

Interview with Mrs. Bea Parich 5/16/03

Q: What is your background regarding Century and what has been your involvement or role during in the school year?

A: I came to Century High School the second year that it was in operation, so I've been here for 5 years. And in those 5 years, I've been a school counselor and 4 out of those 5 years, I have been an advisor for National Honor Society.

Q: How has this year compared to the others that you've experienced?

A: This year is really a memorable year because I've been an advisor for the senior class for 4 years, ever since their freshmen year, and I've been an advisor with Trista Kirsh and Heather Hamilton. It's kind of a cool year because I've seen these kids start out as freshmen and be very naive and very wiry to a point where they're a little more mature and goal orientated. It's exciting because I've written so many recommendations this year for seniors who are going off to lots of cool states, like we've got an ivy leaguer going to Philadelphia. We've got a few kids going to Virginia Tech, University of San Diego, University of Richmond, Boston University.... It's really exciting to see and to be involved in that process of choice.

Q: How would you say the morale of the school is like among the students and the faculty due to everything that's been happening?

A: I think that everything is affected; I don't think that there's any particular area that's affected more than any other. I think morale is low, I think that in some cases, some people have just thrown up their hands and "whatever." I think that in a sense, a lot of people are going through loss, and so there are stages of that grieving process. Some of us go through it a little bit faster than others, and some of us are so optimistic, we'd like to take the optimistic role rather than the pessimistic role. I think it's had an affect on all kids' spirits, and an affect on staff, especially with budget cuts: people are getting pink slips, people are getting laid-off, and people are having transfers where they don't want to be. It's been very hard for everyone in the building.

Morale

Q: Who are some key people that have made a difference at Century this year?

A: I really think that if we look at key people that are making a difference in the whole operation of this school, I think that Julie Browne does a superb job with activities, I think that Ron Webb is very instrumental in making activities fly, I think that Jim Dunlop does a terrific job with his band, I think we've got one of the best band programs I've ever been associated with for 25 years, I think that the drama folks, Bill Johnson and Janet VanWess do a great job keeping that area going. I am sad to see Gary Morton leave because he's such a beloved teacher by students. I think that for me, people who have made a difference are

Key People

Key
People, cont

like Bessie Asari, who's leaving this year. She has been a wonderful person to work with and has kept me on the lighter side.

Measure
28

Q: How did you feel when Measure 28 didn't pass to help the school out?

A: Well part of me felt like nobody really cares and that public schools are going down the toilet, but another part of me felt like we're sending a really strong message to the legislature and telling them that they really have to get their act going. I think that the reason why we vote legislatures in so they can make those big decisions, and everyone is afraid to make those decisions because they want to be elected the following time and so when you talk about taxes and increasing taxes, everyone starts to put up their fences and they start to protect themselves. I don't think that going to the people and asking the people to make tax decisions is the best way to go about it. Plus, less than 50% of our constituency vote, so what are those elections really saying?

School
board

Q: If you were on the school board, what would you do to change? Would you cut or add anything with all the budget cuts that are going on?

A: I'm going to get in trouble for this. I think that the school board in a way is acting like a bunch of sheep. My personal opinion is that some of them don't choose to think for themselves, they allow Mr. Rodriguez to think for them. I think that the school board needed to take some stands on their own and reflect what the kids need, and what the community needs, and not necessarily what the district administrators need. I truly believe that school is for kids, and that we need to keep that in mind. We want a good-quality public education, and we can't do that with lack of funding. I don't know too many teachers that only work a straight 6 or 8 hour job, and we don't get paid during the summer. When I look at what the Portland school board did and how the Portland businesses kicked in, and how those teachers decided that they would teach 10 free days. That's pretty heroic because I don't know very many people in any walk of life that will work for free. I know that I spend 10-12 hour days on a frequent basis, and I know I don't get paid for it, and my son reminds me of that all the time. But it's a labor of love. Some people are at a point where they're tired of doing that, so I think that the people that are voted in, need to make some big decisions.

