

Ninepatch

Stitch - by - Stitch

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

Editor's note: Here is recent page from my spiritual notebook.

October 2004

Dear Friends,

The noon sun blazed and no breeze stirred. Humidity hung blue in the air and clung to my skin. No air-conditioned car cooled me today. Instead, moist air whooshed in the rolled down windows as I drove JK's pickup truck. My adventure began hours earlier when I drove into town to meet with my new spiritual advisor.

About once a month I see Sister. Our sessions allow me to unload. Sometimes we discuss accumulated questions about my relationship with God. I also tell her images or dreams I'm pondering. Last, I often admit feelings I don't like. When I walk back to my car after an hour, I notice a kind of peace always surrounds me.

Since I was going to be in town, it was logical for me pick up the siding for our garage under construction at JK's home. He would continue prep work while I was away.

Later, at the home improvement store, two men loaded sheets of wood siding for me. One sensed my inexperience with the truck and advised me to drive slowly. When I asked, "What do you mean?" He explained, "Braking will take longer..."

So it happened that I led a short parade as I followed a narrow suburban two-lane out of town. Since there was no place to pull off, I helplessly watched in my rearview mirror as cars collected. After I turned onto a multilane where the bottleneck was relieved, I breathed easier.

Soon, I turned away from town onto a state road that wound through the countryside. There, car after car passed me as I rolled slowly down one side of the yellow stripe. With traffic pressure gone, for a few minutes I enjoyed living slower. Cicadas' song chirred from roadside trees while the window-breeze sang an accompaniment that carried my thoughts back several decades.

Night insects sang that August night in Indiana. I loved those sultry nights of late summer and the soft feel of the air. I folded the top down on my white Chevy convertible. As I drove toward home, my headlights cut the darkness of that night. My dad's frequent driving advice also echoed in my ears, "Don't over-drive your lights ... it takes one car-length per ten miles an hour to stop..." His advice b-o-r-e-d me.

Thinking back, I understand Daddy probably saw me as I was then -- a high school hotshot, a girl in a hurry, who pushed life and often drove fast, too.

My reverie dissolved. Again I heard Florida insects sing in the trees and warm air wafted in as the laden truck rolled slowly along. Then, as I rounded a curve, another memory led me even farther back in time.

Grandpa reached for his jacket and called over his shoulder, "I'm goin' to th' store to get the mail."

I followed Grandpa, "Can I come? Pleeeeeease?"

Grandpa's truck was nothing like Grandma's car -- or ours. It was dirty, carried junk, and smelled of his pipe. While I used both of my childish thumbs to push in the door's release button, I heard Grandpa's door creak open. My button released and I pulled hard on the outside chrome handle. When the door swung heavily open, I saw Grandpa step up, pull an extra woven "seat" under himself and slide beneath the wheel. I also climbed the running board, but stopped there, looking at the seat. It was covered with newspapers, seed packets, matches, and tools. Atop it all lay a green and white sunburst-like striped tobacco pouch labeled in red, Half and Half.

Grandpa leaned over, took the pouch with one hand and swiped the rest toward the middle. I scooted onto the seat. Then I leaned out and pulled on the inside handle with both hands until the door slammed.

Done, I looked at Grandpa and he nodded. Then, he stepped on a floor pedal, turned the key and the engine roared. He pulled on a long rod with a knob and turned the wheel. We swung onto the road.

Like a queen on her throne, I sat high on the seat, grinning at my adventure.

Today, I smile again over my adventure with JK's truck and several gifts of that day. First, I shared thoughts about my life and relationships. I also had a chance to savor a slower pace and last, I recalled pleasant scenes from the past.

I am blessed.

Frances Fritzie

- - - A-R-O-U-N-D - - T-H-E - -
- - - F-R-A-M-E - - -
(Letters to the Editor)

Hola!!

Well, the summer vacation is over and now, as planned, I'm down in sunny (Well, not today... today it's cloudy.) Playa Jaco, Costa Rica and all settled in to my apartment ... well, almost settled in. I haven't even been here for two weeks, so it's still strange.

I don't speak very much Spanish, but I managed to pick up my Banco National bank card this morning and to ask after a PO Box at el Correo. They didn't have any available and told me to come back in ten days.

All in all, it's been quite hectic, with packing, flying, finding somewhere to live, and taking care of incidentals like grocery shopping. I don't have a job. I thought I would teach English, but that fell through. I'm going to try to write a bit more, see about getting some articles out there and adding some credits to my resume.

I'm glad you made it through the hurricane season healthy and whole! It seems like you were quite lucky!

I'll write again soon!

