

IWCF New Member Profile Jan Bastian

Jan is not only a native Idahoan, she is a life-long Boise resident except for a few years around the traditional college years. She graduated from Capital High School in December of 1973 and was in and out of colleges and traveling during breaks from college.

She lived in North San Diego County, California (Carlsbad, Encinitas, Leucadia, Oceanside.) She also stayed with her beloved grandma in Escondido from whom she learned many valuable life lessons. While living in N San Diego County she learned to scuba dive and decided she wanted to study marine biology which eventually took her to Hawaii.

Jan decided to work for a year and establish residency in Hawaii to help manage the expense of college. She worked as a scuba instructor on the Fairwinds, a sixty-foot trimaran and at various jobs at the Kona Lagoon Hotel. By the time she had reached residency status, she realized island life was not for her. She experienced a severe case of Island fever, aka “rock-it is.”

She returned to San Diego area, her grandma, and a few colleges. While there, studying and starting a business with two friends called the Total Workout (dance and exercise studios), she became pregnant and gave birth to her first-born son, Bret.

Being a single parent is never easy, but the attitudes in the early 80s were not friendly, so she moved back to Boise to be near her support system, family and friends. Bret had built-in “siblings” in his cousins.

A few years after returning to Boise she married a grade school classmate and had another son, John. At the same time in her life, she and her family learned of her dad’s rare and terminal disease which ended his life at the age of fifty-five, a devastating loss.

Shortly after returning to Boise, Jan earned a teaching degree from Boise State University. Teaching ran deep in her blood; her paternal grandparents, dad, uncles, aunt, and brother were all teachers. A few years later she earned a Master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Mathematics which led to eventually teaching Math at North Jr High. Jan thoroughly enjoyed her teaching career of 25+ years.

After a decade of trying to make her marriage work, she eventually divorced her husband. So, in order to make ends meet and provide for her sons she taught school, tutored students and wrote curriculum for the school district and BSU. According to IWCF member, Susan Smith, “Jan was a fabulous teacher, a well-known and liked teacher.” She taught at various schools in the Boise School District.



In 1999 Jan met her current husband, Dennis “Whit” Whitmore, through her dearest family friends. They married in 2003 and joined their families, each having two children. Though they have very different interests, they respect each other’s differences and are supportive of where these interests lead.

Jan is now in her eleventh year of retirement from teaching. Eight years ago she went into an estate sales business with a friend. She found the business and situation were not a good fit so by extension earned her real estate license. Many of her clients have been former students or her sons’ friends. She’s still teaching them, just in a different arena, and enjoying reconnecting with them. Like so many of us watching what is happening in Boise’s real estate market, Jan struggles with the escalating prices and young people wanting to return to Boise and family who can no longer afford a home.

Jan is very outdoorsy. She likes to be outside, skiing, running, water-skiing, hiking, swimming, biking, and just being in the mountains. She has run several Olympic distance triathlons, often using this as an opportunity to raise money for favorite charities. She has placed in several of these and has gone to Nationals where she placed 70th in an age group of 140.

Jan is a very positive person. This has enabled her to face difficult situations and come out on top of them. As she said, she has had great people in her life such as her dad, grandma, family and her best friend of 55 years.

A final story to be shared by Jan as it has a life lesson for all of us: Jan’s grandma came for a visit and attended one of her sixth-grade classes. The kids asked her grandma many questions about Jan as a child, but one student asked what would be her best advice: “Learn how to like yourself.”