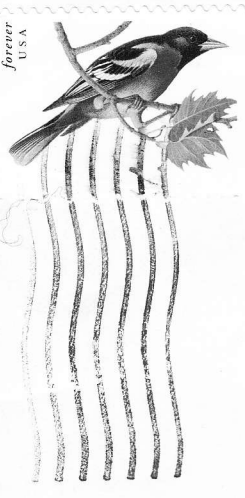


Sue Klingner  
5003 E. State Hwy. AF  
Fair Grove, MO 65648



Leslie Mc Cartney  
Alaska and Fodor's Regions Collection  
Rasmussen Library  
310 Evans Loop  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
99775-17505

March 9, 2015

Leslie,

I should like to share with you information about a friend of mine, Karen (Wakto) Ballard, and hope that some day she might be interviewed. If not, at least the university would have this record of her family and her.

During my senior year, Karen lived across the hallway from me in McIntosh Hall. She was from a family that lived in the Juneau - Douglas area of Alaska. Her family had Finnish roots.

In the mid to late thirties, members of her family had graduated from the University of Alaska: Arvo M. Wakto (her father who taught school); Vieno Wakto (her aunt who married Glenn Franklin); and Olevi Wakto (her uncle).

Karen graduated in 1964 and joined the Peace Corps. She taught school in Equig, Cagayan Province and then worked in a leper colony on Palawan\* Island in the Philippines.

\*Palawan

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She traveled to Nepal, Korea, and Hong Kong, among other places in Asia.

After returning to the states she married Eldard Jensen; they had two children: Alex and Katrina. Karen taught school in California and Maryland. They were unsuited for one another, divorced, and both later remarried new spouses.

Karen worked in the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees. She helped to establish a school for the refugees at a neighborhood house. This was about 1974-75.

In 1977 she taught in Esfahan, Iran for Bell Helicopter International during the Shah of Iran's reign. She left at the height of the revolution just prior to the capture of U.S. hostages. She had taught there Technical Reading and Writing to young men prior to their becoming helicopter pilots.

Around 1980-81 she taught both Muslims and Jewish students in an Israeli technical school located at the base of Mt. Tabor.

Back in the U. S. again she worked in the Head Start Program in California and Arizona. She became Head Start Director in Yuma, Arizona for a three county area.

In Imperial County, California, she served as Head Start Director for seventeen centers in small towns.

In 1987-88 she became Executive Director for those with disabilities. Workshops for the disabled gave them a sense of achievement.

Her last job was working on the Snoezelen Project. She helped to develop mobile units to serve children and young adults with autism and spectrum disorders. Therapeutic

Care could be extended.  
to those persons suffering  
from PTSD.

During the times Karen  
worked abroad, her mother  
Gladys kept me informed  
by letters. In fact her  
mother corresponded with  
me until her death in  
February, 2010. Karen has  
visited me on my Missouri  
farm and I have visited  
her in Yuma, Arizona. We  
chat by phone.

Sometimes I think we  
bonded in friendship during  
those dark, subzero winters  
in Alaska, because while  
we nibbled on delicious  
chocolate brownies that my  
Aunt Norma would send me,  
we shared our innermost  
thoughts.

As teachers neither of us  
ever accumulated monetary  
wealth, but we have a  
wealth of memories of those  
we taught. The education  
we received at the University  
of Alaska broadened our minds.

-Sue Klingner-

Karen's favorite professor, Dr. Skarland, rose far above the others in her estimation. She was a better student of Alaskan anthropology than I (she could spell all the words correctly in her copious notes) which she kept for years) and was an active member in the Arctic Anthropological Society. She could describe his cabin.

After Dr. Gottas of the Geophysical Institute returned to Oslo, Norway, Karen visited him there. According to her, in his first words of greeting, he asked about her friend, Sylvia, i.e. me. Both of us had shared babysitting responsibilities when we cared for his children, Tor and Nora. He was very respectful towards Karen and me; definitely he was a human being in the finest sense of the word. Karen and I had been the mice that had nibbled on the imported Norwegian brown goat's cheese which Dr. Gottas tried to keep supplied in his refrigerator.

The last party Karen and I attended after graduation was in celebration of the doctorate that Wescott received. His happy, smiling wife was the perfect, pleasant hostess. She was a student of anthropology and worked in the University Museum, one of our hang out places.

As we prepared to leave the university, Karen gave to me a parting gift, a little stuffed seal she called Pere Peter. In my bookcase Pere Peter rests to this day. She left in possession of one of my ski sweaters, a sky blue one, not exactly the right attire to wear in the hot climates in which she found herself.

We never truly parted; our friendship lasts to this day. There was just some indescribable energy and spirit at the University of Alaska which drew students to bond in friendship. Maybe the aurora kept us charged.

- Sylvia "Sue" Klingner -