Sincerely,

Christa

Christa Weber (July '04) tells her thoughts on Ninepatch, "I usually read through the whole of each Ninepatch, though I typically just read a little at one time, so it takes a bit. I'd have to say that my favorite parts are the letters from people who are updating the readers on their lives, commenting on your life or on the lives of other letter-writers. But I guess that's really what I like about the whole thing."

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Dear Frances,

I want to say how much I enjoyed TROR'S piece about her dog, Rudy. It was delightful. Those of us who have had smart dogs can identify. Years ago, my family had a German Shepherd puppy. He was named "Hoss" for a character in the popular "Bonanza"/"Ponderosa" TV series, because he was chubby and square-built. We had a contractor named Vernon preparing to build an addition to our house. With a pup's curiosity, Hoss hung around the work area and watched all the activity. As Vernon staked out the foundation with string, it broke time after time. Vernon decided that maybe the string was old, so he got a new roll from his truck. Still it broke.

I became suspicious, so after Vernon left for the day, I watched Hoss from inside the house. He approached the string, looked all around and then chewed it in two! He was smart enough to know he was not supposed to do that!

Bless'ed be,

June

June Poucher (Sept. '04) adds: "Sadly, Hoss was hit by a car and killed not long after that. He was a charming little guy."

Hi Fritzie,

Fall is here. I have put out my mums (set buckets of flowers on the front porch) and changed my wreath on the front door to autumn colors.

We have done many projects since we moved in and still have a patio to do. Then we should be finished with projects for a while. Only things left is to paint my guest bedroom furniture and the trim on the house. I am enjoying this house.

We received the Sept.'04 *Ninepatch*. Thank you. **James** is so profound. We always look for his little block.

My cat, Maggie, is here with me while I check my e-mail. My husband is golfing so I am going to wrap this up and read while I can.

Take care my friend.

Patricia

Patricia (June '04) adds, "My husband is going to the lake visiting for a few days so I am going to paint my guest bedroom furniture..."

Hello Frances,

It was good to hear from you. I hope things are going well.

You mentioned that your younger son, David, was growing up—getting more separate from you. Not so with my daughter, Anita. She is still a pain at times and I wonder if she will ever grow up. She does not really want to. I think guys *want* to grow up—and, it is normal for sons to become more separate from their moms then, too.

Mothers! My mother and I were never close after I was married. She didn't want me to marry and she didn't like my husband, either. Sometimes, she would seem more open and I would tell her things about my life. Later though, she would stab me with those same things and undermine my self-confidence. Later, my husband said he thought she wanted me to remain dependent on her. But, her behavior only kept me away. It's not what she wanted.

Life is full of many puzzles. Do you think this mother-pattern is a problem with women in general or is it just those of us who come from homes like ours? I've read that my need to be perfect and having low self-esteem is common, and so is being a "pleaser." I sure know when I was growing up, I was always trying to make my mother happy!

I'm so glad the Lord led me to those Twelve Step meetings. They really helped me—especially the ones for women. We held each other up as we learned new ways.

I hope you and JK are getting to know each other more and becoming closer as you do.

Take care of yourself.

God bless you both.

Love and prayers,

LindaSue

LindaSue (Sept. '04) says, "My husband and I have several photo albums already but over the summer we added to our lighthouse pictures. On our various trips, we saw ones in Canada and many in Michigan—Ludington, Manistee, Frankfort, Grand Traverse Bay, and Charlevoix to name a few."

Life is gift and sacrifice.

James (Sept. '04) says, "To exploit a true natural ability, one must first be introduced to the sacrificial lamb of time, effort, and dedication."

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Fritzie –

Georgene's sticky note on my Ninepatch was on the money. She wrote,

One can never con-sent to creep when one feels the impulse to roar.

- Helen Keller.

Dear God, would I love to feel the impulse to roar. (If I could roar, it would be a **loud** roar.) I'm so suppressed: self-imposed, learned, or just plain afraid. I creep through the days and the nights and the future seems bleak. All this leads to a story.

I had quite an experience this week. I was severely depressed and tried to find a hotline to call. My first experience was to get cut off. I tried again the next morning and my call was routed through to Kentucky. To make a long story short, the "service" sent two sheriff cars to my house. I was told I could cooperate or go with them in handcuffs. Not really understanding what was happening, I got dressed and went with them.

They took me to a county mental health facility via the back door. I was asked to wait in a bare waiting room. After a half hour no one came to talk to me and I was feeling a little claustrophobic. I left the room and tried to open the outside door only to discover that I was locked in. My sense of claustrophobia grew along with my anxiety.

I tried to get some attention and got nowhere. When I wouldn't give up my handbag, at least four young men slammed me into a chair and took my bag. (My arms are all black and blue.) I learned that under the "Baker Act," they could keep me up to three days.

