

## Karen Warkentin

Vanessa: This Vanessa Warkinten and Jessica Laing interviewing Karen Warkentin on may 19<sup>th</sup> 2003. What is your background regarding the school district and what has your involvement or role regarding century this school year?

Karen: I've worked for the school district since 1996 as the business manager's secretary and my involvement with school had mainly been with my two kids Vanessa and Eric making sure that they stay on task and getting their work done and completed and graduate for this next upcoming year.

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

Karen: This has been an extremely rough year, I think, with the negotiations with the teachers and the...(can't hear)...and the budget cuts and in the 6 years I've worked with the district this has probably been the hardest year.

Vanessa: How would you describe moral among administration staff this year?

Karen: I think moral is probably lower than what it has been because of the budget cuts and because of the cut days and because the negotiations have gone on and on with the teachers and because we're not sure where we're going to be at with our classified negotiations.

Jessica: Who are some key people who really made a difference in the school district this year?

Karen: I think two key people who would be in the district would probably be Kathy Brahm and Linda Warren. They were both the receptionists up at the front desk at the administration office. They are able to field all the calls and be able to direct all the irate parents when need be and they're just a real positive influence and we've lost Linda Warren to retirement it made it really difficult 'cause now we only have one person up there and it's hard for Kathy.

Jessica: What do you think Century is known for in the community of Hillsboro?

Karen: I think that technology at Century is probably what Century is best known for because it is, it was one of our first schools that Intel has given a lot of support to and I think they have a lot of technology for the kids to be able to advance in that area.

Vanessa: What do you think have been and will be the impact of the national coverage that Hillsboro schools have received this year?

Karen: I think that it is going to be very negative on Hillsboro because for the last seven years Hillsboro has been in a very positive light in the media coverage and it's been a

school district where most people have wanted to move to and I think with all the negative that's going on with the budget I think that it's going to make it hard for any type of support that we might need in a way of monetary.

Jessica: If you could change anything about this year, what would it be?

Karen: Probably the cut days because not only has it impacted the students, but it has impacted us as employees as well and for our family it has impacted doubly because my husband also works for the school district too, so it's like having a double whammy of 34 days.

Vanessa: What were your feelings when measure 28 didn't pass?

Karen: It was really unfortunate that measure 28 didn't pass, because it means less money for the kids and if it had passed we wouldn't be cutting as many days this year and I don't know if it would have made a major difference for this year, but at least next year the kids would have been able to finish up the school year.

Jessica: How have budget issues affected you directly?

Karen: Oh let me count the ways! Saturdays, evenings, working, imputing, because one of my main duties is to input the budget and help with the budget preparation. So, this is kind of a question that it impacts me in the way of work because I'm trying to get it all in and with this year, with all the budget cuts and with the incentive of income we're doing what we normally do in 3 weeks, in a week and a half.

Vanessa: in your opinion, who has been affected the worst by the problems that have occurred this year?

Karen: I think the students have been affected the worst, because the teachers have been, oh let me use the right word, the teachers have been kind of stubborn in the way of negotiating with the contract so that there weren't quite as many days cut off. If they had settled their conflict earlier, there would be so many days impacted this year and I think that because of the cut days, students are going to be losing a lot in the way of their AP classes and preparing for colleges, the seniors, they've lost a good two weeks of school to get them ready for those last two weeks.

Jessica: What are your feelings on the cutback of programs and classes?

Karen: I'm okay with the cutbacks in sports because I think athletics are not a necessity of High School. But cutting back on academics and increase in class sizes will make it more difficult for next year for the teachers to be able to have a conducive learning environment because the larger the classes get, and our kids don't know how to behave properly in classes, it makes it harder for the kids.

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

Karen: I'm not sure what kind of precedent it will set, but I know it's not as bad as it was in 1989 when, from what I understand, when the district was in the red, which means that they were running in the negative, which they're not supposed to be doing. And that was actually one of the worst years. It was worse than this year is right now. I think that when we're dealing with the budgets, it's going to take several years to get us back to the standards that we're used to. And I hope that we don't have another year like we had this year.

Jessica: How does Century compare with other schools?

Karen: I think Century is probably more cutting edge in the way of technology...(can't hear after that)...and they don't have that technology over at Hilhi and Glencoe...(can't hear)...If I had my preference with all 3 of them, I would probably choose Liberty but Century I think would be my next choice, because it really is more of a cutting edge...(can't hear)...

Vanessa: Who do you feel will leave a lasting impression on the school of the retirees, how and why?

Karen: I think that Mr. Keene will be the one to have a lasting impression because about two years ago when Vanessa was in choir, I happened to go to a concert for the whole district and the professionalism and the, what's the word I want to say? It was definitely a high standard he set for his choir compared to all the other choirs in the district and he is one that's there for the kids and that's really, really enjoys his music and that's show through his teaching. I think that a lot of kids are going to be crying when he leaves Century.

Jessica: I think this covers about everything. Is there anything you have to add that we haven't asked you already?

Karen: No. You girls have done a good job. The only thing that I would have to add would be that everybody needs to pull together in the time of crisis...and there's always a light at the end of the tunnel, even though we may not see it right now. But we all need to work together and that includes the teachers, the classified administrators, because without one, we don't have the administrators, we don't have the classified or the teachers. We're all one team. We're here for the kids, we're not here for ourselves.