



Gail M. Lutolf

December 3, 1949 – September 30, 2001

When Gail volunteered to proofread and copy edit for me in 1989, little did I know what an asset had befallen the magazine. Who would have thought that someone with such a quiet demeanor and gentle spirit would have a profound influence on the direction the magazine would take? And now she's gone.

As I sat at Gail's memorial service and listened to her family and friends recall the Gail they knew and loved, a beautiful, complicated flower unfolded. The two words everyone used in their reminiscences were *honesty* and *character*. From her uncle who was still angry with her for leaving New York and moving to California 20 years ago to her friend from a cancer survivor group who spoke so eloquently of Gail's courage and determination; *honesty* and *character*. Her husband, Bob, spoke lovingly of their life together and I thought, "Gail, you would love to hear this!" And then I realized she would have been embarrassed at the praise. She was confident in her own self

worth and never sought praise. Gail was a perfectionist who toiled countless hours in the background making all of us appear literate.

Her memory for a dog's name and titles was legendary. She had no equal.

It was no secret her favorite *GRNews* author was Christopher Glaeser. He was the only person in eleven years to receive an "excellent" from Gail for one of his Newbie columns.

Reading their e-mail exchanges as the column wound its way through production was sometimes more humorous than the column itself.

Here they were discussing the challenges of editing humor, and with this particular punch line, the words must rhyme:

Gail wrote, "Don't worry about the zing. It's in there, and I try not to change it. The biggest change I made so far was in the Nov-Dec issue, in which I transformed linguini into rigatoni (and let me tell you, re-grooving those little suckers is tough). Why? Because the plural ends in 'e,' that's why, and it would have ruined your 'inis.' I just know Guido would have noticed."

Honesty *with* character — that was Gail. We are all going to miss her quiet guidance, gentle prodding and selfless devotion to make our written words perfect. She was the wind beneath our wings.

SD-F