I called my lawyer, but he was away for ten days. Next, I called my doctor who was supposed to call back, but didn't. Finally, my husband showed up. We had to wait two hours until a psychiatrist could come to give me a perfunctory interview and release me.

For me, calling a hotline was a **roar** -- and just look where it got me. It has been my experience all my life that I need to make a scene or have some kind of extreme behavior in order to get attention or help. It was that way when I was a child, too. I've been creeping through life and still need to learn *how* to roar.

Elaine (July '04) assures us, "I am going to see my doctor tomorrow." She adds, "Fritzie, I know you have suffered considerably in your life but you have made something of yourself that I hope you are proud of. I am proud of you but not at all surprised at your successes."

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

THE DAVINCI CODE

I've just finished, The DaVinci Code by Dan Brown. It's a conspiracy theory, and murder mystery told through a theological lens. The "good guys" are academics who understand religion as being universally necessary to the human mind as a vehicle to cope with life. Yet, as academics, they are drawn to the mysteries being revealed as leaders in two religious organizations use the follower's faith to further their own agendas.

In this contest the academic "good guys" are caught in the cross-hairs of a battle between the Roman Catholic Church and the Knights Templar. The story promotes that the Church maintains its power by teaching Jesus was God, unmarried, and upon his death, gave The Church "the way" to show humans how to worship and ultimately join God (which they of course, abuse to their own gain).

In this book, The Knights Templar believe there is proof that Jesus fathered a child (and established a lineage to forward the truth so they practice a form of Christianity that still includes the Sacred Feminine. This is the recognition of the womb as the chalice of life and part of this concept includes sexual act rituals as a celebration of the creator and "the way" to meet God.)

In this story, our understanding of the "Search for the Holy Grail" is to be moved from the Knights Templar search for an object—the chalice Jesus used at the last supper, which would strengthen the current church teachings—to a person, a descendant of Jesus. If this turns out to be true, Christendom as the Church now teaches could no longer be "the way."

It is a good, easy read, as long as you remember it is fiction and don't get too tangled in the theology.

Georgene (Sept.'04) says, "As a Catholic, I sometimes weary of what feels like bashing of the Church in many book and movie plots. On the other hand, it's true there will always be folly's and abuses from any major power structure and it's important that we be vigilant to recognize them."

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FINDING MY VOICE

I picked up this autobiography by Diane Rehm. At first, I skipped the beginning and dived into the latter part of the book hoping to find out about her distinctive voice. Then I started at the beginning to find out how a woman with no college education liberated herself from the stereotypical image of woman as homemaker.

Diane begins her story in the traditional fashion of describing her parents and grandparents, her birth and early childhood and adolescence. She describes her first marriage at the age of eighteen followed by the death of her mother and, in short time, her father. (Had her parents lived, she may not have had the courage to divorce her first husband.)

Later, she marries John Rehm, has two children and takes pride in her homemaking skills. Diane enters the world of broadcasting as a volunteer. Then, she explores psychotherapy. She learns to liberate herself from the traditional role of homemaker and make her marriage stronger. Her book also contains an in-depth look at her radio career.

It is a fascinating read. Dianne Rehm is a strong character role model.

Carol (July '04) belongs to a book group and reads one to three books a month.

*Editor's note: In June '04, several Ninepatch readers who lived near Frances gathered in a Read Around, a forum where each reader shares recently read books. Several members were kind enough to write up comments on some of the books they discussed. This month, **Joan H.** and **June Poucher** share their book comments.*

GOD CODE

The title of this book is *not* a play on Dan Brown's best seller fiction, The DaVinci Code. That book is a rip-roaring thriller filled with mayhem and danger. It dubiously links ancient times with the present.

No, God Code is a real-life story of astonishing discoveries being made by scientists like the author, Gregg Braden. Scientists have noted linkages between modern scientific DNA and information given in the most ancient Hebrew and Arabic writings.

Braden, a respected scientist, suggests that each area supports the idea of a universal intelligence. He suggests a "marriage" of religion and science is occurring in the outposts of modern research.

If you like to ponder BIG questions like, *Where do we come from, really*, this book offers an exciting look at raw information about us and our beginnings. It requires a thorough reading to grasp the entire logic of Braden's findings. However, following is an overview.

First, ancient writings tell of four earth elements -- from which God made man -- which are corroborated by science. The ancient Hebrew alphabet assigned numerical values to each letter. These numbers were used to give hidden meanings to words.

The elements which make up our bodies, oxygen, carbon, hydrogen and nitrogen *also* have numerical values given them in the Periodic Table of Elements (PTE). These numbers correspond to their atomic mass or density. If you apply the numerical values of those four elements of the PTE then link them to the ancient Hebrew value/ letters, they spell *God Eternal Within*. (The odds of this happening by accident are very, very high.) Thus, every person on earth, in fact, every living organism has in every cell the genetic code for the words, *God within*.

