lakota students were hit by cars (fortunately all are OK). After a few inquiries from the public, the city installed school safety zone equipment, and the police started doing emphasis patrols to send the message. It's nice to see the improved safety for these kids. Big thanks to Federal Way Traffic Engineer Rick Perez and Assistant City Manager Cary Roe for making this happen as quickly as possible.

91. Bob Kellogg. Bob is one of those guys who believes down to the very core of his soul in the importance of community and the value of individuals participating in community improvement. A long-time Kiwanis activist and parks advocate, Bob's been involved in way too many projects to list. But a sample would include getting the big toy installed at Celebration Park, as well as the park's huge American flag, serving countless hours at the Kiwanis stand at Memorial Stadium, past President of Kiwanis and being a charter member of the Federal Way Parks Commission. People like Bob who roll up their sleeves and get involved in improving the community are one the reasons there so many good things to list about Federal Way.

92. John and Aline Carnahan. I'm tempted to call them one of FW's true power couples, but I just know how that would go to their heads. John is the former Western Site Operations Director for Capital One and now a V-P with WaMu. He also serves on the Multi-Service Center's (# 30) board of directors. Aline is the current President of the excellent Federal Way Education and Communities in Schools Foundation (# 76) and a middle school mentor. But what gets them on the list is their personalities. They are a funny and entertaining couple to talk with and in four years of sharing the same soccer sideline, and tournament hotels, they've been a welcome source of lively and engaging conversation and lots of laughs.

93. Andy Hobbs. When I was working as a journalist, one of the unwritten rules, particularly for those of us non-Pulitzer quality scribes, was compliment your editor. Seriously, though, Andy has been a breath of fresh air to the local conversation. As an editor, he is quick to spot new ideas, unafraid of trying something different, and committed to the concept of the local paper as more than a reportorial device, using it to

also facilitate community dialogue. I don't always agree with all of his choices, but a newspaper should never be entirely comfortable, if it's going to provoke thought. On a personal note, we bonded over music, with Andy sharing my love for classic 70s rock (now you know the genesis of Andy's infamous School Board as The Who column) and contemporary indie bands like the Decemberists, Arctic Monkeys and the Fratellis. Rock on, Andy!

94. The Spotted Towhee. Another of my favorite native birds that can be found all around the F-Town. This stocky little brush denizen has distinctive markings, dark head and back, with a rufous side and white underbelly and distinctive red eyes that lends it a bit of a crazed look. The towhee is often heard scurrying and scratching in the underbrush, though it can be a bit elusive to spot. Its distinctive call, described by my bird book as a growling zheeee, is not necessarily musical, but is a unique and welcome sound in my yard.

95. Neal Beets. Because of the complexity of the job, and the slowness of governmental change, I don't believe you can honestly judge a city manager's record before three years are up. So, consider this an assessment of the person, not the performance. Federal Way's relatively new city manager Neal Beets is a welcome addition to the community. Affable, intelligent and engaging, Beets understands the importance of connecting city government to its citizens and has made a sincere effort to reach out to Federal Way's various community groups. I get the sense that Neal has a passion for the community and its people, and from that, an ability to envision future possibilities for community improvement.

96. Federal Way Matters. There's been a real political change in Federal Way in the last decade. While the community has historically been consistently conservative, the populace has shifted leftward in recent years. In the past year, we've even begun to see anti-war protest rallies, screenings of *An Inconvenient Truth*, and educational meetings on a number of progressive causes. Much of this activity has originated with the organizers of Federal Way Matters and their [website](#). Whether you agree with all the group's positions or not, suburbs like Federal Way are often accused of being hotbeds of political and intellectual incuriosity and it's refreshing to see lively political activism and new voices to the community conversation.

97. Keith Eldridge. Silky smooth doesn't quite capture Channel 4 newscaster Keith Eldridge's talents. The Federal Way resident has a tremendous gift for articulating a story. I could sit and listen to him read the phonebook. Whether it's on the KOMO news cast, or at one of the many local events he emcees, (he's done all of the Friends' Ruby Dance dinners and has made each one hum) Eldridge's vocal talents help tell important stories about our community and region.

98. Laser Quest. You're never too old to strap on a panel of flashing lights, hoist a laser rifle and hunt other human beings in a darkened maze. 'Nuf said.

99. Bo Howell and all the Federal Way active duty military serving in Iraq. This one is not about the Iraq war, (which I personally oppose but that would be another column or four), but about the brave FW'ers like my neighbor who are putting their lives on the line to serve their country. There are many things a democracy must have to survive and thrive, including an informed, active citizenry to keep an eye on their government, shared values and diversity of thought. It also must have courageous men and women who are willing to sacrifice their personal safety to defend their country. It's hard to believe that Bo, who was a diaper-clad tyke when his family moved in across the street, has served two duties in Iraq and may soon be back for a third. Let's all pray for a safe return for him and all our military personnel, and soon.

100. Federal Way's Future. I started this series because of Federal Way's undeserved reputation as a soulless, strip mall community. After reaching the end of the list, I have to note that our future as a city is bright. We have a tremendous range of assets in the people that live here, the special places we frequent, and the activities that are here for us to experience and enjoy. The city is slowly, but steadily, shaping re-development that will get us past the development mistakes foisted on us years ago by absentee government. More and more individuals are getting involved in leadership and volunteerism in the community. Our economic development future looks promising, and our community efforts to improve our schools and protect our environment are beginning to pay dividends. At the beginning I wrote that the items on this list are not in any order of importance. But upon reflection, I'd have to put our future at number one on my list.