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Paul Chissus - Making Life on the Water of Reality in Seldovia

by *Charity Winters*



Paul Chissus joins the teaching staff at Susan B. English this year in a larger capacity than he has held in all four of his years here in town. Formerly the Boy's and Girl's Club director, Paul is taking on a new position as a .6 CTE (Career Technology Education) Instructor. In years past he had been sponsored by SVT as a guest teacher once a year to teach shop. This year he has three classes: Construction I and II (taught at the same time), Digital Photography, and Health. Though he will miss many aspects of the Boys and Girls Club, Paul says he is happy to be back where his passion lies, teaching kids about building, constructing, and creating.

Paul grew up mostly in Fairbanks, Alaska. His father worked as a pilot for the state of Alaska and so Paul spent some of his growing up years in various places: Washington (where he met his wife, Jenny) and Juneau, where Paul graduated from high school. Paul

reasons. He particularly liked the freedom that he had to work with kids wherever their interests lay. He said that he hopes the community will always support whoever is in the position. Paul says his main reason for finding a new career was his desire to spend more time with his family. Working for the Club meant that if the school wasn't busy, then the Club needed to be busy and that meant all school breaks and weekends were times he had to work double time, rather than spending it with his kids. When this opportunity to work for the school on a more full time basis came up, he jumped at the chance.

To fill in all of his newfound free time, Paul has begun a few new business enterprises. Starting this year will be Seldovia's first Winter Watch program. This program is designed to provide home security and management to those who leave their homes for the winter. Once a week, Paul makes the rounds to check the

knew he wanted to be a shop teacher from the time he was 13 years old. He spent much of his life working in various capacities as a general contractor, painter, etc. and now holds a degree in Vocational Education. After his marriage to Jenny, the Chissus's returned to Fairbanks for several years. But Paul remembered the time he spent living on a boat in Juneau and missed the coastal lifestyle. An avid sailor, Paul began looking for a place to live on the water, "in pursuit of the boating lifestyle", as he put it. About seven years ago, he and Jenny came across property in Tutka Bay. Though the land was beyond their financial means, their search led them to the small town of Seldovia not too far away. The town seemed perfect except for one major problem: no job. Paul went back to Fairbanks and spent the next three and a half years working as a teacher in the Fairbanks North Star school district and trying to figure out how he could make a living in Seldovia. The answer came through his involvement with the 21 st Century After School program grant. The time he spent under this grant gave him experience and interest in after school programming. It was this interest that led him to apply for the position of unit director of the Seldovia Boy's and Girl's Club.

In October of 2002, Paul, Jenny and their 3 children (K.C., 16, Devin, 10, and Marina, 8) moved to Seldovia. For almost four years Paul worked as the unit director for the Boy's and Girls Club. He enjoyed his work there and will miss it for several

homes. This is to minimize problems like break-ins, bursting water pipes, and other such issues that summer people face when they are gone all winter. As of now, Paul has eight people on his list for this winter.

Paul and Dave Cloninger work together in the second new business. Both men have acquired the necessary education and equipment to shrink wrap items as a form of winterizing them. "It's avoiding the blue tarp idea", Paul explained. They can wrap and protect almost anything that someone may want to protect from the weathering and high maintenance brought on by winter. Boats, cars, lumber, you name it. Even now, several people take their boats out of the Seldovia harbor to Homer to have their boat shrink-wrapped. Paul is hoping to keep the business here in town.

Paul is enjoying life here immensely and hopes to keep it that way for some time. Two years ago, he and Jenny bought Crow Hill, rumored to be one of, if not the, oldest home in Seldovia (built in either 1908 or 1915 – no one seems to know for sure). Maintaining his beautiful home, living and sailing on the water, fishing, and just spending time outdoors with his family are all things that make Seldovia home for him.



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