ON
Portland
School
teachers
teaching
10 free days

Q: How do you feel about Century continuing on the block schedule for next year?

block
schedule

A: I love the block schedule and next year I get to teach in it, so I'm really excited about that. I like the block schedule because for our really bright kids, it gives them an opportunity to really advance themselves and to give a smattering of more opportunities. I have some kids that are taking 2 or 3 languages. I have kids who've taken every math class they possibly can. In order to do that, they have to be teaching on the block. I worry a little bit about those kids that have

learning disabilities, because sometimes it's a little bit faster pace and they don't have the tools needed to be real successful. But on the other hand, with an 87 period, that would give some teachers an opportunity to let kids do some homework during class, and that should help the other kids, maybe the kids that aren't as strong academically to get things done. You will always find kids who will fail and who will excel, that's a given. I like the block schedule.

block
sched. cont

Q: What would say would be the most significant achievement of NHS?

NHS

A: Well NHS has been a really fun project for me because whenever I go to check kids out and what they're doing, everybody that works with our kids just have nothing but wonderful things to say about them. And our kids are so well mannered and they do what they need to do, and they're focused, and they're great. I think NHS at Century has made an impact in our community because we have elementary schools that call us all the time and ask us for help. We've had churches call this year and ask for help to collect food or we've had the city of Hillsboro call. We've kind of got our name out there and we have our reputation out there, and people have come to not only recognize that we have a really strong student contingency of service, but that we do a really good job when we're there. So for me, NHS has been a stepping stone to reaffirm how great kids can really be.

Q: Why did you choose not to be an advisor again for next year?

not
being
NHS
advisor

A: I think it's time to get some new blood into NHS and some new ideas. I'm going to be in the building, so I will be resource, but I just think it's time that I step away and let someone else come in with some new ideas. It's kind of like after 3 days, fish begin to rot, well after 4 years, I feel like I have to step aside.

Q: How do you feel about going back to teaching?

on
teaching
again

A: I'm so excited. I think that counseling has given me an opportunity to maybe change some of my way in which I handle the classroom. There are some theorists out there that I really like. I've been really working over in my head some activities that can be an instrumental piece in my classroom and how I'm going to set it up and how I'm going to manage it. Being in the classroom for me is an opportunity to be creative, and to be able to go off on my own, I don't have to go through 5 or 6 people to get approved what I want to do. If I want to work extremely hard, I can, and if I don't want to work very hard, I don't have to. I'm my own boss and I get to do my own stuff. That was one of the things I felt like I couldn't do in counseling. I couldn't do some of the things that I felt were really, really important because no one else was doing it, so I was kind of restricted. In the classroom, I won't be. So that's one of the reasons why I'm excited.

Q: What do you think has impacted the students most this year?

what
has
impacted
students

A: Good question. I think cutting the school days short is a huge impact because our last semester, kids have had to cram in a ton of curriculum and teachers have had to cram in a ton of curriculum. But I think the cutting of days, being so significant, you know graduation is 2 weeks after we finish school. I just think that's been a huge impact. Of course overcrowding here at Century hasn't been a joy either, and so next year will be really nice, there will be a little more room in the halls.

Q: Between programs or personnel, which one would you cut back on?

Cutting
pers.
or
prog.

A: Every aspect of our school community is important and to make that decision is a very, very difficult decision and I really couldn't say where I would cut, and that's why I'm a teacher and I don't make as much money as those administrators do. They have a hard decision to make and I just hope that we keep in mind what's good for kids when we cut.

Q: What kind of a precedent do you think this school year will set for future years?

class
sizes

A: Well I've already seen some staff members that aren't real happy about their assignments for next year; they're going to be gone or their hours have been cut back, class room sizes are going to be 35-40, which are huge. When I started teaching, my class size was 20-22, and it has gone up significantly, because we've had to cut back on staff.

Q: Do you have anything else to add?

A: To me, it's been a great school year. I have had an NHS board that I have thoroughly enjoyed working with. The staff here is always ready and willing to help: Bessie Asari and Carol Shallberger and Maria Fernandez and the boys have been really good about balancing out our work loads and things like that. I just hope next year will be better.