



Seldovia Gazette

Serving Seldovia, Alaska and Kachemak Bay southeast

Seldovia, AK

22 °F / -6 °C

Light Snow
at 6:52 AM

[Click for Forecast](#)

Thursday, Feb. 23, 2006

Just another day in paradis

[Local News](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Opinions](#)

[Spotlight](#)

[School](#)

[Classifieds](#)

[Archives](#)

[Seldovia.com](#)

[Gazette Services](#)

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.



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

Dede Higman, Seldovian artist extraordinaire

by *Charity Winters*



You might never guess that quiet, reserved Dede Higman lives out the road in a tiny 16x16 house, all by herself, without running water! But she loves her piece of land. Set on the trail to the TV tower it has a beautiful view of the bay, Mt. Iliamna and Mt. Augustine. I got the feeling that Dede wouldn't give up her little plot for anything.

relief in New Orleans. The organization is nonprofit so she lives in a tent and has meals and that's about it! She also has a website (www.valisahigman.com) where you can see some of her unique paper artwork.

Obviously, Dede has raised some very creative kids. A large part of this she attributes to the artist co-op of which she and

Dede grew up in Minneapolis, where most of her family still lives. She married and settled in Washington where her first son, Bret, was born. She and her husband always had an itch to live in Alaska. They had spent some time in the Southeast and it always had appealed to them. In 1977, her husband copiloted a plane up to Seldovia with a friend. He decided then and there that they were moving. "It sounds funny," Dede explained, "but he always liked tides." Since Seldovia has some of the largest tides in the world, it seemed like the perfect spot. Within 2 months, Dede sold everything they owned and followed her husband to Seldovia, sight unseen.

Things were hard for the newcomers at first. Work was scarce and the cost of living was higher than they expected. But eventually, they found work and Dede started her own business printing T-shirts and painting signs. Coming from a fishing town in Washington, Seldovia wasn't too big of a change and living off the road was just an added bonus to them. Several people their age moved in around the same time and they made a lot of good friends. "I like that you can rub shoulders with everyone in the post office," Dede says, to explain her love of small town living. She also brought up the fact that many things are available to you in a small town, you can "try anything." With so few people, a person can wear several hats because no one else is there to do it!

As everyone claims, Seldovia is a wonderful place to raise kids. Dede's 2 children, Bret (29) and Valisa (25), both graduated from Susan B. English. Bret (or "Hig") is now completing a doctorate program in geology in Seattle. He specializes in tsunami deposits. He and his wife, Erin, love to hike – to an extreme level. They have hiked all over Alaska and, if they have the time, will hike as much as 1000 miles in a summer. You can check out their adventures at www.aktrekking.com. Hig also partners with Shawn Reynolds (son of Larry and Cheryl Reynolds) making Sundrop Jewelry, which you can find at Yesterday's. Valisa has a psychology degree from Louis and Clark University and is currently working as a volunteer for the hurricane

her family were charter members. "Synergy" was mostly made up of women who wanted to have some time to get together and be artistic and just get away. Dede brought the kids along at times and there they developed an interest in the arts. Dede herself has dabbled here and there in her own artistic endeavors. She has since given up the T-shirt screening and sign-painting – just a bit too much without running water. But for the past 10 years, she has developed a unique style of pottery. Her work is mostly hand-built rather than wheel-work and she makes figurines, platters, dishes, bowls, and all sorts of things. She sells her work at town bazaars, Yesterday's, and the Fireweed Gallery in Homer. In the future, she hopes to be able to get the business going to a point where she could simply live off her art.



"Buttons my Fish" Beautiful Wall Hanging (18" x 10") by Dede Higman

Besides pottery, Dede loves to garden. From talking with her, she knows a lot about raising all sorts of veggies and flowers in Alaska. This is a large part of her love of being outdoors. One of the things she likes best about Seldovia is having both the mountains and the ocean so close. That "you can walk out your door and be on a ridge in a couple of hours!" She also likes to travel and attends the knitting club, "Chicks with Sticks", when she can. Right now, she works at Susan B. English as a full-time special education aide. She is hoping to finish up her house soon and start a new garden. There are many things that keep Dede here in the town she loves – Seldovia is, and always will be, her home.



Dede's great little house and her view of St. Augustine

Copyright © 2006 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.](#)