



# Seldovia Gazette

Serving Seldovia, Alaska and Kachemak Bay southeast

Seldovia, AK

39 °F / 4 °C

Light Rain  
at 9:29 AM



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Thursday, March 29, 2007

Just another day in paradise

Vol. 3, No. 13, March 29, 2007

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## Opinions



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## Spotlight



PhotoStory  
Sea Otters last home game of the season

## Seldovia WebCam Update

We're happy to report that all but one of the Seldovia WebCams are functioning again. Cold weather and internet problems had shut down all but one of our five WebCams. The AirportCam is still down but a new camera is ready to be installed once the snow and ice field blocking the location have melted a bit. Should not be too much longer. We will also be replacing the lens on the HarborCam2 (Herring Bay Mercantile) so that it is not wide angle.

Seldovia Chamber of Commerce

4th of July Button Contest

Submit your drawing by April 4th [more info](#)



## Top Stories

### SBE Selects New Principal/Teacher for 2007-08

by Tamara Blodgett

*An in-house choice pleases community and students alike...*

The current teacher for grades 4th through 8th grades, Sherry Hingley, has been chosen for the Principal/Teaching position for the 2007-2008 school year. This decision was made following a much-publicized interview process that took place on the 15th of March.

## Marketplace



Jenny Chissus  
234-8000

Your Seldovia Connection

[www.seldoviaproperty.com](http://www.seldoviaproperty.com)  
RE/MAX of Homer



Come In, Browse, Have Fun!

Herring Bay Mercantile  
Seldovia, AK

Support the Seldovia Sea Otter Booster Club  
Help keep sports and academic travel programs alive for our school!



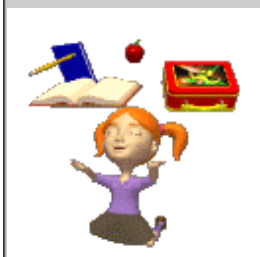
Seldovia Boat Slips for Rent  
The Seldovia harbor has 32 foot and 42 foot slips for rent. Call for details:  
Harbor Master (907) 234-7886  
City Office (907) 234-7643

▶ **Sherry Hingley - SBE's  
New Principal for 2007-  
2008**



**School**

▶ **Susan B English  
School by school  
reporter Katie O'Leary -  
Click here**



During this interview, in which Ms. Hingley was the only candidate physically present (the two other candidates were simultaneously interviewed telephonically), a series of 16 questions were asked without candidate foreknowledge. The candidates off-the-cuff responses were a crucial part of determining who the best choice would be for this challenging position. While the other interviewees were selected based on their experience and abilities, Hingley came out the clear choice.

*Ms. Hingley is our Spotlight in the Gazette this week,  
click here for the rest of the story . . .*

**Notices &  
Newsletters**

▶ **The Seldovia Visitor  
2006, Seldovia Chamber of  
Commerce. Click here to  
download PDF (6mb)**

▶ **Comprehensive Plan  
Public Final August 10,  
2005 (pdf)**

▶ **Amended FY05 Seldovia  
City Budget 7-8-2005 (pdf)**

▶ **Boys and Girls Club  
Calendar**

**Kenai Peninsula Borough Assessors Visits  
Seldovia**

*by Tamara Blodgett*

*Education & explanation are explored at public forum...*

A three-man team came through Seldovia in an effort to explain to the public the reason for the tax assessment valuation increase from 20,000,000 for Seldovia in 2006 to 30,000,000 in 2007. This equates to a 50% property tax rate hike for this coming year.

*What is their role in assessing...?*

State statute mandates assessors to determine each property at full and true market value each January 1. They are to assess to the owner of record. Every property owner is provided a 30-day appeal period with this year's appeal period ending on March 30. What has happened in the South Kachemak /Seldovia area is it has historically very low number of sales. Alaska is one of 4 states that are a non-disclosure of property sale price. After receiving a deed transfer, the Borough sends out a sales questionnaire to the

