



## *For Gail*

*by Margaret Paradis, June 27, 2013*

Good morning everyone. I am so glad to see you here helping to celebrate Gail's life. If she has stayed behind a little longer I know she is very please to see you all.

I haven't known Gail as long as some of you, and I am sure you all have good Gail stories to tell, but I will tell you what I know about Gail Saunoris.

Didn't she have a great laugh? It was so contagious. Gail was a very social person and would befriend anyone. Before she became so sick, she loved to entertain and spoil people. She was a pro at it too. Many of you know what a wonderful cook she was and the desserts she made were to die for. Who remembers her dump cake? How about her death-by-chocolate tort? I get a belly ache just thinking of it since it is one of those desserts that you can't only have just one piece. Gail loved to read and her favourite books were recipe books. When her eyesight started to fail, Gail loved to watch cooking shows on TV.

Not only did Gail love to read, but she was a wonderful writer. Gail was so very smart and great with words and description. I am certain that if she had not been sick she would have made an important mark in this world and have had an impressive career.

During Gail's working life she had been employed as office administrators and that training carried over into her personal life. She was very organized and a great record keeper. She had everything filed and always reminded me to keep those documents for 7 years just in case. Even last week she wanted to see her bank book to see how much money she had, where it was going and to make sure her bills were up to date.

Gail knew that her time on this earth was coming to an end, so she organized today (her funeral service).

Gail was generous beyond description. She loved to buy gifts for friends and family and was always thinking about the welfare of those around her. One of the P.S.W.'s at the hospital in Midland made sock monkeys to sell. Gail called everyone she knew and took orders. She wanted to help her new friend make ends meet. Gail bought herself a monkey and named him Ralph. There were a lot of laughs around Ralph and they had a great relationship. A few weeks ago

when I was speaking with Gail's dad, he asked me about these monkeys that Gail was talking about. I assured him that Gail knew that they were made of socks.

Gail loved and she loved deeply. It was so devastating when Alex died. You see, he was the love of her life and they did everything together. They loved each other unconditionally. They loved going on day trips or staying at a bed and breakfast once in awhile. When Gail became sick, Alex took good care of her.

Gail and Alex were not blessed with children so they adopted cats. I did not know Mozart but I did know Webber and Wagner. When my brother had to give up his cat Spot they jumped right in to adopt him but gave him the respectable name Wagner. They loved classical music therefore the names.

Gail also loved her family. Even though it may not have seemed the case sometimes, Gail loved her parents, her brother and sister and her nieces and nephews very much. She loved to tell stories of where they were born and what they were up to. She was always surrounded by family photos. Gail was especially fond of nieces Kimberly and Jennifer. Being an aunt was second best to being a mother.

As for extended family she and Alex adopted me and my family becoming my surrogate sister and surrogate auntie to my children of whom she was always interested. She spent many holidays and special events with us.

Her St. Margaret's family was important to her and she received lots of support from her many surrogate mothers such as Do, Jackie, Edna and Ruth who loved her unconditionally. When she moved to assisted living then to the Midland area she added a whole new branch to her family tree and I know that the staff at those facilities will miss her very much.

We all know that Gail did not have an easy life, a life that we would not even want to imagine. Along with other ailments, Gail suffered from depression and mental illness. Doctors don't always know what causes mental illness, and every one's mental illness is different. Gail's may have been caused by her childhood trauma and if anyone has read *The Road Less travelled*, by Scott peck, you would have read that this kind of trauma is always with a person and it changes the brain. Some can live with it and some cannot. Mental illness can change a family, change relationships. The person with this illness seems to get stuck. Gail was still that little girl in many ways, unable to move on.

The plight of the mentally ill has been in the news lately and it is good that people are being made more aware that this disease is all around us. We do need to talk about it more so that the government will begin to listen and realize that more research dollars need to be spent so that help can be given faster to those waiting in line for treatment that is right for the individual person.

But As I said, Gail did love us all even though she could become disgruntled with us sometimes. I remember standing up to her and telling her that she taught me to stand up for myself. She laughed and told me that she had created a monster. Gail was loyal and if you were her friend you were her friend forever no matter what.

Gail was so very courageous. Most of her life was met with pain, physical and mental. She really did try to carry on the best she could. Her mind was there but her body would not cooperate. She

carried on and carried on! She spent these last two years with a lot of physical hardship and faced it with courage and often laughter. As I said before, Gail loved to have fun and was often moved to laugh, even at herself.

And again for love, you see, Gail had a lot of faith. She loved God and God loved her. It was evident that God loved her. He always provided in one way or another. I would often hear her fighting with God, asking him why she couldn't be healed. Why did she have to suffer so? But she never, ever said that she hated God or that she didn't believe in Him anymore. God was her refuge even during the most trying times. In St. Paul's letter to the Romans he reminds us that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor powers nor heights, nor death, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ. Gail knew this and I was often reminded by a certain fellow here with us today that, sometimes, healing is on the other side. Because Gail knew this too, she was not afraid to die and was certainly at peace with it. So, Gail is now free, on the other side with those that love her too. We can celebrate because we know that She does still live but lives without pain and is free.

If she were here she might say:

Look inside my soul,

See the person that is me.

It may surprise you

I am not what you think.

I was not what you saw.

For I was a mere mortal stumbling along with all creation

Groaning for that day when all things will be made whole.

But wouldn't it be great to see a person the way God does?

Even better, wouldn't it be great to see ourselves the God sees us?

To look inside our souls.

We may be surprised.

