

New 2005 Waves of Hope



Merle Darling

Merle was born January 26, 1942. Her family lived in Brandon until 1953 then moved to a farm north of Dunrea where she learned to milk cows, ride horses and weed the garden. Darryl and Merle were married in Brandon on September 1, 1962. Their children are Carla (born 1965), Brent (born 1969) and Johanna (born 1974). Carla and Richard have a daughter, Lucy (born 2003) and they live in Whakatane, NZ. Brent and Glenda have two children, Jessica (born 2001) and Charles (born 2004) and they live in Sioux Lookout, Ontario. Johanna lives in her own house in Brandon.

Health: Diagnosed with celiac disease in 1985, followed by hypothyroidism then osteoporosis, irritable bowel syndrome, diverticulosis then in 2004 breast cancer. A mammogram on February 16 revealed a tumor in the left breast (she did not feel this lump until April 16) Lumpectomy surgery took place on April 26, 2004 then from July 26 - September 8, underwent radiation treatments in Winnipeg. The experience of living at Lennox Bell Lodge, hauling food for a week in a backpack to Winnipeg and cooking gluten-free meals with only a microwave is memorable for Merle. But she says the camaraderie of everyone there made up for its downfalls. "We were good company for each other."

Hobbies: collecting family history, sewing, baking.

Favourite Activities: swimming, curling, golfing, playing cards, watching curling and baseball on TV, traveling, spending time at the cottage at Lake Metigoshe, visiting with children, grandchildren and friends, dancing (although her husband hates to dance), meeting relatives to collect their family history and paddling with the Waves of Hope dragon boat team.

Organizations: member of IODE since 1966; Legion Aux. #3; Manitoba and SW Manitoba Genealogy; Canadian Celiac Association - Brandon Westman Satelite Group (helped to organize the Brandon WestMan group in 1999). Merle is a contact person to chat with newly diagnosed celiac patients about gluten-free recipes and the availability of gluten-free food and just coping with the condition.

Retirement Plans: Retired on April 15, 2005 from Brandon University. Merle has three quilts to complete that were started years ago (one is for Johanna who keeps reminding her!) Merle would like to travel to Scotland and Ireland to research family history and is hoping to learn to clog dance.

Merle has such great support from her family and friends. With a positive attitude and outlook on life, She is determined to enjoy her retirement, to be a good paddler with the Waves of Hope dragon boat team and looks forward to friendships and all the activities and enjoyment of this team. "What an enthusiastic group of breast cancer survivors. Everyone is so friendly. I wish I'd met you years ago!"