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▶ <a href="#">Aleutian's Tusty Trip - July 25 - Part 1</a>
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▶ <a href="#">Summer Solstice Music Festival - June</a>
▶ <a href="#">CofC Chainsaw Carving Contest - May</a>
▶ <a href="#">SBE Graduation - May</a>
▶ <a href="#">SBE Spring Concert - May</a>
▶ <a href="#">SBE School Play - May</a>
▶ <a href="#">SBE Science Fair - May</a>
▶ <a href="#">Prom - May</a>
▶ <a href="#">SBE Basketball - Feb.</a>
▶ <a href="#">SBE Basketball - Feb.</a>
▶ <a href="#">SBE Basketball - Jan.</a>
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▶ <a href="#">Seldovia Summer</a>

new owner of record, to solicit the sales price. The Borough says they receive a 25-30% response; this is a voluntary response. This becomes a real "catch 22" for the Borough. The 75% non-response from property owners that are not motivated to mail the questionnaire back may be twofold. A) it is not mandated that they do *and/or* B) if they purchased their property for more than the assessed value, they don't want their assessed value raised, in turn, raising their property taxes. This works somewhat against property owners', as we will explore below.

#### *Borough taxation not the enemy...*

The assessors' are true to their name. They are not responsible directly for the tax hikes (levies are). They use a mathematical formula to *assess* true market value. Those figures are then sent on to the Borough Assembly and City Councils' and the taxation levy is determined at that level. Seldovia had not seen an updated assessment in a decade and the property values were grossly undervalued. In speaking with assessor Shane Horan, it was apparent that the assessors were trying to conservatively update the assessment of Seldovia as a whole. If the mandate for true and fair market value is not met, the assessment level, also provided to the state, is used in the school funding formula. Essentially, the complex state school funding formula penalizes those municipalities with a low assessment to sale ratio.

#### *What formula...?*

Land assessor Paul Knight showed me a list of vacant parcels for sale in the Seldovia area since 2004 (remember sales volume and availability are low). He felt that he needed to go back to 2004 to obtain an adequate sampling. Yet, he could not go farther back, as that would skew figures because of time elapsed. For example, the least expensive property listed in this timeframe had a list price of \$23,500, with the assessed value at \$15,900. This results in a ratio of 68% of its listed value. If full and true fair market value is to represent 100% of the sale price then most of our properties (in theory) are under assessed. Thankfully, the list price is not always what properties sell for. Out of the 9 vacant parcels listed in that time frame, on average, those parcels assessed value to list price was at 53%; 47% of their list price. In the improved parcel arena, the ratio was 62% of list price.

#### *How do we Seldovians recover...?*

Horan encourages people that feel that an appeal is in order to phone the Borough first instead of immediately filing, a resolution may be determined just from that. The Borough assessor staff of nine people has a lot of "ground" to cover but would still like to offer first rate customer service and attention to homeowners. Since the hour grows late, at this point in the 30-day appeal process, all appeals must be postmarked no later than tomorrow, March 30, 2007. For future reference, it is best to phone in questions or stop by the borough office early in the appeal process so that resolution can be made in a timely manner. However, a written appeal can be still be made in the "ninth hour." Horan assured me that after all the appeals have been filed in a timely manner with the appropriate filing fee, assessors would physically come out to re-inspect property that has an outstanding appeal.

#### *Accuracy...*

The Borough encourages property owners to respond to the sales

<a href="#">Gazette Newspaper</a>
<a href="#">▶ Seldovia Summer</a>
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<a href="#">2005 PhotoStories</a>
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### Photo Archives

▶ [Click here to view all photos from the Gazette over the past years](#)

### Classified Rates

▶ [Instructions and rate sheet](#)



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### Corrections

▶ None this week

questionnaires so that the actual sale prices can be determined and assist in the assessed valuation of property. These are hard numbers that are accurately reflective of the *actual* values in Seldovia, rather than list prices and a quarter of all actual sales used to compute values. This would be the truest way of getting fair and accurate figures. Taxes collected support our school and infrastructure, without that, we would be without adequate facilities and maintenance. To find out more about assessed property value, tax structure and other questions, please visit the Kenai Peninsula Borough website at: [www.borough.kenai.ak.us/assessingdept/](http://www.borough.kenai.ak.us/assessingdept/)

## PAC Meeting Discusses New 2007-08 Bell Schedule

by Tamara Blodgett

*Parent Advisory Committee proactive for our kids...*

PAC has determined during Tuesday's public meeting that our best hope of utilizing the Polycom courses available to Susan B. English High School students is for "agreement" between SBE's schedule and the rest of the Borough. In the past, our later time line has reeked havoc on our high school students that take the Polycom courses. These courses are offered during class periods that differ from SBE's, causing kids to miss part of their regular class or using correspondence class time to juggle their learning. The change in schedule will greatly streamline this process, while allowing for the diversification of their higher learning.

