

"Hairdressers are a wonderful breed. You work one-on-one with another human being and the object is to make them feel so much better and to look at themselves with a twinkle in their eye." Vidal Sassoon

"I think that the most important thing a woman can have, next to talent, of course, is her hairdresser" Joan Crawford

At Aveo Peregian Springs Country Club we are fortunate to have the presence of such a talented hairdresser as our lovely Audra. Audra has been looking after the ladies (and gentlemen) in the Village since she took over from the original hairdresser (Julia) in May 2008. She is a constantly smiling, happy person who handles the most difficult perms, colours and sets with cheerful friendly charisma.

Some of her clients may not be aware of a life-changing experience Audra endured in 2010. The nagging pain in her underarm and a lump turned out to be every woman's worst diagnosis, of aggressive breast cancer, and very much unexpected as she was under 40. Audra agreed to follow the medical profession's advice and after a biopsy, she underwent two lots of surgery and started on Chemotherapy, finishing with Radiation and medication.

While Audra and her family began this fight, Audra did not want to let her clients down. Her mother, Barbara (a hairdresser of many years) physically dropped everything she was doing, drove back to Queensland from Western Australia, where she had been house-sitting, towed her caravan to Pacific Paradise, parked it in Audra and Lawrence's front yard and took over in Audra's Salon, keeping her clients' needs covered.

We all loved Barbara, a larger than life personality who started Audra off in her career. Audra had kept records of her clients' needs and so Barbara was able to take over seamlessly. She quickly became an important part of the Manor. With her many years of Dancing, Ballroom, Rock & Roll and Line Dancing, Barbara joined in with our early line dancing group and actually taught some dances and generously helped with some new music (DVD's), in between tending to her clients.

Barbara kept us all updated with Audra's journey through surgery, chemotherapy and losing her hair. Barbara actually shaved Audra's head when it was necessary, and with Lawrence, kept supplying her with nutritious foods and fruit and vegetable whizzes to help her recover and continued to support the family to get through the worst. Audra returned to the Salon part-time in 2011.

Audra gradually recovered and has been cancer free for almost seven years now and is still looking after us all, with our straight, curly, grey or white hair, cuts, perms, foils, colours, blow dries and sets, and those pesky little hairs on our chinny chin chins!

Later in 2012 Audra was advised to take up Dragon Boat Paddling and that is what has really **changed her life in an unexpected way.**

In 1996 Dr. Don McKenzie, a Professor in the Department of Sports Medicine and exercise physiologist in Canada, challenged the prevailing medical thinking that women treated for breast cancer should avoid rigorous upper body exercise for fear of developing lymphedema, a debilitating and chronic side effect of treatment. He developed a program to determine the impact of exercise on breast cancer survivors, choosing dragon boat paddling as the epitome of strenuous, repetitive upper body exercise. He trained twenty-four breast cancer volunteers in a gym for three months, introduced them to dragon boats and taught them paddling techniques. At the end of the three-month season on the water none of the volunteers had lymphedema.

While Dr. McKenzie's medical experiment/project was underway, the women found they were fitter, healthier and happier. They loved the camaraderie and support of their fellow paddlers and had regained control of their lives. They realized that dragon boat paddling could become a means to raise awareness of breast cancer and of the ability of survivors to lead normal lives. They named their team '**Abreast In A Boat**' and invited other survivors to share their exciting experience.

Audra joined the "**Sunshine Coast Dragons Abreast**" and not only blossomed with the dragon boat paddling, but she and Lawrence made new friends who had been through the same trauma. They both became fitter and healthier and then came the really big event when they obtained their Passports and travelled overseas for the first time to a Dragon Boat Festival in Sarasota, America. This was such a wonderful experience for Audra and the other breast cancer survivors.

Now the **Sunshine Coast Dragons Abreast** are fundraising to go overseas again in 2018 to the **IBCPC Dragon Boat Festival** which is being held in **Florence, Italy!** This will be the trip of a lifetime for the breast cancer survivors and their spouses.

John Lennon famously penned in a song, "*Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans*" and that is what happened to Audra, Lawrence and their boys but now they have much to look forward to, especially the trip to Italy next year. The changes have been ongoing with Audra picking up a paint brush again after 20 years, and learning how to make lovely jewellery as well as the very strenuous paddling regime that takes up hours of her time. The whole family has become healthier, fitter and look towards a rosy future.

Ann Landers

"Nobody gets to live life backward. Look ahead. That is where your future lies."