



Seldovia Gazette

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Thursday, July 6, 2006

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2 Cents Worth:

How did you celebrate Independence Day ?



" I stuffed myself then went to bed! "

Angela Singh



" It was a great day. I spent most of the day at the Firehall."

Gerry Patrick



" I celebrated with my family." (Mr. Bond was in the parade with his grandkids and won first prize for their float.) "

Randy Bond



" Well, I visited people and played games. Because I always celebrate it by having fun because it's the day we got freedom from England . "

Levi Blodgett

Letters to the Editor

A Letter to the Editor of the Seldovia Gazette

Dear Editor,

In the last few weeks I have been repeatedly asked about the roll of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District's School Board in the hiring process at our local schools. So I am taking this opportunity to explain, to the best of my knowledge, how this works.

Those of us who sit on the Board of Education are given the responsibility to develop policies and the annual budget. We represent our borough students, schools and the public. Although we are elected by district, most Board members consider ourselves to be accountable to the entire Borough. I have made it a goal to represent to the School District the concerns and the desires of the people that are involved with education, either as students, family, community members, or staff. I also try to represent the School District to the public. As a board we are not directly involved in personnel matters, except in two areas. One way is when grievances occasionally come before us. Then we conduct hearings and rule on the evidence presented to us. We are often just one step in this process, which might go from our Board to an Arbitration hearing. The second area is that we do vote on hiring and resignations. We do not participate directly in the laying off of employees. (Although when we set our budget we stipulate the PTR—Pupil Teacher Ratio, and that directs the number of teachers that may be retained).

The hiring of a teacher for a posted position basically follows this procedure, according to Debby Stewart, Recruitment Specialist: first the position is posted, applicants are interviewed, the Administrator (Principal) makes their recommendation, Human Resources (Personnel Department) approves that recommendation and the applicant's name is added to a list that is forwarded to the School Board. Usually the Board relies on the expertise of Human Resources and votes to accept a block of applicants. We do not get any information about the individuals. That is our only involvement in the hiring of new employees.

-- cont. --

I have also been asked how the public can be involved in these decisions. The only way that I know is through contact with the School District Administration, and even that would be questionable, since there is no current procedure for public comment.

One last question involves local hire. I have been asked about the School District's policy on hiring Alaskans. At this time, I do not believe that there is a stated preference. I can find no policy on this. This would be a question better asked of the KPBSD Administration.

I hope that this explains our responsibilities, and our limitations, in the hiring process. I would definitely encourage our community to continue contact, both when there is a concern and also when there is something that you see that is working. Email is a common method of communication, and depending on the issue it can be effective. Addresses are on the KPBSD website or I will forward anything sent to me. (According to Norma Holmgaard, Director of Federal Programs and Small Schools, email messages are not considered confidential. However, evaluations on the forms provided at school are confidential and are sent directly to Superintendent Donna Peterson.)

Please continue to let us know what you support and also what you feel needs to be changed. I believe in our School District, but our goal is always improvement. Your support makes a difference.

Thank you,

Sunni Hiltz
Representing District 9 on the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education



Special Interest Forum: From time to time, topics of discussion will come up that are not a good fit for the Letters to the Editor section . . . usually due to things like the length of the letters or the need to post responses sooner than once a week on Thursday. Click the "Forum" button to enter this section. If you have a topic that you would like started, please let us know.

Last topic: Creation vs. Evolution

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 tomg@seldovia.com or maryg@seldovia.com, by fax at 907-234-7526, or by mail at Seldovia Gazette, P.O. Box 97, Seldovia, Alaska 99663.

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