*The early bird gets the worm...*

The best schedule would be to coincide with Soldotna High School (So-Hi). First period will begin at 7:50AM with the last period ending at 2:25PM . This allows for a 9:44-10:12AM mid-morning activity/break period for the kids to "recharge;" lunch will be from 12:01-12:36 .

*Short on staff, long on creative learning...*

The budgetary cuts are another concern for SBE and borough-wide students. At SBE there will be 1.5 less teachers next year to teach our kids. Currently, SBE has 4.5 teachers. Polycom gives a chance for interactive learning. Correspondence is a great alternative for the students, but Polycom is the best way to optimize interactive teaching. Courses to be offered next year will be AP English and Calculus, Accounting I & II, and HSGQE Math (High School Qualifying). The pared down teaching force is SBE's opportunity to take advantage of this alternative learning method, giving students more choices and a comprehensive education in preparation for college or a vocation. A coinciding high school schedule with other schools is critical for the success of this program.

*A non-school bonus...*

For parents with children in sports activities, this is a real plus. Kids arrive home earlier from their sports activities with a family supper that can be enjoyed with more frequency. There is more time for homework and whatever else needs to be accomplished.

*The staff will help decide...*

K thorough 3rd grade teacher, Karen Bornheimer, was directed to meet with the staff about the final decision, which will be announced at the next public PAC Meeting on Tuesday, April 24th. It was clear during the meeting that the consensus of staff is 'earlier is better' for the students. **Now** is the time to look at the long-term picture and make choices that will have a positive impact on our students' future. Polycom is the learning alternative/augmentation of the future, especially for rural schools.

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## City Council Meeting March 28 *By Tamara Blodgett*

The Seldovia City Council convened together to include the following members present: Keith Gain, Tom Glover, Tom Keesecker, Walter McInnes, Allison Miller and Gerry Patrick. Mayor Wyland presided with City Manager Kurt Reynertson in attendance and City Clerk Ronda Haynes taking minutes.

**Amended agenda** approved with change of M-2 moving the Cannery Area Development-Concept Design by PND Engineers to the next, regular council meeting on April 11th.

### Public Presentation for Items not on Agenda

A member of the Public, Charles Gillick presented the Council and attending audience with a situation involving the City and himself. Gillick requested water turn on from the City and was told that the "frozen" shut-off valve was non-operational and he was responsible to remedy the situation before city water resumption. Gillick requested that City Manager Reynertson evoke a written statement referencing the code that makes Gillick, as the homeowner, responsible for the valve function. He felt that is was unfair that a monetary burden be put upon him and that it was the City's responsibility to get the valve working for resumption of water service to his residence. Furthermore, he stated that on March 12th, Reynertson was requested by him to put this in writing and had twelve days to manufacture said letter. As of the 12th day, there was no written letter forthcoming from Reynertson and Gillick wanted the Council to be aware of this.

### Committee and Advisory Board Reports

Nothing to report at this time.

### Old Business

#### **Land lease on Lot 1, Block 10, Waterfront Resubdivision #1 for food service mobile unit.**

This is a lease submitted by Michelle and Liza Bieri for a seasonal lease to have a mobile, "food wagon" for general limited restaurant use. This establishment would have approximate hours of operation seven days per week from noon to midnight during the busiest times of the year, April through October. This is not a permanent structure and would not be in this location during the winter. Furthermore, this may not be the eventual location of said structure in the future. This enterprise will effectively augment existing

restaurants while filling a much-needed evening eatery timeframe.

Council consensus was positive for this temporary lease for this coming summer season.

*Action:* Approved unanimously.

#### **VISTA Program Contract**

A new VISTA grant has been made available this month and the City of Seldovia will be assigning Jeanette Flint as the new VISTA member. The City will provide Ms. Flint with a work plan with objectives/goals, provide office space and related items for use, training and guidance, provide community involvement and assistance for meetings and contacts, and quarterly progress reports in conjunction with maintaining communication with the VISTA leader.

*Action:* Approved unanimously.

#### **Harbor Project Update (GLOVER)**

Contract crews have been off for the last two weeks. All but 10 pilings have been completed. Electrical has been progressing without complication. Approximate timeline for grid to be completed is mid-April. Decking replacement to be completed in the near future.

