

Diana J. Holmes



Following grad I worked in the Bank of Montreal for a year, went to UVic for 2 years, after which I attended UBC for a further 2 years, graduating with a BA in Art History. Back to the bank for another year, then on to dental assisting for 3 years or so, in Vancouver.

At that time I was a scuba diver, which I really enjoyed. I met and married my first husband, John Smith, another scuba diver. Scuba diving in the sea during the season, we ran rivers in our wet suits during the off season to keep fit for the scuba season. We bought a wooden sailboat and lived aboard in the Fraser River for a while, til moving the boat and ourselves over to Victoria on Vancouver Island.

I worked at Pemberton Holmes, then separated from John, and went to live in Spain in the late 70s, where I taught English as a Second Language at Berlitz School of Languages for 2 years. I returned to Vancouver, worked for a bit and then returned to UBC to take my professional year of teacher training, aimed at teaching non mainstream children. I had discovered I really enjoyed teaching and wanted something a bit different from mainstream positions.

Teaching jobs were very hard to get in the early 80s, so my first position was on a native Indian reserve outside Williams Lake at Alexis Creek in the Chilcotin, teaching for the Federal Government in Indian Affairs. They provided housing on the reserve, and I had a Grade 3/4 class, a perfect age for me to teach. The children arrived at school only speaking their native Chilcotin language, so it was a pretty ideal location and position for me, I stayed there for 3 years, finally moving back to Victoria where I married Lary Hansen, a military Air Force officer I had met while living in Barcelona. The Chilcotin is very beautiful, warm in summer, wild and supernatural B.C., great for hunting and fishing but very, very cold in winter.

We were posted to a Canadian military base in Baden Soellingen, Germany, for 3 years, there we were able to travel a lot, our base was located right beside the Rhine River, and we hopped over to France in 20 minutes or so. Our VW camper was never unloaded during our 3 years there, and we were off travelling whenever we could get free time, distances are so much shorter in Europe than here. I also taught ESL which I really enjoyed a lot, both in a language school and private lessons. We travelled extensively, both by ourselves and with relatives when they visited us. Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, Spain, all places we could reach easily in a few days time. We even went to the Scandinavian countries once, and over to the UK a time or two.

Posted back home to Canada as the base was closing, I requested that Lary get a position in the Maritimes, we were first on the list!!!! We spent a year and a half in Dartmouth near Halifax, Nova Scotia, then were posted back to Victoria, where we retired in 1997. But we hadn't seen enough of Europe, there was still a lot to uncover there.

We returned to Europe for a year and a half camping, in a VW Jetta pulling a German made travel trailer 14 feet long. First 3 feet were the hitch!! Calling it cozy was a huge understatement. Holland, France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Greece, we did a lot of mileage, spending winter in southern Spain, as central Europe was very chilly during winter.

Back to Victoria after that lovely long trip, I taught ESL at a privately owned language school in Victoria until we decided in 2000 to leave Victoria and move to Nanaimo, joining my sisters Sue and Jen who had been here for many years. And here we still are, loving Nanaimo, but also enjoying spending 5 months or so of each winter in the Palm Springs area of California. We love swimming in the hot springs, playing native American wooden music, and enjoying the cultural things from that desert area of the country.

When I was younger I did a lot of handcrafts, my most favorite among them was counted cross stitch. Both of us play wooden native American style flutes, we love world music, and host a flute circle of flutie friends here in Nanaimo when we are home. I do some personal writing, and I also love to draw, sketch and paint.