



Seldovia Gazette

Serving Seldovia, Alaska and Kachemak Bay southeast

Seldovia, AK

9 °F / -13 °C

Light Snow
at 8:00 AM



[Click for Forecast](#)

Thursday, Jan. 26, 2006

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](#)

Shirly Giles, a dedicated volunteer

by Charity Winters



Shirly Giles

Shirly Giles has been one of Seldovia's most dedicated volunteers for the past 30 years. She modestly calls herself the "manager of the library" since she feels that she can't take credit as a librarian without the degree. Along with Shirly's work in the library, her story here is intertwined with some interesting history about one of Seldovia's central public places.

In the mid-1980's Susan's health began to fail. Shirly began to slowly take over more and more of the responsibilities at the new library and eventually became the second "manager" of the Seldovia Public Library. She now runs the library for 12 hours a week with 6 volunteers: Savannah Lewis, Leny Buchman, Mark Massion, Pauli Carluccio, Peni Seville and Amy Gilson. Tom Glover also volunteers as the technical

In 1935 a group of Seldovians, Susan B. English being one of them, formed a public library. For many years, Susan ran the library with a few volunteers keeping the library open one night a week for 2 hours. Shirly arrived in April of 1963 from Illinois with her husband, Pierre and their daughter, Grethe. The couple eventually had 2 other children, Pirie and Heidi. Shirly's love of books drew her to the library quite often and finally Susan asked her if she would like to volunteer. Beginning in the 1970's, Shirly volunteered at the library off and on, working closely with Susan and learning the ropes. In 1978, the library applied for a small library grant to build an actual library building. Until this time, the library had been housed in the old Lipke building (no longer standing) which also held a store, some apartments, and the city council meetings. The grant allowed them to build the first part of the public city building that now contains the multi-purpose room and medical clinic. There were some conditions that still stand today: the library must be open for at least 10 hours a week and an annual report needs to be completed each year to show how grant money is spent, circulation, public use and other such information. Shirly also has to attend the Alaska State Library Conference every other year.

support person. Shirly runs the library in a very diplomatic manner, using suggestions from the library board and volunteers to help her make decisions about library issues. "They're all adults," she says. "I'm not going to come in here and start bossing them around. We're all volunteers....it's all very casual."

And so, Shirly has offered much of her time to the community of Seldovia during the past 43 years. She and her second husband, Leslie Giles, enjoy their quiet life here. Her youngest daughter, Jill, made for four kids that she has raised in Seldovia with no regrets. "It's a great place to raise children. I like the small town atmosphere...the kids can feel safe...SBE has been a good school..." Her 5 grandchildren love to visit in the summer. Shirley refers to Seldovia as a "haven" with its beauty, charm, and seclusion. A haven where "you can walk one block and be at a pretty harbor full of boats...or drive down the road and find yourself at a beautiful beach with a view to die for." In the meantime, Seldovia can be grateful that Shirly chose this haven for her home and we can have our library.