

## **“My Brown Suede Boots”**

**– by Lorelei Pepe**

I love buying shoes and clothes and have lots of fun doing both! About twenty-five years ago, when I was working in the fashion field, I always loved buying high heeled shoes but one day discovered a pair of high-top suede brown boots with brown laces and were rubber soled on the bottom. Very practical I thought and I could use them in case I ever went camping or hiking – (which had not occurred yet in my life)...anyway they were “on sale” and that justified my purchase in my mind. Years later, I thought, “really?” What was I thinking? As I never went camping or hiking, although a few boyfriends along the way tried their best to get me out in the great outdoors!

So, they stayed in the box and every few years, I would take them out, brush them off and try them on to make sure they still fit. I put them back in the box and completely forgot about them for a decade or so.

When I moved from Florida to New Jersey last year, they were “rediscovered” again, but much to my dismay when I tried them on they no longer fit! Too tight! I hated to give them away and when I had the VETS pickup truck show up at my place for other discards, I couldn’t part with them. The little voice in my head said “wait” you will find a home for them, so I did.

Then, I got involved with the Food Pantry at the new church I joined recently and truly loved. I felt so humbled and happy to help all who came to pick up their groceries. I was amazed we could help so many too. I got to know a few people by name and their stories. There was one, sweet middle-aged woman who came in with a cane named Demi. She was sweet despite the fact she had just lost her mom and showed me her photo. She would come in wearing a funky hat and brought her own reusable bag to take the groceries.

It was mid-winter and freezing outside when Demi walked in one day. I noticed she was only wearing tennis shoes and the laces were loosely tied. After questioning her she told me she could not wear anything else as her feet were swollen from medication. She mentioned she needed new boots anyway. I asked her what size she wore and she said a 9 ½ or 10 and said she had a big foot.

I smiled and said “don’t feel bad, I wear a 10 too!” Then we both laughed and she went on her way. I kept thinking about her when I went home that day and got excited as I realized maybe she would like the boots. Quickly, I put them in my car trunk until the next scheduled food pantry pick-up day. I couldn’t wait for Demi to show up that day and took her to my car, unwrapped the boots and her eyes lit up! “Yes” she said, she would like them! I was so pleased they finally had a home with someone!

It was only a small gesture on my part, however I felt so good inside and was joyful when I left the church office that day. I left with a smile on my face! As I was walking to my car, I was reminded of how in some small way I was serving and honoring Jesus. **“Serve the Lord with gladness” it says in Psalm 100:2**, and I believe it was the Holy Spirit that guided me in that way and directed me to give the boots to Demi.

I hope and pray the Lord continues to work in me as I am blessed when I follow His lead, for I reap many rewards! Thanks be to God!