

Ninepatch

Stitch - by - Stitch

- W - e - C - r - e - a - t - e - O - u - r - L - i - v - e - s

Editor's note: This month's story is another related to my Ireland Pilgrimage in September of 2002.

March 2003

Dear Friends,

I walked up my slightly sloping cement driveway and paused on the red quarry tile of the porch. I opened my left hand and gazed on the treasures I'd collected on my two-mile walk. In my palm lay treasures I'd found, stacked in the order I discovered them: a small and a large rusty washer, a quarter-sized "slug," a dime so battered the date was impossible to read, and three pennies. Two of the pennies were also so beaten the dates were unreadable. The third was dated, 1993. All together I found thirteen cents!

I believe in *signs*. Finding a coin usually is a signal that I am — at that moment— at one with The Universe. After I pick up a coin I ponder its date. Often a memory from that year will delight me. Other times I note a past parallel to my present life. I know this about my discoveries: I don't find anything when I am upset or distracted. Thus, a *find* is always a **small** miracle.

Last August I walked at least two miles a day to build stamina for my Ireland Pilgrimage. While striding along, I picked up more than coins. Because some rusty washers looked like pennies, I noticed and collected them, too. I had a separate reflective practice for *found* washers. Each time I gathered one, I brought to mind of a circle of friends or relatives. Then I sent blessings / light/ thoughts to that group as I walked on.

I took my thirteen- cent mini hike two days before I left for Ireland. As shadows lengthened that day, I strode down my driveway. First, I picked up the smaller washer and I sent positive energy to our *Ninepatch* prayer group. Soon, I stooped for the larger washer and blessed women in our other *Ninepatch* groups.

All the while, I put one foot in front of the other and before long I was half a mile down the pavement near a traffic circle. There, I leaned over when I saw a round, flat silver object. As I pulled it from a bed of sandy grit, I smiled, **A quarter!** But, when I straightened and rubbed away clinging dust, excitement faded. It was just an aluminum slug. I frowned but paused, looking for a *positive* to my disappointment. On reflection, the slug seemed to represent other false leads in my life.

Then a positive thought came to me. Like a clerk stacking donuts in a box for some office treat, I smiled as I added the slug to the cache in my palm. Even though life's blind alleys stopped my energies, each foray held a little risk that *prepared* me for yet *another* possibility. For example, in picking up slugs and washers, I developed a better *eye* for coins.

That talent showed itself the next day. As bright pastels of the tropic sunset darkened, I set foot on my covered porch with **forty-seven cents!** Never had I found so many coins.

On the forty-seven-cent walk, I picked several items in the first few blocks: a brownish slug, followed by a 1993 penny and a 1990 nickel. When I was again about half a mile into my walk, I noticed a metallic glimmer in a nest of roadside grit. As cars shished past me, I stooped and thought, *Another slug!* In a split second, the good things I'd thought about my slug find the day before flashed in my mind.

I followed that gleam and pulled out the half-buried metal disk. As I rubbed grit from it, wings of an *eagle* slowly appeared. I smiled and nodded. This "slug" was a *quarter!*

Following odd leads *has* enriched my life. Not every life project produced *something notable*. However, each small venture prepared me for another.

I have been blessed!

Frances Fritzie

Frances Fritzie, Editor adds, "*I don't find coins every time I walk. Often I go a week or ten days without finding anything—not even a slug!*"

- - - - A-R-O-U-N-D - - T-H-E - - F-R-A-M-E - -

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(Letters to the Editor)

Dear Frances,

It felt like a bolt of electricity ran through my body when I read your article and saw the phrase, "*The way is through the green!*" It reminded me that I had dreamed that exact phrase about four years ago. My daughter had "heard" the same words in a meditation about three years ago.

We had forgotten until I read your article because neither of us had been able to make sense of the words and what we were supposed to do with the message. My daughter thought we were supposed to go to Ireland at some point -- and you did and heard the message there! I don't know what it means, either, but I will stay alert to hints. After all, this is the third time, I've "heard" it, so I have high hopes that more information will be forthcoming. Perhaps your other readers will have clues!

Love and prayers,

Joy

Joy (Oct. '02) adds, "*I can-not remember the context of the phrase in my dream -- I just woke up with "The way is through the green." repeating in my ears.*"

Dear Frances,

I was absolutely thrilled with your letter in February '03. (I have been waiting to hear about your Ireland Pilgrimage for so long.) When I read of your 'message' about 'green,' I got chills!

