

## Chance phone call leads Aurora woman to ?emotional lottery?



**By Brock Weir**

As a young girl, Gail Sellers would always pester her parents to give her an older brother.

Once she was old enough, however, to figure out the intricacies of that particular situation, she changed tactic and decided she'd be fine with a younger brother as well.

It might have been a childish desire, but it is a memory which stuck with her throughout her adulthood, but now she knows her original desire was not far off the mark.

She vividly remembers getting a call from a cousin in Ottawa seven years ago who had made contact with a young woman. Through the course of their conversations, they came to a startling conclusion ? Ms. Sellers indeed had an elder brother, and her cousin had a phone number.

?I left a message, got a big glass of wine and sat down shaking,? says Ms. Sellers, who recounts her story in the latest installment of *Chicken Soup for the Canadian Soul*.

An Aurora author, and active member in the Writers Community of York Region, she shares her story of ?winning the emotional lottery? when she least suspected it. Having settled in Aurora with her husband and two stepchildren, Ms. Sellers sadly had a void in her life after her 13-year-old son died in an accident.

?Since my son died, my life hasn't been easy and I have lived a life of depression,? she says. ?I have been very blessed to have a wonderful husband, and two stepsons, but I haven't had that sense of family.?

After leaving her initial message, she thought about the voice she had heard. The timbre was reminiscent of a radio announcer, she says, and once they actually made live contact the words came fast and easy, and pieces of a dusty puzzle began to fall into place.

?I couldn't sleep that night,? she says of their first real conversation.

Her brother had some pieces of the puzzle and combined with hers, they created a whole. They pieced together a story dating back to 1938 which was a very different society. Their father was in an unhappy marriage and couldn't leave, but fell in love with a young woman who ultimately became their mother. After Fred was born out of wedlock, their mother faced a difficult challenge of raising her baby despite an overbearing and domineering father of her own, and she ultimately ?caved into the pressure? of putting him up for adoption at six months old despite the emotional and financial support of the baby's father.

With the baby out of the picture, they went their separate ways, but fate brought them back together over a decade later with both deciding to rekindle their relationship. Gail was born about three years later, joining a half-sister over a decade her elder. As such, she had the feeling of being raised almost as an only child, leaving that longing in her.

'I have often thought about what I would ask my parents,' says Ms. Sellers, whose father died when she was 13. 'I would probably have asked my mother, 'Why didn't you say something to me? We could have found him together.' That would have been my burning question.

'It would have been such a wonderful thing to reintroduce her to her son. What Fred said to me is he always hoped he would have had a picture of his mother or his dad, something to cling onto, but when we met, I bombarded him with information and pictures, stories that were more than he could ever imagine. It helped him to become more complete. He understood why mum gave him up and he never blamed her for it.'

Now working in administration at the Ontario Command of the Royal Canadian Legion on Industrial Parkway North, Ms. Sellers says it still seems just a little bit surreal to have gained this 'instant family' of Fred's wife Janet, his two grown daughters, and his grandchildren. They now spend Christmases and Holidays together and when the latest installment of Chicken Soup for the Soul was launched in Toronto last month, her youngest new niece was there to take in their shared story.

'The miracle continues,' she says. 'I hope people take away a sense of family, how important it is and if they are searching for somebody, I hope it gives them the inspiration to go. I hope it gives them some kind of desire to go out and search for their family because, to me, it was like winning the emotional lottery!'