

DARCY HAWKSHAW



Darcy passed away on December 16, 2005 at the age of 60.

I met Darcy when we were early into our treatments for breast cancer at a meeting of the Bosom Buddies, a support group for breast cancer survivors on the North Shore. We hit it off right away. Although that group didn't turn out to be what we were looking for, that evening we found out that there was a dragon boat team consisting wholly of breast cancer survivors and we both agreed that this was something we definitely wanted to do. We stayed in touch over the next year until registration night for AIAB.

We were both feeling pretty nervous as we drove together to the Holiday Inn to sign up for the Deep Cove crew. Darcy loved the energy of the group although we were quite intimidated after our first practice. We couldn't quite believe how incredibly hard it was – not what we had thought it would be – a leisurely paddle around Deep Cove. We would go home and soak in our tubs of Epsom salts, then drag our sore and aching bodies to the next practice.

Darcy sat in the back of the boat where all the power comes from and, in our boat, most of the wisecracks. You see, in the back of the boat the coach can't see you. But one thing we all saw and shared was the beauty of our surroundings and our deep bond with each other. No one loved the thrill of competition more than Darcy and who could top her joy when we won a medal – and we have quite a number of them.

The three of us, Gail, Darcy and I, carpooled to practices and Darcy definitely led the conversation. I learned soon enough that Darcy was a motor mouth. Her zest for life, her energy, her love of getting things right, her love for her mom and her large blended family, and the huge dinners she hosted, were all described as only Darcy could. She could remember every detail of conversations and events, what he said, what she said, when, how, why and where. She was a stickler for detail and set high standards for herself. Her love of numbers put her in the position of timer at one of our practices this past year with a GPS gadget in her hand. She was in her element, barking out our stats to us. Darcy was a true leader. She decided to volunteer us as social reps and how could we refuse. For our first regatta, out was Darcy with the spreadsheet for everyone to sign to organize our lunch menu.

I owe to Darcy my knowledge of spreadsheets which, before knowing her, I thought referred to what went on a bed. She took command of the finances of our organization like an admiral of a ship. It was a great accomplishment for her to have commanded the budgeting of our 10 Years Abreast Celebration so competently. We came out in the black with enough money to make a substantial donation to Dr. Don McKenzie's research project for breast cancer patients. Her sense of accomplishment was modest compared with the

respect we all had for her stamina, competence and dedication to our team. In spite of being in the middle of chemo treatments, she was working on site for the whole weekend as well as dancing herself silly at the Saturday Night Dragon Fever party. Darcy loved her garden, reading, sports, camping on Whidbey Island and watching her girls grow up into amazing young women. She was so proud of Kelly competing in the Olympics and recently being accepted into nursing and of Kim's promotion to manager of the Pacific Centre Gap store. She talked about Bruce and how lucky she was that he came into her life. Bruce became one of our team's most enthusiastic fans. More importantly he was a compassionate source of support, hope and love for Darcy through her illness.

I will always cherish the memory of holding hands with Darcy at the 10 Years Abreast Celebration as we joined in the flower ceremony to honour the memory of the women we have lost to breast cancer. As we shed tears together and hugged, she said "I hope I'll be here next year". Even though she didn't make it, the driving force of her personality and her indomitable spirit will be with us always. Cutie, every time we get into the boat we will be bringing you with us.

- Ruthie Ross