I wonder, would you mind if I were to post a copy of this to my own website? (<http://www.witchypoo.com>) I think my friends would like to hear about your pilgrimage too.

Ok now, it's been a long day and I worked half of it out in the cold so I'm off to get warm.

Love,
Lynn

TROR /Lynn (Feb. 03) also has a Miracle story in FABRICS.

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Hi Frances,

The Feb. '03 *Ninepatch* shines. I'll be interested to know what you glean from, *The way is through the green*.

I particularly liked TROR's book review on Self-Unfoldment by Swami Chinmayananda. "A Course in Miracles" (ACIM) has a similar message.

When used in ACIM, "Miracles" means using love to perceive a situation, acceptance instead of judgment, shifting from unforgiveness to forgiveness, from force to gentleness, and asking God's Will be done then getting out of the way.

ACIM is a spiritual/ psychological dynamic having peace as its only goal, but it also teaches how the ego works. ACIM is comprised of a text, a workbook for each day of the year, a manual and clarification of terms.

Unlike what TROR says of Self Unfoldment in her review, ACIM is rather difficult to understand, being radical and a giant departure from conventional religions and nondenominational movements.

ACIM says it is a *required* course. Only the time we take it is our option. It says, "Nothing real can be threatened; nothing unreal exists; therein lies the peace of God." Further, it teaches belief in separation is first cause of world problems. If we all held firmly in mind, "I am as God created me," that would save the world. Most of us try to "fit" any new ideas into a mold which we already have. This is why it is so difficult to move into the "shift" in perception. This is truly a case of thinking outside the box.

I've been told ACIM is the West's answer to the Eastern Vedas. As I understand it, the Vedas or Vedanta that TROR mentioned are the core spiritual law of the Upanishads, the Hindu "Bible."

I'm still interested in reading more of your Ireland Chronicles.

Love,
Gail

Gail (Jan. '03) comments on her everyday life, "Your Florida weather is the envy of the country right now -- at least for those of us in the North. We are enduring the wind and ice, and driving over highways blown with snow and windshield wipers flagging under use."

Frances,

I hope you and your family are in good health. My husband is still “wobbly.” We’ve had to cut activities that require much walking. He uses a walker, but getting around is still difficult.

This situation puts limits on me. I do not like to stay home that much. I have had to give up several activities. On the other hand, I stay active with the library’s book group and we have also started back to early church. All-in-all I am doing OK.

I really appreciate the newsletter.

Love,

MM

MM (Jan. '03) adds, “ I just found out I HAVE A BLESSED HOUSE!”

*Following a set of coincidences, MM discovered the doctor they bought from has a nephew who is a Roman Catholic Priest. The story she heard says that when the doctor first moved into the house, his nephew came to visit and put a religious **blessing** on the house.*

Hello Frances,

In your e-mail, you said you were moving into your outgoing Big Personality. Talk of cycles leads me to think you might be coming out of something but it also sounds like you are working hard to help yourself. Bravo!

I've had a flat winter, so to speak. I find one of my "indicators" is that when I let my grooming slide, everything else slides. I ran into someone I hadn't seen in about six years the other day. She only knew me in a business capacity when I was coifed, well-dressed and much, much slimmer. She had absolutely no idea who I was until I reintroduced myself. (Not a good sign.)

I made up my mind today to spend more time on grooming even though I often think it is a silly waste of time. Perhaps it will help me feel better.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Love,

Elaine

Elaine (Feb. '03) says, “In late February Elaine summoned the energy to travel to Florida without her husband to do some pre-retirement home/location scouting. She loved nearly every minute of her solo trip.”

*

Hello Frances,

We just got home from church. I always feel better when I make it to church. It is a very cold winter day, but there are only patches of snow here and there.

We had nice holidays. First we ate a big dinner with our girls and grandchildren. Then, we exchanged gifts. New Years Eve and Day my husband and I had to our selves. We had a nice romantic dinner in candlelight . January first was a lazy day. We just relaxed.

All the best to you this year. Take care of yourself. God *bless* you.
Love and prayers,
Linda Sue

Linda Sue (Feb. '03) says, "It may be a new year, but life goes on the same as before. My life is filled by my job, my children and my grandchildren."