*Action: None, information only.* Council discussion did involve current placement of steel pipes with a request that a pipe be obtained for pipes to be relocated to a less conspicuous location that would negate their potential liability potential.

#### **New Business**

##### **Request for Access Easement on Lot 19, Block 10, Seldovia Townsite by John Mickelson and Vivian Rojas**

The above homeowners have asked for a permanent easement along the edge of Lollipop Park in order to install a private stairway accessing their property on the bluff. The existing easement is owned by the City and contains the existing utility lines (sewer and water) that service this property. This property lies directly adjacent to Lollipop Park and through Council discussion it was determined that ownership of utilities would have to be confirmed and the request routed through Parks and Recreation to determine if it would infringe upon existing park boundaries. A member of the Public, myself, mentioned that access should be granted via a staircase (as requested) if it did not adversely affect the park and that could also be secure from minor use.

*Action:* Council has directed City Manager Reynertson to determine ownership of utility lines in addition to request being put before P & R.

##### **Discussion of Misinformation in Anchorage Daily News regarding Seldovia Village (MCINNES)**

The above news source incorrectly stated population of Seldovia with

Councilman McInnes wanting a retraction/correction of said inaccuracy.

**Action:** Council has directed Mayor Wyland phone the appropriate entity to rectify the inaccuracy.

**Status of Kachemak Bay Ferry Project** (Possible Executive Session)

**Action:** *Executive Session - no action taken*

**City Manager's Report:** See below.

**Next Meeting** April 11th @ 7:30PM

**Adjournment:** Time elapsed 1 hour, 33 minutes.

## SEE Update

*by Stephanie Lewis*

Seldovia Enterprise Expansion (SEE) is a three-year economic development project run by Seldovia Village Tribe. It is funded through a grant from the Administration Of Native Americans (ANA). The goal of SEE is to promote and develop economic sustainability in our community through youth and community involvement and by providing economic opportunities through expansion of our Alaska Tribal Cache (ATC) product line and through our the promotion of tourism in Seldovia for The Seldovia Conference Center.



So far SEE has employed 12 high school students who have learned many helpful skills such as marketing, business, and people skills. The students have focused on developing marketing for ATC's products, and the Seldovia Conference Center. They have also been working on research and have helped to narrow down the options for new products, in co-operation with the Co-operative Extension Services Team of UAF.

SEE has provided an estimated \$149,800 of spending into our community through conference center events. SEE Project forecasts that number will triple this summer and be three times greater for the following summer. SEE has offered a great opportunity to the residents of Seldovia and hopes continue to create economic sustainability in Seldovia.

The SEE project students recently presented new ideas to the Alaska Tribal

Cache to better their profits in sales. They presented the idea of; repositioning the ATC product line by changing the products look and feel, reducing the number of product choices, focusing on profit making and high selling products, and developing new products. As a result of these new ideas ATC is hoping to increase sales and create additional job opportunities for the community.

Being a SEE student myself I have experienced and learned so much in these past few months. Such as learning important things like work safety, and other life skills. I also had the chance to travel to Fairbanks and speak to professionals in this sort of business face to face. I enjoy going to work everyday and everyday is a new learning experience for all of us here at the SEE project. I believe that

SEE has given many students helpful skills and tools that we will need in our future lives. We are all forever grateful for this opportunity.

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## **Rep. Paul Seaton Newsletter - March 26**

Greetings from Juneau on this 70th day of the legislative session. The weather has finally turned warmer so the accumulated snow is going fast. Last Saturday four of the Fisheries Committee, joined by Senators Gary Stevens and Donnie Olsen, flew to Anchorage enroute to Seward for the reopening of the Alutiiq Pride Shellfish hatchery and inspection of the king crab and other shellfish hatching operation. This was a great opportunity since we are discussing several mariculture issues in the legislature. We left a clear blue day in Juneau early in the morning, thankful that a Juneau over flight did not occur. Remarkably, we got weathered out in Anchorage by below minimum visibility for the twin engine plane trip to Seward – though Seward was bright and clear. We were very disappointed that by the time the flight got cancelled there was not time to drive to Seward and still get people returned to Anchorage for other engagements. However, we were able to tour the new Department of Conservation laboratory in Anchorage . We got to observe the complicated test for Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) that is necessary to certify the public digging beaches and is required before any mariculture farm product is shipped. We very much appreciated Kristin Ryan and Tom Hathaway for taking part of their weekend to further our education.

