

Interview with Gary Rauh

Conducted May 15, 2003

Bella Harris: What is your background with Century, what has been your involvement this school year?

Gary Rauh: My background concerning Century is this is my fifth year here; I'm the librarian and have been for the last five years.

BH: In general, how does this school year compare with the others you've experienced?

GR: **This school year has been one of the most hectic, and most controversial in my 30 years of being involved in education.**

BH: How?

GR: Its been hectic and controversial because of the fact that we are still dealing with the overcrowding situation, and have for the last five years. Plus, with all of the financial goings on with the state legislature and funding for education it's been very disconcerting. Plus, the fact that next year we are going to be losing a number of staff to Liberty. And so, many factors including the War on Iraq that's been going on, have made this a very unsettling year all the way around.

BH: How has overcrowding affected your job?

GR: This school was built to handle approximately 1,800 students, and a corresponding number of teachers for those students. And this year we started at over 2,100 with a corresponding number of teachers to deal with that number of kids. And so the resources in the library including computers and books and whatnot get pretty well stressed out because of the fact that there's so many people competing for a finite set of resources.

BH: What have been the high points of this school year?

GR: The high points of this school year is when I look at the students I see them pretty much unaffected by all the goings on and in [the] face of the confusion and the uncertainty about education, I still see students taking their education seriously and working very hard to get their studies done. And so that's been very encouraging.

BH: How would you describe the morale among the faculty, students, administration, etc this year?

GR: **Generally, morale is lower than a snake's belly right now.** It's been just such a difficult time this year for people in general, specifically in education and specifically here at Century. With all the unknowns that face us, it's a struggle for some people to get up every morning and put a cheerful face on because there are so many unknowns that are still yet to be answered.

BH: Has the staff been helping the, I guess the other staff with the morale and everything, trying to support everyone?

GR: Most all staff members have been crying on each other's shoulders and providing support as best they can to try and get everybody through the end of the school year and hopefully prepare for what lies ahead next year.

BH: What have been the factors most directly affecting morale?

GR: Probably [the] class sizes are huge and will get huge-er next year. The contract situation was a very long and dragged out process, and a number of people were not satisfied with that. Part of the contract was health benefits, and health benefits for teachers have gone up and its coming directly out of teacher's pockets where before it was covered by the contract. So all those factors are really weighing heavily upon their minds I think.

BH: Who are some key people who have really made a difference at Century this year, and what have they done?

GR: Mrs. Montgomery provided some real steady leadership in the face of all the uncertainty and the chaos that's going along, she and the other administrators have really, I think, pulled together to create, as best they can, an atmosphere of "we're going to get through this, together".

BH: What do you think Century is known for within the community of Hillsboro?

GR: I think in Hillsboro, Century is known as a very multicultural, conglomeration of students and staff, that really try their best at what they set themselves up to do. Whether it be band or choir or sports or speech or whatever you have and they just do the best job they can.

BH: What do you see as the impact of cutting 17 days from the school year?

GR: The immediate impact is a cut in teachers' paychecks. Not necessarily that's the most direct result of this; I think more importantly the 17 days that students lose from their education will be hard to replace.

BH: How do you feel about Century continuing on the block schedule for another year?

GR: That was decided by a vote of the staff members who a majority felt that was the way to go and so I think next year will be a transition year because the year after, I'm not so sure the block will be in affect at that point. But most people have come on board they want to go through the block one more year and they're looking at alternative schedules for the year after that.

BH: Did you enjoy the block schedule?

GR: The block schedule has its good points and bad points just like any schedule that any school has ever had, whether it's an 8 period day, whether its an A-B schedule, whether it's a block schedule. There are always advantages and disadvantages to every type of schedule, you learn to deal with the schedules you are given, and you make the best of it.

BH: What do you think has been and will be the impact of the national coverage which the schools have received this year?

GR: The school system is really under the microscope, locally and nationally, and that scrutiny, I think, is going to pay off in the long run in that you can't run away from something that's splashed across the TV screen or the papers everyday and pretend that it doesn't exist. So by really emphasizing the hard times we're in right now, I think that in the long run good will come from it.

BH: Do you think the War in Iraq has had an impact on Century, if so what has it been?

GR: It has not had a direct impact but with everything else we've been facing with in the way of changes, and the unknowns that face us, its been one more factor that has weighed on people's minds as time has gone on. It has not directly affected anyone around here that I can see other than somebody who may have been in the military and related to a soldier fighting over there. But, again, its one of those things that, one more thing that people have had to worry about this year.

BH: How would you describe school spirit at Century this year?

GR: School spirit is in a transition year, we know for a fact that we're going to be losing a number of students to Liberty with the redrawing of the school boundaries. That's going to affect the attendance areas for where students will be going next year and where staff will be reset, reassigned. So the school spirit has probably suffered a little bit, as a result, but after the next school year starts and people are, again, assured of where they'll be and what school they'll be attending for the next four years, assuming they're freshmen, I think we'll see a resurgence of school spirit all over again.

BH: Will you be leaving this school next year?

GR: Actually this year is my last year, I am retiring as of May 28, 2003 so this will be my last, last hurrah, so to speak.

BH: What do you look forward to in your retirement?

GR: My wife and I have been in education for 30 years and we're both retiring this year and we're not making any hard and fast plans at this point, we're just looking for an enjoyable summer, time to decompress from the whole situation. When I thought back to my lifetime, for the last 46 years every September I've been in school whether as a 1st grader or a junior high student or high school or a college student or a teacher or a librarian. And it will be quite a novelty to wake up about September 5th and not have to worry about my life being run by the bell system for a while.

Thank you.

Thank you.