----- **F-A-B-R-I-C-S** -----

(Our Experiences)

TIME TO LISTEN

I have been reading The Emperor's Handbook by C. Scot Hicks and David V. Hicks. This is a fresh translation of The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius. This second century A.D. Roman emperor's writings have been called the very first self- help book, and his ideas are as relevant today as they were in 160 A.D. as this quote illustrates:

Everyone dreams of the perfect vacation ... in the country, by the sea, or in the mountains. You too long to get away and find that idyllic spot, yet how foolish ... when at any time you are capable of finding that perfect vacation in yourself.

Nowhere is there a more idyllic spot, a vacation home more private and peaceful, that in one's own mind, especially when it is furnished in such a way that the merest inward glance induces ease (and by ease I mean the effects of an orderly and well-appointed mind, neither lavish nor crude).

Take this vacation as often as you like, and so charge your spirit. But do not prolong these meditative moments beyond what is necessary to send you back to your work free of anxiety and full of vigor and good cheer.

This need for an "inner vacation" has been recognized and practiced by many of the greatest thinkers and writers in history: Thoreau at Walden Pond, Jesus in the wilderness, Moses on the mountain top, and Hemingway in his studio, long before sunrise.

Where in America today do we find the time and place for this inner, serene vacation? We waken to the incessant ringing of the alarm clock, flip on the TV for snippets of news murders, plane crashes, abuse and fraud injected between scores of shouting advertisements. We proceed to work amidst honking of horns, racing of engines and screeching of tires in automobiles equipped with am/fm/CD /DVD noise-makers amplified through an assortment of woofers and tweeters.

On the week-end 100,000 screaming fans jam the Super Bowl, Rose Bowl, or rock con-cert. Even in houses of worship there is barely a moment of silence between the programmed noise of anthem, homily and electronically amplified calendar of

ecclesiastical events. Even shopping for groceries is accompanied by overhead speakers blaring the specials of the day and a shouted cell phone conversation by other shoppers.

It takes specific intention and unflagging effort to take even a ten minute inner vacation.

Here are some that have worked for me:

- Arise before the alarm and the rest of the household;
- In traffic gridlock turn off the radio and close your eyes,
- On the way home, pull into a park, or even a parking lot, and go within for ten minutes.

My daily routine takes me past a cemetery where I can pull in, drive to the back, shut off the engine and enjoy the perfect silence observed by the residents.

The words of Psalm 46:10 instruct us, "***Be still and know...***"

Don (Jan, '03) adds, "I have had some memorable vacations three blocks from home.

ANOTHER *INCREDIBLE* MIRACLE

When I heard *Ninepatch* was asking for miracles, I thought, "I've never had a miracle." Then I realized that my son was my miracle.

My first pregnancy was 'normal' through the first few weeks--normal but for the dream of my son I had. I dreamed he was a young man, about 5'10", strongly built, with blonde-ish hair and blue eyes.

I woke the next morning and said to my husband, "I've seen my son!"

Of course, my hubby thought I was just being silly. I hadn't even had an ultrasound to tell me what sex it was. But, I didn't need the test-- I knew-- I'd already met him.

Sadly, as the pregnancy went on, my health deteriorated. Weeks before I'd planned for it, I was forced to quit work when my doctor said, "I don't want to lose you or your baby." It was that serious--and it got worse.

When it came time to deliver I had to make a decision. After three days of labour, two hospitals and countless doctors and nurses, the professionals presented their opinions. I was too weak, they said, and maybe wouldn't make it. The baby had to come out. They prepped me for a C-section.

But I said, "No." I knew I wasn't going to lose my baby and I would be there to know him when he was a young man. After all, I'd already agreed to that with him in my dream.

I'd already been prepped for the operation with an epidural and was full of enough drugs to drop an elephant. Despite all of this, I crawled onto a gurney and was taken to a delivery room. There, hours later, *without an incision*, I gave birth to a healthy baby boy. Now, he's a young man, and he looks exactly as he did in my dream!

I suppose most people would think that my miracle was this difficult but successful birth, and I suppose I would agree. But what no one knows is my son gave me a miracle before he was even born.

I'd been so depressed that I was contemplating suicide. Then, my son came to me in my dream. After that, I couldn't kill myself. I had to know who he was going to be. I wanted to be here to know and love him.

