



Seldovia Gazette

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Thursday, June 30, 2005

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2 Cents Worth

Some residents feel bear disturbances have been on the rise in Seldovia lately. Last week, the City Council even addressed the issue. The Seldovia Gazette asked:

Does the "bear problem" in Seldovia need immediate action?



"Yes. They need to transport them out further. People shouldn't kill bears unless they want to eat them."

Priscilla Botero

"No. For me and my neighbors, there are bears, but it's just not that big of a deal. I blame myself if I have bear problems. Anyone can bear bait."

Craig (Higgy) Higman



"Not sure. It might just be a passing problem. They're not being nuisances, they're just being sighted everywhere."

John Ardenia

"Yes. They need to get live traps and get the bears far away from here."

Sharon Burt



"No. People just need to calm down a bit about the whole thing."

Susie Gruber

"Yes. They need to be killed. Bears do not belong around people."

Tim O'Leary



Letters to the Editor

The Seldovia Gazette values freedom of speech. We welcome original, insightful letters from our readers on issues that are of concern to them. However, due to space considerations, please limit letters to 300 words. We also reserve the right to edit all letters for clarity, grammar, and taste. Letters must be signed and submitted by Tuesday at 5 pm in order to be printed in that week's press. We accept letters submitted by one of three ways: by email at [damara@seldovia.com](mailto:damera@seldovia.com), by fax at 907-234-7526, or by mail at Seldovia Gazette, P.O. Box 97, Seldovia, Alaska 99663.

Killing bears not a good solution

I would like to state my opinion about the recent "bear problems." I recently read the article with the quotes from other locals, and I must say, I do not completely agree with them. Personally, I feel that shooting the bears is not the proper solution. Of course, there may be certain situations in which it may be necessary, but so far, I have not heard of such situations. There is always the safety concern for children and adults and also just the basic nuisance the bears can be. I admit, bears-coming-to-town is an issue that needs a solution. I am not only concerned about the safety of our town, but I am also concerned for the bears' safety. I have been told one of the bears causing the mischief with garbage is still a small, young one. How fair is it for a baby bear to be shot and killed when it has not even been alive long enough to know better? I have no idea what happened to its mother, but as far as I know, this young bear has just been wandering around as a scavenger, trying to survive.

The logging that has taken place in the past few years, in my opinion, has disrupted the area where bears usually sleep, eat, and live. It seems this gives bears even more reason to come to town. They are hungry, and since their land has been disturbed now, they are forced to move around.

With bears coming into town, people need to be especially cautious. Bears, like other animals, are curious. If we leave our garbage or fish carcasses out in the open bears, dogs, crows, or other things may get into it. It is unfortunate that we may be forced to put our garbage in an enclosed area to protect our own property. At the same time, it is unfortunate that bears are being killed for almost no reason.

I don't think the solution should be to shoot the animals. To me, it would be like shooting a dog after getting in the trash. Until the bears begin acting hostile or actually causing damage - other than disturbing garbage - there is no need for guns. I don't know how well this would work, but my solution is relocation of the bears. It seems to me, that if we could somehow sedate the bears long enough to transport them, then they could be moved to Red Mountain. I was up there recently and there was so much green, the bears would be in heaven! There would be plenty of space for the bears to roam about and there would be enough food for them to stay out of town. If the transport works the bears would be out of city limits, in their own natural habitats and everyone would be happy.

Sincerely,

Emily Mickelson, Seldovia resident

America is "Land of the Free"

This month we celebrate freedom as we celebrate our Nation's birthday. I wonder if we sometimes take our freedoms for granted? How often do we sit down and think about how blessed we are to be allowed to speak our minds, exercise our own religious beliefs and vote peacefully?

I recently read an essay by Gary Bauer, former presidential candidate and current chairman of the Campaign for Working Families in Arlington, Virginia. He identified a danger in America not making headlines -- "Our history textbooks are sanitized to be politically correct and give our children virtually no sense of the greatness of the nation they live in. The Founders are seldom mentioned unless it is part of a controversy about slavery or whether they sired illegitimate children." Often decent American youth have little good to say about our country. Bauer said, "Their knowledge of the sacrifices made to establish and preserve their freedom was virtually non-existent. They are, literally, the recipients of the greatest freedom and opportunity that any society has ever produced; yet they are unaware of the price in flesh and blood that was paid for it."

Our troops, many from Alaska, are in Afghanistan and Iraq so you and I do not have to experience terror here on our homeland. I am always humbled when I meet these servicemen and women at deployment ceremonies, welcome home celebrations and change of command ceremonies. It is reassuring to see the look of resolve in their eyes and hear the confidence in their voices.

On June 1 Carolyn and I watched as 906 of the finest young men and women in our country graduated from the United States Air Force Academy. One of them was our son Joseph. I mention this not only because we are thankful parents, but also because he and his fellow cadets realize they stand in the shadows of those who have gone before them. Without the sacrifices of veterans it would not be possible for Joseph to have such opportunity. Indeed, we all owe a debt of gratitude for the freedoms we enjoy. It is because of brave American veterans that our hearts can hope, and we can pursue our dreams.

I agree with Mr. Bauer's proposed remedy for teaching our children. He suggests, "(let's) remind ourselves, and our children, about what happened at Concord Bridge ; the fields of Antietam ; at the beaches of Normandy . Let's explain to them why there was a Berlin Wall, what happened at Okinawa and the price that was paid to stop Hitler. In short, let's take at least a moment to teach them to love the things we love, and honor the things we honor."

I encourage you to celebrate Independence Day because of what it represents. Salute our flag, thank our military men and women and take time to reflect on what it means to be free.

Lieutenant Governor Loren Leman