

## **CAROLYN WALTERS NOVICE DIARIST AWARD - 2017**

My name is Dianne Price and I paddle with Abreast In A Boat, Rocky Point in Port Moody, BC.

A year after my journey with breast cancer I was asked if I might be interested in joining Abreast In A Boat. I had read about it and certainly had considered looking into it.

After the novice meeting I was hooked. The women attending were a dynamic group. To be part of this would certainly be rewarding and being a novice at the age of 73 was going to be a challenge.

My first few times in a dragon boat were daunting wondering if I would be able to pull my weight and be an asset to the crew. Everyone was welcoming and helpful as they had all had their turn as the new one in the boat. Through the sunny and mostly wet practices I felt more confident each time. The coaching was amazing and always positive.

The first regatta was great fun, competing against other AIAB crews as well as other women's teams. I wasn't sure what to expect and 250 meters seemed doable. Then I was told the next two regattas would be 500-meter races – a challenge to say the least!!! So many standout memories – the flower ceremony – emotional at many levels, a memorial to those who did not survive, and the overwhelming realization of how many women have endured breast cancer and we two hundred participating that day were but a few. Our gold medal win at the Concorde Pacific. Quite an honour for a novice and to be part of an amazing crew!

I facetiously told friends that the paddling was going to do me in or make me a better person! It has made me appreciate that all of us who have had breast cancer have survived a journey that no one ever hopes to make. Abreast in a Boat brings us all together so that we may continue to challenge ourselves with the support and encouragement of each other.

The Canadian Cancer Agency provided amazing treatment for my body.

Abreast in a Boat is treatment for my soul.

I look forward to the coming season to be part of a crew once again – now a "seasoned" paddler. Our merry pink group will head to the boat, hunker down, thighs to the gunnels and wait for the word.

Paddles Up!!