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Rochelle Purpura -- Seldovia's budding prolific author!

by Charity Winters



Rochelle has already experienced a "Quantum Leap" in her short 15 years. Her early years were spent in Tutka Bay area with a population of 7. Then last year she went to live with an aunt in Berlington, Massachusetts (near Boston), population of approximately 22,876! This year as a sophomore at Susan B English School, she is back in Seldovia and is turning 16 years old in May.

At a very early age, Rochelle has been writing and composing stories. She was home schooled from Kindergarten through 4th grade. Her family chose to move to Seldovia so Rochelle and

Rochelle has been submitting essays to the Homer Council on the Arts writer's contest since 4th grade. Each submission is a separate entry and there is a \$2 entry fee for either an essay or a poem. This year she has submitted two short stories and thirteen poems. Because she is rapidly approaching 16, if she is chosen this year, she will be allowed to read with the adults. In previous years, she has been able to read with the other young writer winners. Rochelle's first poem was written while she was in 4th grade; however, she started writing short stories before the 4th grade.

Last year, Rochelle won 1st place in the writers level grades 7-9, fiction for *Tree: A Legend of How the World Came to Be*. In

her sister, Rosalia, could attend the Susan B English School. Rochelle states that her literary ability comes quite honestly as “her grandmother on her mother’s side of the family was also a story writer and a poet.”

Renee Purpura (Rochelle’s mother) stated that from the time that Rochelle started to talk that she would tell imaginative stories. One time she told a story about two moose who had tea and cookies – and the story continued during a car trip from Homer to Soldatna. She was not quite 3 years old at the time.

A few years ago, Rochelle was listening to the radio and the “This I Believe Essays Contest” was advertised. Rochelle wrote an essay, submitted it and then because the months wore on, she actually forgot about the essay contest. “Then one day she got a phone call that said she had been chosen to read her essay over the radio.” Rochelle had written the essay while she was in Seldovia and because she left Seldovia for studies in Burlington, Massachusetts, the interview had to be conducted by telephone in the School Counselor’s room. All first place winners were interviewed and the interviews were aired on KBBI in January, 2007.

addition to the notoriety, the monetary prize was \$50. [HomerNews.com carried the story on May 16, 2006](#)

Rochelle wants to “get published in various literary magazines and build up a portfolio” of articles so that she will eventually be able to be published by a publisher. She has a double major planned: learn to be a bakery chef and pursue a career in writing.

Rochelle also works with her dad, Robert Purpura, during the summer in his fishing business. She does everything from quality control of picking out the best fish to the accounting aspect of the business in filling out the spreadsheets. She works in just about every aspect of the business after the fish are caught and in the processing end.

We wish you great success in all your endeavors!



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