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A Faithful Seldovian: Sandy Geagel!

by *Charity Winters*



Sandy Geagel has faithfully served our beloved school for 24 years. Every morning her cheerful voice is heard over the intercom, welcoming the students and starting another school day. She helps out with the Booster club, is at almost every school game, and is involved with the local Seldovia Bible Chapel. And on top of it all she has 4 of her own children and helps her husband run a business at home!

It was because of this success that the family decided to embark on another dream – that of having a large family. With daughter Jaime born in 1984 they were now a family of 4. They decided they wanted to give some other kids a home. So they adopted 2 more kids: Jordan in 1990 and Sarah in 1995. “The Lord blessed us with 2 more great kids!” Sandy exclaims. “They have always been ours – from the moment we began searching for them to the moment they were ours.”

As you can see from her large family, Sandy loves children. I have never seen someone so ecstatic over the birth of her first grandbaby. Sandy could barely contain herself when she heard the news! On October 7, 2005, her son, Ryan, and his wife, Carly, gave birth to Trenton David. He has been an obvious blessing to the whole family.

Life has not always been easy in Seldovia. The most frustrating thing for Sandy (and for ALL of us!) is trying to get in and out of this secluded little town. Another concern was that the kids weren’t getting all the right opportunities. Yet, as Sandy would say, God has always worked things out! For example, their daughter Jaime was an excellent basketball player. But in such a small school there was always the chance that there wouldn’t be a team. But God was faithful – Jaime had a team to play on every year, her skills were recognized by San Diego Christian College, and she was awarded a scholarship. “We’re always weighing the pros and cons,” Sandy says. In the end, they have decided that Seldovia is a great place to raise kids and they

Sandra Geagel, or Sandy, as we all call her, is a hardworking Seldovian mom – yet there has never been a time that I have seen her too busy to give you a smile and a bubbly, “Hello!” What is the story behind this optimistic personality?

Sandra Benline was born far from our little town of Seldovia, in another little town called Chester, Illinois. Her father was in the military and the Benlines moved every 2-3 years whenever he was given a new assignment. But Sandy felt as though she grew up in Georgia. For some reason, that was the state they always ended up going back to. Germany was one station that Sandy remembers with a lot of fondness if only because she remembers getting her first pair of “real” shoes. As a little girl who always had to wear oxfords, this was quite a significant moment in an eight year-old’s life! In 1974, the Benlines ended up in Anchorage, AK. Sandy graduated from Bartlett High School in 1977 and, at a basketball game one night, met the love of her life, Russell Geagel.

After Sandy graduated, her family went back to Georgia and left her behind. She and Russ were planning on getting married and in 1978 that’s just what they did. For their first year, they lived and worked in Anchorage. But what they really wanted was to get out of the city and make their living the way many Alaskans do: fishing. So in 1979, the couple moved to Seldovia and bought set net sites in Bristol Bay. When they got to Seldovia, they were supposed to move into the cute little boardwalk house across from the Seldovia Rowing Club. However, the house was still being rented out. So the newlyweds spent their first few months in Seldovia with Russ’s parents until the house opened up.



Sandy talks about that little house with a lot of happiness – waking up to the ocean and the eagles every morning. The couple lived there for several years. In 1980, their first child, Ryan, was born. Their first year of fishing was over and it hadn’t gone so well. They knew that they wouldn’t be able to make it on fishing alone. So, Russ got a job working on a crab boat with Gordan Giles and Sandy applied for the school secretary position. A few years later, the Geagels bought Kar-A-Van Transfer from the Hoffman family. Back in the days of

have stuck by that decision. “I guess the trade off is worth it!”

Sandy and Russell are just another example of those people who have worked hard to make it work here in Seldovia. They have dedicated their lives to providing a loving home for their children in an environment that can be very tough to grow up in at times, yet also very unique and wonderful. With everything that she does, Sandy has played a large part in making this community what it is.



the cannery, the business was used to load fish-laden trucks onto the ferry and unload the empty trucks. Since then, the Geagels have expanded the business to assist the community of Seldovia in many ways. Now, they haul freight for everyone under the sun from Anchorage and all points in between. Sandy describes the business's success as, "a true blessing from God."

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