TROR adds, "Darn it! It's sixteen years later, Frances, and I still get teary when I think of this. "

*

A LOVER OF BOOKS

I started loving books early in life. First, at home it was, The Three Little Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood and The Three Bears that caught my attention. Then, when I learned to read, I enjoyed reading my textbooks. I went to a rural one-room school and, since we had no library, no other books were available. Reading textbooks was not unusual at my house; my dad also read the textbooks I brought home. I remember that geography was my favorite text. I could go to far away places but never leave the farmhouse.

Later, I was caught up in reading autobiographies— I found people's lives fascinating. In my teen years, I discovered love stories. Like so many girls, I went through a dreamy love stage. A few romances, however, led to other reading, though. For example, after I finished, Gone with the Wind, I read more about the Civil War. After I closed A Tale of two Cities, I turned many pages of French History. As you might guess, English Literature was my favorite high school class.

One thing led to another. The more I read, the more I realized how much there was to know. I began to open books for knowledge. In a way, I became addicted to books.

I went on to college. When family money ran out before I finished, I worked most of a year to make enough to go back. First, I commuted. During northern winters I drove out to class in all kinds of snowstorms. Looking back, it was crazy. I moved back on campus as soon as I could afford it.

I continued to read books during my married life. During those years I read mostly novels to relax. My favorites in those days were spy novels and mysteries in general—they were the best entertainment around.

Once the children were grown, in his early fifties, my husband had a heart attack. That turned my reading in a new direction. My husband read Dr. Dean Ornish's book, Recovering from Heart Disease. Of course, I read it, too. Dr. Ornish talked about using meditation and the yoga experience to release stress. He also discussed getting rid of negative feelings-- letting them go in order to heal yourself.

These ideas fascinated me. I had to know more. I read about and practiced yoga. I started to cook and eat differently. I read, bought and used vegetarian cookbooks.

I also began to see my life more spiritually. This perspective led me to branch out from Dr. Ornish's book. I also read authors Sylvia Brown, Joan Broysenko and Ian Kabot-Zinn.

Being a lover of books propelled me to be all I can be. It has led me to expand my physical world and my spiritual life. There are always more books to read—my journey continues.

Lynan (Jan. '03) tells us more about her reading, "I am presently reading the Left Behind series. It is a story of those left behind at the Rapture. My younger son raves about these books. I was dumbfounded when he told me he read all ten books. After all, I am talking about the son who never liked to read and now he tells me that he took books to work to read during his lunch break. Being a book lover, that was all the persuasion I needed.

*

A BIRD FROM PARADISE

When I was a child I remember looking in the mirror, and seeing both my reflection and that of my mother. Oh, how beautiful she was! My mother was beautiful; though not in the photogenic sense. She was lovely in the manner she carried herself, her sense of humor and the way that she radiated her love to my dad and her children.

I imagine my mom could have been a good suffragette campaigner but she had no need to be liberated. She was her own true person. She may not have been the Amelia Earheart type but she could drive a car and go places on her own.

In my early years, we lived on a farm. It was the 1930s and life there took its toll on my mom. It was not so much the hard work, rather hard times that wither the spirit. We lost cattle to disease. Then low prices for the dairy products and little ventures that went bad called for drastic measures. Dad sold the remaining livestock to pay overdue bills, closed down the farm and we moved to live with grandparents in the small town where the four of us children had been born. There, dad had found a job working in the granite quarries.

I liked living in Grandpa's house and I soon had many friends to play with. I also liked my new school, even though I had to go to summer school, to catch up with the others in my class. I spent a wonderful first summer with my new friends. That fall, just before school started we moved again but I didn't have to change schools. Spring Street was a pleasant street to live on but the spring season that year brought me a great loss.

First, though, I was blessed with a beautiful sister in February. Later, spring arrived when a robin came tapping at our kitchen window. But, that robin was no harbinger of good news. That day my mamma went in a coma and my aunt came to get my baby sister. Mom was taken to the hospital where we children were born. She remained in a coma until her death a week later.

Our family history went on to include a remarriage for my dad, a good stepmother for my two brothers and me. It also brought adoptive parents—my aunt and uncle-- for our little sister.

Life and fifty odd years went by. Then, I received an invitation to celebrate the fifty years of marriage of my aunt and uncle. My wife and I flew down for the festivities, arriving a day early just to visit. We were all talking when my aunt addressed me with a serious look.

