

Our Story

Written by

Tuesday, 19 September 2006 12:27 - Last Updated Saturday, 29 August 2009 07:12



About Me

I was born in Manitoba on a cold winter day in 1955 joining my sister Christine who is a year and a half older.

My Dad and Mom immigrated from England after the war as young newlyweds. My Dad joined the RCAF as a pilot in 1951 and was stationed in Manitoba until 1958. We moved several times over the course of time and grew up on or near a few European Air Force bases. We always seemed to have a trailer and our family vacations consisted of exploring other countries. Dad finally retired from the armed forces in 1967 to the small community of Coldwater, in central Ontario.

My sister and I both attended high school in Orillia, Ontario. After a really dumb, failed marriage at the tender age of 18, (it lasted 10 months) I moved to Toronto and after moving three times, settled down with my second husband, Jim, back in Orillia. We had three children, a daughter, Karley, and two sons, Jay and Jamie by the time we were all of 24 years old....crazy by today's standards!

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Jim and I worked hard over the years and in 1988 we bought a resort on the edge of Muskoka while he simultaneously operated an insurance brokerage and I ran a cleaning service. In September of 1993, Jim died suddenly, drowning in a boating accident at the resort. That certainly knocked the wind out of my sails for a while and altered my life as I knew it forever.

About Rick

Rick was born in Weston, Ontario on a January day into a family of four sisters and one brother. His Dad, Lloyd Hollingshead (nicknamed Mick) worked for DeHaviland Aircraft and his Mom, Beatrice, stayed home raising the six children until their youngest was old enough to attend school.

When he was two, the family moved to the Cookstown area where Rick attended public school in Bondhead and later, high school in Alliston. Growing up, he spent a lot of time at his uncle's dairy farm where Rick's cousin, Ivan first taught him how to drive at the age of 10. That developed into a passion for driving which eventually led Rick to mastering the handling of larger trucks, finally even owning his own tractor trailer.

Rick was married, living in Alliston and had two children, Angela and Bill, by the time he was 24. His love for cars and his enthusiasm for anything mechanical enabled him to learn how to repair motors of all shapes and sizes; hence his jobs were mostly to do with working on and around all kinds of machinery.

In 1987, Rick was working for a large Rent-All company in the sales division when he met Jim Seabrook, at the time, soon-to-be owner of a resort in the Muskoka's. Rick and Jim became fast friends and in 1990, Jim hired Rick to be his maintenance manager at the resort for the season. It was the most trouble-free season the resort had experienced and the following winter Rick began to work for Susan in her commercial cleaning business.

In June of 1993, after several years of trying to keep their marriage together, Rick and his wife decided to separate for the last time.

About Us

Jim was fondly known as Mr. PMA (positive mental attitude) and he was the "brains" behind running our resort while I was the administrator... the data processor. In an instant, my role changed in every facet of my life from work to family. My biggest concern was for the well being of our children and the challenge of maintaining some continuity in all our lives.

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When Jim died, Rick and I were left with a large void in our lives. Rick would call me every week or so to see how I was doing and we often consoled each other. After several months, I began to feel something more than friendship. As it turned out, Rick's feelings had changed too and we were married on April 1st, 1995.

Together, we continued to operate the resort but finally after a particularly challenging summer, made the decision to put it up for sale in the fall of 1995. In 1997, we had accepted an offer to purchase from a German company and we started to make plans for our future. We thought we would buy a transport truck and use it to finance our travels around North America and I would write. However, the deal went sour and we waited for the next one.

In the fall of 1999, on November 1st, the resort finally did sell but by then the price of fuel had skyrocketed and the trucking industry was no longer a good option to earn an income. We decided to take a couple of months off to explore our options. Just one month later, Jay, my oldest son and middle child, learned he had melanoma, a deadly form of skin cancer, which required a lot of our time. (He has had a recurrence of it in 2004 but to date has a clean bill of health.) Then on February 1st, 2000 my dad, Dick Ainsley, suffered a massive stroke.

Traveling was no longer a possibility because we moved my folks into a granny flat beside our house. Helping Dad in his recovery became our priority. We decided to convert our house into a Bed & Breakfast and hobby farm because we were home bound anyway. We had two dozen "pet" chickens, two goats, four pot bellied pigs, two sheep, three llamas and a vegetable garden. Between the care of my parents, running the B & B and looking after the farm, our lives were very busy. On April 9th, 2001 Dad suffered another stroke which he succumbed to on May 18, 2001.

Rick and I rented a Class C motor home and took Mom to PEI for a much needed vacation. While we were on our vacation we met some people who *lived* in their motor homes, full time, known as "fulltimers". What a concept! When the time was right, we too could live in a motor home and travel all around North America!

Well, Mom went into a retirement home in June of 2002, (she passed away in April, 2006) we sold our house in December of 2003 and hit the road a few days later. On December 29th, we started to live our dream, traveling around North America, sleeping nightly in our own bed and following our hearts.

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