

DEBRA 'CRICKET' GATLIN-FINNEGAN
FEBRUARY 20, 1955 - SEPTEMBER 17, 2006

SALEM - Debra Sue Gatlin-Finnegan, age 51, died unexpectedly and peacefully in her sleep on Sunday, September 17, 2006. Deb, also known as 'Cricket,' was born in Salem, Oregon on February 20, 1955, the sixth child of Norman Lee Gatlin and Evelyn Sikorra Gatlin. She lived in Salem most of her life, attended Englewood Elementary, Parrish Jr. High & Whiteaker Jr. High, and graduated from McNary High School in 1973.



Deb was a photographer and a gifted artist in watercolor, acrylic and collage. Most of her work exhibited her love and passion for nature and animals including insects. One of her ongoing projects was researching and drawing the different species and life stages of her favorite insect, the butterfly. This special love for butterflies kept her avidly involved in the lepidopterist club for many of her adult years. Consequently, her childlike delight and fascination with the natural world also found her continually sharing her observations and insights with anyone who was interested.

Creative and a good worker. Deb had a variety of occupations over the years-including harvest cook in Washington, garden store clerk in Michigan, legal secretary and dental receptionist in Salem.

Passionate, generous, and always ready to try something new, Debra contributed different ideas that expanded the horizons of both her family and friends. She enjoyed interacting with people of all ages. Because of her special ability to connect with the younger generation she will be greatly missed by her many nieces and nephews.

Debra is survived by her devoted husband, Paul Finnegan, whom she married in 1991; one daughter, Jayme Benson Bandy (David); father, Lee Gatlin (Nenita) and mother, Evelyn Gatlin of Salem; one brother, Larry Gatlin (Carol) of Groton, Conn.; four sisters, Linda Watson (Don) and Diane O'Brien (Mike) of Salem, Leanne Ruby (George) of Pendleton, and Leslyn Grape (Mark) of Sisters; and twelve nieces and nephews.

There will be a "Celebration of Life" gathering at a later date. [Written for the 9/24/06 Statesman Journal]



On October 15, 2006, a Celebration of Deb's Life was held at the 4H Center where she and Paul were married on June 15, 1991, and where Jayme & Dave had their wedding reception this past June. It was a place Deb loved. Corby, Larry & Carol flew out from Boston so all Deb's siblings were there, and eight of the nieces and nephews, including Tyler from CA. Deb always said she wanted a party, not a funeral, so we had a potluck and just a few remarks with a song. Paul had a good variety of her art on display as well as lots of photos of Cricket, and had gotten beautiful flowers from the Saturday Market. Deb would have liked the party he planned for her.

Some of us stayed at the 4H cabins on Sat. night after we set up the dining room for the Celebration. We talked about Deb, Don showed a slide show of her he had created, we had a campfire and Amie played the guitar. It was an emotional but healing time.