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*Plus: Kirkland's Milagro Cantina, Learn to Place Your Bets at Emerald Downs, Lounging at Langley, Sunny Summer Styles and a Local Teenager Working to Change the World



LOCAL FAVORITES



BEST FESTIVAL

Bellevue Arts Week

Bellevue Arts Week is three great festivals — Bellevue Arts Museum’s ArtsFair, the Bellevue 6th Street Fair and the Bellevue Festival of the Arts — rolled in downtown Bellevue the last full weekend in July. With more than 60 years of tradition of showcasing more than 650 artists and their original art, there’s more art per square foot than the Louvre. Scores more play music, sing and dance, both outside at the fairs and inside Bellevue Square on Soundstage.

Runners Up: Issaquah Salmon Days, Issaquah; Kirkland Uncorked, Kirkland

Best Blog

ANNALEESULLIVAN.
BLOGSPOT.COM

According to the blog’s introduction, it is written about Annie, a “playful, spiritually sensitive, musical child” who “had a brain injury, seizures, and Addison’s disease. Now she has none of these, because she’s in heaven with Jesus — healed and perfectly well.”

RUNNERS UP: *pupppymanners.com/blog* and *blog.seattlepi.com/eastsideuptown/*

Best Celebrity

BILL GATES

twitter.com/billgates and *microsoft.com/presspass/exec/billg*

In 2008, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates shifted from software guru to philanthropic trendsetter, devoting most of his time to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which aims to reduce inequities worldwide. In 2010, he launched Gates Notes (*thegatesnotes.com*) to publish his thoughts about the foundation and other topics. About 2.7 million people follow his tweets about innovation, education and solving global challenges such as hunger and disease.

RUNNERS UP: *Ciscoe Morris; Ichiro Suzuki*

Best City

KIRKLAND

kirklandwa.gov

Despite heated debates and held breaths, the annexation that doubled Kirkland’s population apparently hasn’t dimmed the Sunshine City’s popularity. Kirkland has cutting-edge workplaces, waterfront shopping districts, exquisite parks, a notable school system and an abundance of diverse and distinctive neighborhoods. An Urban Land Institute panel in July will discuss >>

PHOTO BY CAROLINE PLANQUE

revving up the Totem Lake district, known as the city's economic engine. The completely remodeled 22-acre Juanita Beach Park will open soon. Bring your sunscreen.

RUNNERS UP: *Bellevue; Redmond*

Best Event

BELLEVUE ARTS WEEK

With four blocks of entertainment and free admission, Bellevue Arts Week, the largest arts and craft event in King County, sustains the region's rich arts and crafts and

feels like a block party. Downtown Bellevue hosts three major arts and crafts fairs the last weekend of July with more than 650 artist booths, art demonstrations, live music and kids' activities.

RUNNERS UP: *Reading with Rover, Borders Redmond; Issaquah Salmon Days, Issaquah*

Best Neighborhood

NORKIRK

North of downtown Kirkland and east of Market Street, NorKirk

embodies the original small-town Kirkland, complete with annual picnics and friendly neighbors. It is home to City Hall, the police department, the Kirkland Women's Club and American Legion Hall, as well as the Kirkland Arts Center in the 119-year-old Peter Kirk building. From here, you can easily walk to the waterfront, downtown, Heritage Park and Juanita Beach Park's nature preserve for spectacular views.

RUNNERS UP: *Enatai; Medina >>*

LOCAL FAVORITES



BEST NONPROFIT

Reading with Rover

Woodinville, readingwithrover.org

Rover dogs and their handlers help kids become better readers because Rover dogs are such great, willing listeners. Kids who read to dogs improved their reading skills by 12 percent over kids who do not read to dogs, according to studies. Also, kids became more social and experience humane interactions. A free DVD and how-to manual for new program handlers will be released soon.

Runners Up: *Hopelink, multiple locations; MEOW Cat Rescue, Kirkland*

PHOTO COURTESY READING WITH ROVER