

**Mayor's column for
The Beacon
Published on 3/1/07**

Have you ever “Googled” yourself? Now, before you go hiding this paper from your kids, it’s not what you might be thinking! Google has changed how we operate in the world of searching for information. Just for fun, the other day I Googled my name and found that the first item that shows up is Dr. Gary Haakenson, a gynecologist, in North Carolina. His business name begins with an “A,” so he was listed ahead of me in the search. I emailed him because of the coincidence, and he had already heard of me from relatives here on the west coast.

I found 14 pages of information about the Edmonds Gary Haakenson. There were photos, news stories, including a couple in Japanese, and a speech that I had apparently given in Spanish (must have been the doctor!). One could find my email address; my office phone number; stories about my wife; a story in which I was quoted about the late Jack Roberts of appliance-selling fame; and a website called the “Political Graveyard,” which lists as many elected officials as they can, and states that as of 2004 I am still alive. I wish they’d update that statistic to 2007!

I found my name listed several times in USA Today. I had no idea! My wife will be jealous to learn that I was even mentioned in “Crafting World” magazine several years ago. I didn’t know that the Union Oil Company of California had a newsletter—they do, and I was quoted in it. I found references to Gary Haakenson (the mayor, not the doctor) in Port Periodicals, Marina News Quarterly, old election results, postings of Edmonds City Council meetings and many other City Council meetings minutes, several websites listing auction donations that I had made to various charitable organizations, and of course, many references about the infamous bear chase through Edmonds.

The most astounding link that I found, however, was to Hillary Clinton’s Forum. I didn’t know she had one, and I’m pretty sure I wouldn’t have looked at it until Google pointed out that I was mentioned in it. So I searched through it until I found a mention to a November 15, 2001 story of how I dealt with an art donation to the City of a 9-11 painting of the World Trade Center that depicted some crosses in the background. Why that was news to Hillary, I’m not certain.

I guess in this information age, you can find just about anything online. Even some stuff you may not have known about yourself. Try it for yourself; our lives are far from private, and you may find some financial information that you don’t really want out in cyberspace. So on the next rainy day when you have a few moments to spare, “Google” yourself!