



Seldovia Gazette

Serving Seldovia, Alaska and Kachemak Bay southeast

Seldovia, AK

45 °F / 7 °C

Overcast
at 7:43 AM



[Click for Forecast](#)

Thursday, Sep. 29, 2005

Just another day in paradis

A truly unique shopping experience - Gifts for that special person! Friendly - Affordable

HERRING BAY MERCANTILE

<http://www.herringbaymercantile.com>

Located in beautiful downtown Seldovia - 275 Main St.



[Local News](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Opinions](#)

[Spotlight](#)

[School](#)

[Classifieds](#)

[Archives](#)

[Seldovia.com](#)

[Gazette Services](#)

[Current Spotlight](#) | [Spotlight Archives](#)

Margaret McInnes - Postmistress 99663

by *Charity Winters*



Margaret McInnes - one of Seldovia's constants in the midst of so much change. It doesn't seem like there would be much to tell about a small-town postmistress, but as a person who has never left Seldovia, her life is intertwined with the history of this unique little town.

Robert and Eloise Kincaid (Margaret's parents) moved to Seldovia in 1956, when Margaret was 7 years old. Before the move, the family lived in Bremerton, WA where Robert worked in the naval shipyards during the war. After the war, the economy was poor and it was hard to find work. Since Robert had been visiting Alaska in the summers since 1950, he decided to take his family of 3 children there to find work. He found a job working in Seldovia's canneries (Wakefield Fisheries) as a port engineer. Consistent work kept the family in Seldovia where Margaret's parents retired and lived out the rest of their lives at Lakeside Terrace, ~~which they built~~. (Correction: Lakeside Terrace was actually built by a contracting firm for Cook Inlet Housing Authority.)

Margaret was able to share fond memories of life 'back in the old days' when things were simpler. There were only a few phones in town for a long time, most families using short wave radios. Her family didn't get their first television until 1972, when Margaret was 23. Even the Tustumena ferry wasn't servicing Seldovia at the time, making small planes and private boats the main source of transportation out of town. Margaret said the family didn't get out much, but the isolation never bothered her. She remembers playing on the old boardwalk, and, like today, how the whole town was her play area. The family never did own property or a home of their own. Margaret explained that her father didn't believe

in owning property as he often said, "The titles aren't clear!" Robert Kincaid's distrust of Alaska's property titles kept the family moving. They lived in several places in town, renting houses and apartments and living in cannery housing at one point.

Margaret was in town the day of the 1964 earthquake that changed so much of Seldovia's landscape. At that time, her family lived in a house at about the same spot as today's post office, across the street from the old Linwood Bar. Margaret remembers that day by repeating a thought that ran through her 15 - year - old head, "So this is what the end of the world is like...". Margaret replays some of that day's memories: "...we had just finished dinner when the earthquake first shook. Dad jumped out of his seat and ran up to the cannery to shut off the boiler in case it would start a fire. Mom grabbed the kids and we ran out of the house..." She remembers watching a young woman run out of her home with a small child wrapped in her arms and seven or eight little ones following close behind. That night Margaret was too scared to go home so she stayed with many other townspeople in the school building. She remembers just how frightening it was to walk downstairs in the middle of the night and step into cold water that almost reached her knees.



Margaret graduated from high school with a class of 3 in 1966 - when the old school building was still standing and being used. In 1969, Margaret married Walter McInnes (photo on left). Walter arrived from Canada in 1960, worked for Homer Electric in Seldovia for many years and is currently serving on the Seldovia City Council. When asked how the two of them met and married, Margaret simply stated that it 'just happened' as if was meant to be. The couple had 4 children: Rebecca, Rosanna, Kristina, and John and are now blessed with 10 grandchildren, 8 boys and 2 girls. Rose is the only one of the children now residing in Seldovia with her two sons, although the other children would like to move back. Walter commented that "Margaret's first thoughts are always of her children and grandchildren" and that she values family above all else.

Margaret and her family led a simple and quiet life in Seldovia while she stayed home as the children were growing up. During this time, she liked to keep herself busy doing small odd jobs in town: cleaning houses, watching other children, making and selling crafts and other such odd jobs. In 1986, Margaret's work ethic earned her the position of postmaster. It must have been meant to be - Margaret had just taken the Civil Service test when the postmaster at that time quit. After going through several postmasters in the last few years, the post office was pleased to get a local person who they hoped would stick to the job. Still Margaret claims, "I had some big shoes to fill!" referring to the legacy of Seldovia's famed postmistress, Susan B. English - our school's namesake. After 19 years Margaret can still say that she likes her job. "It gives me a chance to see and meet everybody," she explains. Margaret has been a steadfast and hard-working employee for the U.S. Postal Service and for the people of Seldovia. Everyday, Margaret keeps the post office lobby open for an extra hour and a half after closing so working people can get their mail. She then returns on her own time to close up.



Daughter Rosanna and Margaret



Daughter Kristina and granddaughter Anna

"Why we never left, I don't know. We just like it here!" Margaret describes her favorite things about Seldovia: the people, being able to stroll down a quiet street without worrying, the fresh air and beauty. She sees little change in the actual heart of Seldovia, that special quality that keeps people here and captures the romantic interest of others. People like Margaret McInnes help make Seldovia what it is - a small community of people who love where they live so much that they are willing to do whatever it takes to stay put.

Copyright © 2005 Seldovia.com, Inc. and Seldovia Gazette. All rights reserved. The Seldovia Gazette is published weekly by Seldovia.com, Inc. Contents of this publication may not be used or reproduced, in whole or in part, in any form or manner without the express written permission of Seldovia.com, Inc. [Click here for additional details.](#)