

Anne Walton
821 East A. St.
Ogallala, NE 69153

3/21/2021

Lake and Peninsula School District
P.O. Box 263
King Salmon, AK 99613

Attn: School Board

Dear Members of the Board,

It is with pleasure that I am contacting you, with the purpose of donating a painting of Ivanof Bay to the Lake and Peninsula School District. I worked for Lake and Pen when Frank Hill was the superintendent from 1989 to 1991. I worked as an itinerant speech pathologist and served the village schools in the South the first year, and all the village schools in the second year.

I have worked in hospitals and schools from Texas, Montana, New Mexico, Nebraska and Oregon; but none of the experiences I had in any of those settings, can match the positive experience I had with Lake and Peninsula School District. All of the people of the villages, the students, the pilots, and the administration and support staff were great to work with. I enjoyed being invited into the homes of the students for their name day celebrations, or for dinner. It was not unusual to be invited over for cinnamon rolls, maple bars and tea. I felt very welcomed. Over the years several of my friends have passed away there, and I know things are changing, as they always do in this life.

I was very saddened by the passing of Tom O'Hara, Roland Briggs, and George Tibbetts: each as they occurred. Tom and Roland were friends of mine, and I spent many hours conversing with them as they flew me around to my schools. George Tibbetts would address me, when I came into the air port as "Annie Walton, world famous Lake and Pen school marm." All three men always had a twinkle in their eye, a keen but kind wit, and were always just plain fun. George and I flew in zero zero visibility all the way from Ivanof to the Lake one time on purely instruments and someone talking to George on the radio. He was an amazing pilot.

I had no problem deciding who to dedicate the painting to, because without the pilots, the students would not get their special services, the schools their supplies or teachers, and the villages their groceries, medicines, or any specialty clinics that they rely on. We depended on those men for everything. And in the meantime, they were just all around great people, and they had very difficult jobs. With this I am proposing that the painting be dedicated to the memory of Tom, Roland and George.

I kept a journal while I was with Lake and Pen, and my final entry follows here:

"When I think back on my time in the bush, I recall, that there were no pretenses, and life was engaging and critically interactive out of necessity. The large distances between communities, and the more tentative nature of existence, pulled people together. It agreed with me.

So, here is to the people of the bush, bush life and the bush land of Alaska, where the measure of a person is not based on what one has, but on what one gives; where if you have a problem, or are lonely, there is almost always someone to talk with, and a warm cup of tea, or something a bit stronger if needed. Nostrovia ”

I cherish my time in the Lake and Peninsula Borough and School District like no other time in my life, and the people I met there. It is all the more cherished, because I have relatives from Pitka's Point and my family's history goes back to the 1890's and earlier in Alaska. Florence Pavlov Pitka married my Uncle Charlie Knox shortly after the turn of that century. He was the grandson of Scotch Irish immigrants and he was orphaned in Dawson during the Klondike Gold rush. He and my aunt lived in the bush most of their lives, and traveled by dog sled in winter, did fish camp in summer, and lived between Ruby and Rampart. I had planned to come to care for my aunt after I got out of graduate school, but she passed away before I was done. Coming to Lake and Peninsula District, and partaking of life there was what I did instead. I was not disappointed, and my aunt would have been very proud of me. We were very close.

So with that bit of history, and my affection for the people of your borough, I humbly request that you will accept my gift to the memory of Tom, George and Roland. I thought it could hang in the board room, or a spot where people pass by, and then as the years pass, and people come to the district office for business, they can be reminded of them. I will pay for transporting the painting up to you.

Sincerely,

Anne Walton



Charlie Knox and Florence Pitka Knox Probably taken in the 1920's or 30's.



Anne Walton and Florence Pitka Knox 1980