It was a very busy week for me with involvement in proposing a design for a Community Dividend, blind trust reform for the ethics bill, and proposal options for next year's 90 day session. These were in addition to the intensive work on mining tax reform and regular committee work.

[Click here to read the entire newsletter \(pdf\)](#)

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## **Sen Gary Stevens Newsletter - March 27**

Greetings from the State Capitol. March came in like a lion and went out much the same way. By late in the month, Juneau 's accumulated snow for this season broke the 190 inch mark set in the winter of 1964-65.

Regrettably, it was inclement weather on the mainland that kept me and other Legislators from attending the March 24th reopening of Seward's Aluttig Pride Shellfish hatchery and inspection of the king crab and other shellfish hatching operation. We did, however, have the opportunity to tour the new Department of Environmental Conservation's laboratory in Anchorage, getting a first hand look at their Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning testing operations. These necessary testing procedures are required before any mariculture farm product is shipped, and help certify public digging beaches around the state.

[Click here to read the entire newsletter \(pdf\)](#)

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## Special Notices

### *Boys & Girls Club Update*

#### Regular Club Schedule

- Power Hour: Mondays - Thursdays from 3:15 - 5:15 p.m.
- Pottery: Mondays from 3:15 - 5:00 p.m.
- Clubhouse: Mondays - Fridays from 3:15 - 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
- Teen Open Gym: Tuesdays from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
- Teen Night by SVT Prevention Program: Fridays 9:00 p.m. - midnight

Any questions, contact: Laurel A. Hiltz, Unit Director Seldovia  
234-7577 office; 234-2004 fax & kid phone during Clubhouse hours  
lhiltz@positiveplaceforkids.com

### *How to Raise Honeybees*

*by Josh Blodgett*

SEE Project will be hosting a free seminar on 'How to raise Honeybees on the Kenai Peninsula.' The Alaska Tribal Cache has been working to introduce local honey into our product line, and now the possibility of purchasing honey from local producers can become a reality. A question has arisen though... "How do we raise bees?"



This question has had us seek out esteemed beekeeping expert, Keith Malone. Mr. Malone will be gracing us with his vast knowledge of beekeeping and will provide us with the proper information on how to get started on the right foot. Yay! All local beekeepers are welcome. The seminar will be from 1-5p.m. on Wednesday, April 4th 2007 at the Seldovia Conference Center with a potluck soon to follow. Very busy we will be, us busy bees.

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### Tidbits . . .

Here's a bird you don't see very often in the Seldovia area . . . a Great Horned Owl at the landfill.



Photo courtesy of Paula Elvsaaas

### City Manager's Corner

by Kurt Reynertson

In last night's City Council meeting, the Council has authorized the City to pursue a temporary lease with the Bieri's and their desire to install a food wagon near the harbor. The lease, if accepted, would be for the summer. Liza and Michel's longer range plans include the possibility of building a restaurant. Many of you have had the pleasure of eating Michel and Liza's cooking before, and we may be able to again in the near future.

The harbor is progressing on schedule. The grid is scheduled to be completed by mid April. The contractors will soon begin replacing areas of the dock with new planking. The piles that can be installed have been driven to the required depth, cut and capped. The electricians are working towards completing the wiring for pedestal hook-ups and lights. The new ramp is installed and will have its roof cover installed shortly. All indications point to the harbor being completed with this phase of the repairs by mid May.

Our new VISTA position will be starting up in mid April. Jeanette Flint is our VISTA person and her responsibility will be primarily looking, researching, and writing grants for the City. Emphasis will be on energy related type of grants. She will be attending training in Utah and Anchorage in the very near future before coming back to Seldovia to begin her duties.

There have been a lot of water line freeze-ups in the last several weeks. Please turn on your water (to a trickle) and leave it on until the weather warms up. The City will locate your valve box for you, but customers are responsible for maintaining their own service lines, which includes thawing any frozen lines.

The City Manager position is closing as of Friday, March 30. We have received nine resumes so far. Any resumes must be post marked by March 30 to be considered. The City Council will be looking at all the resumes next week in order to create a "short list" of those applicants they wish to talk with further.

### **Seldovia Police Report**

*by A.W. Anderson, Chief of Police*

**>> No Report this Week <<**

