

We landed in Winnipeg. Mother went to work in a sewing factory, my sister at the Swift's Sausage factory, and I took a babysitting/housekeeping job. When Fall came, we needed to decide if we would go to school or work. My mother reminded us of all we had been through and all that had been taken from us: losing our father, our home, our country, and our money. In closing she said, "Education is the only thing nobody can take from you." The decision was easy to live in cheap, smelly rooming houses with no kitchen and shared bathrooms for years. We studied during the week and worked weekends, holidays, and summer vacations. I understood the value of an education and excelled in school. I applied for every scholarship I could find and was able to attend college. After 3 years we saved enough for a down payment on a 3 bedroom house. This was much more luxury and space than we needed, so we rented out part of it to cover expenses. Life continued to bless us: my mother continued to generously provide for us, my sister excelled in Art school, and I went on to graduate from medical school and accept an internship in Vancouver BC.

In November of 1958 I met Lembit at an Estonian (Rotalia) party. Being with him made me feel good. We dated for a few months, we were engaged by March, and married in May. The wedding was simple, friends brought potluck dishes, Lembit was late to the church, but I knew everything would work out well. I received a Pathology Residency position at Virginia Mason. We went on to have 3 lovely children (Leo, Evi, Tiina) and a nice house in Bellevue.

Raising the kids was a fruitful, but busy time. I was able to work half time as a Pathologist at PSIP & Evergreen hospital and half time as a mother, homemaker and wife. We found a community swimming pool that occupied the kids during the summers. The girls excelled in music; all kids were driven and gifted in sports: swimming, diving, and gymnastics. This proved to be a mixed blessing. A great deal of time was required to drive the kids to all the practices and events. At the practice or event there was undisturbed time to form great friendships with other parents and celebrate the kids achievements. By the time the kids started driving themselves to practices and events, free time allowed for a revived love of arts and crafts making hook rugs, quilts, and stained glass. I was relaxed and smelling the roses again.

Retirement and grand kids gave me riches I had not expected. Retirement allowed me to spend winters sailboarding in Mexico and summers gardening on the shores of Lake Sammamish. The grand kids allowed me to celebrate in their successes. Estonian friends became my extended family. Most of all I appreciate the 55 years of devotion that my husband Lembit has given me.

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