

A miracle recovery from major surgery

By BRUCE STAPLEY
STOUFFVILLE — On May 9, 1985, Pat Robinson lay on her couch watching television when she puts it, "my head exploded."
Pat's daughter, Cheryl, responded to her mother's cries, roused her father Ron and calling an ambulance. Mrs. Robinson was rushed to Scarborough Centenary Hospital.
After waiting considerable time in emergency, Pat's condition was diagnosed as food poisoning. Ron was advised to go home.
However, Pat wasn't convinced. She was sure it was something more serious.
Later, another physician was called in. A spinal tap was performed. Pat was transferred to St. Michael's Hospital for surgery.
There, it was discovered she'd suffered a ruptured cerebral aneurysm, a serious brain malfunction.

"Most people with this problem never make it to the operating table," Pat says. "I was one of the lucky ones. It was properly diagnosed."
It wasn't until three weeks later that the Ninth Line North, Stouffville resident regained full consciousness.
"All I wanted was to return home," she recalls. "I didn't really care what was wrong with me."
Six weeks later, she met with Dr. Allen Hudson, head neurosurgeon at St. Mike's.
"I liked him until he sat down," she remembers, "when a doctor sits down, you know you're in trouble."
The news the physician would bring her was that a second operation was necessary. There was another aneurysm, buried in her brain that, like the first one, was a veritable time bomb waiting to explode.
It took two weeks for the bomb to be defused.

The surgery, said to be 'a piece of cake', was indeed serious, even more serious than the first. The aneurysm was deep. A team of surgeons took eight hours to remove it.
She was released seven days later.
Pat's period of recovery spanned an entire year. Most of the time she spent watching television with an occasional walk in the backyard. She could do nothing more.
"It's only been in the last six months that I've felt like a human being," she says.
A good-natured, upbeat person, Pat claims she now takes time to smell the roses, considering herself lucky to be alive.
"When I was released from hospital, I began noticing things I'd never seen before and doing things I would have never done before," she explains.

Appearances are deceiving. Pat looks great, hiding the ordeal she's been through. She admits, however, it'll take time for her speech to return to normal and shake a stuttering tendency associated with the malady. She still suffers from hypertension and consumes what seems like an endless supply of pills.
Pat attributes her successful recovery, in part, to a "fighting personality."
"I refused to accept the downside. I was determined to beat it," she says.
The neighbors were wonderful, she notes, continually offering assistance and support.
Pat's now back at her former position on the staff of The Old Country Inn, Unionville.
"I'm only working a few days a week," she states. "After watching television for the better part of two years, it's wonderful to see real people."
There are days, she admits, when she finds it impossible to do even routine household chores because of lingering fatigue.
"Mentally, I'm fine," she says. "You just think you can do certain things that you can't."
Pat smiles at the fact some well-meaning visitors eye her up and down, looking for physical defects and scars. "I'm really quite normal," she states.
"I'm happy," she concludes, "the time bomb in my head has been defused. I hope to live to be a very old lady."



Pat Robinson, Ninth Line North, Stouffville, flashes a smile for her new lease on life following major surgery for a double aneurysm. "I was determined to beat it!" says Mrs. Robinson. And she did. —Jim Thomas

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