"Lee," she said "I have something that I want to share with you." She took out a little notebook that she had in her apron pocket. "I have here a journal that your mother, Marie, wrote a long time ago. She went on, "I was looking for something in a bureau,

your mom and dad gave us as a wedding present, when this pad fell out from behind one of the drawers. I know that your mother wrote it because of its content. It was written when we lived on a farm in Quebec. I can't place the time when she wrote those entries but some are a little comical since I remember she had a crush on our hired man, who was a little too old for her. I don't remember seeing her write in that notebook but I know that my sister wrote it."

Having said that, my aunt handed me the collection of verses that my mother had written. When I opened the pamphlet, the first item I read was a poem in French, which translated in English would read;

**Little bird on the wing
Bring
A message
To the one I love.**

Suddenly, through my tears, I saw the robin of that long-ago spring, tapping at the window.

Lee (Oct. '02) says, "Miracles are the blessings and consolations in life that mere coincidences can provide."

-----**I-N-S-T-R-U-C-T-I-O-N-S**-----
(Reading and Listening)

BOOK OF DREAMS

This volume is by well-known psychic, Sylvia Browne, who often appears on "Montel" and other TV talk shows.

In this book she relates her research and her own experience with dreams. She believes that the subconscious mind takes charge while we sleep, and through dreams gives us access to a vast array of knowledge. This includes passive memories as well as recollections of past lives.

She details dreams in these five categories:

- 1. Prophetic dreams** always appear in color and have a logical sequence. These dreams are the result of astral trips to the Other Side where she believes the future is already written.
- 2. Release dreams** are our way of "emotionally exhaling," ridding ourselves of fear, stress, and anger. Nightmares are release dreams and serve as safety valves.
- 3. Wish dreams** are a signal to look beneath our obvious wishes for our real motives.
- 4. Information and problem-solving dreams** unfold in a logical order. The dreamer sometimes awakes with an answer or a new perspective. This occurs because the

dreamers' spirits can receive either telepathically or by astral travel. Our spirits know how to find answers that our conscious minds don't know.

5. Astral visits are a connection to our loved ones, both here and on the Other Side. When we are sleeping and our conscious minds are out of the way, we can travel to anyone we want to see, or they can come to us, and have wonderful reunions. One clue that we are having such a dream is if we see ourselves flying without a plane. We may wake up feeling as if we have just spent time with a loved one.

Browne has written half a dozen books previously, and I find all of her work fascinating. She writes in an easy conversational style that draws the reader in.

June (Feb. '03) says: "I love to watch Sylvia on TV; it's like watching a friend."

-----**T-H-R-E-A-D**-----
(Our Spirituality)

DINO

They say there are no dinosaurs
anymore
But this early morn I saw three or four
Roaring along Route forty-four.

Giants of the highways,
Awesome lizards of our days,
Juggernauts of the long roadways,
Threading along through many a maze.

They grow longer every year,
Huge and bulky they appear.
They shake me up with sudden fear
As if a dinosaur came near.

And yet I buy the goods they bring
With never a thought from whence they spring,
Enjoying the lovely tasty, beautiful things.
Truly, our dinosaurs are amazing!

Phyllis (Feb. 2003) was a contributing Ninepatch reader from its inception. She passed away, January 2002. This poem is from Editor Frances' personal collection.

---**M-A-N-A-G-I-N-G—T-H-E—H-O-U-S-E**---
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(Ninepatch Business)

OUR NEXT THEME

June 2003 will be our second issue of 2003 to have a theme. We invite you to start considering a letter, story or poem to share with others on **Friendship**.

Webster's New World Dictionary defines **friend** in our context as, "... *I a person whom one knows well and is fond of 2 an ally, supporter or sympathizer...*"

Did someone come to mind when you read this description? Perhaps a person was in your mind but he/she did not *fit* this explanation thus you want write a better one! Kindly consider sharing your thoughts with us.

Here are a few of my thoughts: FRIENDSHIP is a "ship" larger than an aircraft carrier, deeper than a submarine and more swiftly carried than a skiff in a stiff breeze. It can be as magical as Captain Hook's ship, sprinkled with Twink's *pixie dust*, flying though the skies.

Editor, Frances

Ninepatch, Inc.

P.O. Box 1263

Avon Park, FL. 33872

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E-mail: Ninepatch9@AOL.com

Website: <http://www.ninepatch9.org>

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