Further, Braden draws from other sciences like archeology and anthropology which offer ideas about our past and our future. He points out some alarming statistics about the number of wars and other dangerous trends in this century which he calls, "The bloodiest

century in history.” He agrees with the late Carl Sagan that we are in a technological adolescence. Our technological advancement is doubling every decade.

Unfortunately, our spiritual insight and wisdom is lagging behind. He hopes that realizing that *we are one with our creator* (and therefore, *with one another*) will help us move past our cultural differences and historical hatreds so we can live in peace. The challenge is to get this information from the level of scientists to the minds and hearts of every man. This will not be easy in the face of resistance from long-entrenched traditional mistrust between races and religions.

The reading is not “heavy” in the sense that the book tires the reader. Rather, it is a serious story that deals with the rapidly changing world we live in. Braden’s writing style is optimistic and visionary.

For me, it is a new, positive revelation in a time of seeming pessimism and old ideas.

Joan H. (Feb. '04) adds, “Four of us went to a Gregg Braden workshop. We found him to be bright and charismatic as he chatted with us. In his presentation, he talked about his future work deciphering DNA, which comes in many layers, using the tools he's already developed. He and others believe their work will bring insight and ma-turity to our small but diverse planet.”

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MORE OF JUNE’S GOOD READS

1. Good Harbor is by Anita Diamant who is also the author of The Red Tent, an earlier book based on the women in the book of Genesis. This newer story is about the importance of female friendship. It takes the reader into the once-in-a-lifetime friendship of two women in Gloucester, MS. Both in their middle years, they meet by accident and realize they have a common love for the beach at Good Harbor. Unfolding events in their lives recall their sorrows, guilt and their resolutions in a realistic honest sharing.

This is a very human story, containing all the elements and foibles that readers will recognize and identify in themselves.

2. Raising the Hunley is by Brian Hicks and Schuyler Kropf. The authors have thoroughly researched the history and legends of the first attack submarine. It was the inspiration of Horace Lawson Hunley and was built during the Civil War with the hope that the little boat could break the Union’s blockade of Charleston Harbor. It was successful in sinking the USS Housatonic in February 1864 but vanished the same night. It was found 132 years later and was finally raised in 2000. Most of it was intact but the cause of its loss is still undetermined.

3. Enemy Women by Paulette Jiles is a historical novel based on journals and diaries of the Civil War. It is set in southeast Missouri, whose women citizens are assumed to be the enemies of Union forces. The principal character, Adair Colley, is a young girl whose father, a judge and teacher, is arrested by the Union militia and charged with treason. Adair and her two younger sisters escape but are later separated. Adair, in trying to rescue her father, is herself imprisoned for three years. While a captive, she meets and falls in love with a Union officer. Most of the book is taken up with her escape, and her efforts to survive in the wilderness while trying to make her way back home.

The only drawback to an otherwise interesting story is the publisher has hampered readers by choosing to eliminate the formality of using quotation marks within the dialogue.

June Poucher (See *AROUND THE FRAME*) adds, “Of these books, *Good Harbor* is my favorite. However, I like a change of pace in my reading so I cover a lot of different subjects.”

- - -B-E-S-T- - M-O-N-E-Y- - -
- - -I - -E-V-E-R - - S-P-E-N-T- - -
(Our Special Topic)

Editor’s note: This special topic will continue through Nov-Dec. ’04.

RENEWED VOWS

The *Best Money I Ever Spent* was used in July of this year. That month my husband and I renewed our wedding vows. On July 20, we stood in a church again and celebrated our thirtieth anniversary!

I had help from family and friends. One gal decorated the church for the occasion. My daughter originally stood up with me. Since she is deceased, this time my sister-in-law stood in her place. My husband was lucky. The same man who years ago stood up with him, took the place to his right again.

This time, though, there were just eight in total attendance. Still, we celebrated. Our reception was at a local restaurant overlooking a small lake. This time around, everyone wanted just *appetizers* – how things change!

After we ate, my husband and I left for our suite at a fancy motel. We stayed two days. Ah!

Merry Mary (Mar. ’04) adds, “Our brother-in-law advised us not to go back to our first honeymoon’s hotel. He warned us that motel had fallen on hard times and might now rent rooms by the hour instead of by the night. Ha!” Note: a photo of this event will be doon available on our website at www.ninepatch9.org

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MONEY-MONEY

I have my own ideas about our special topic, *BEST MONEY I EVER SPENT*. Looking back, I see most of the *important* things in my life cost little in terms of *legal tender*.

However, my pilgrimage to Ireland DID require quite a bit of my saved coin-of-the-realm. I seem to be writing and *writing* about images and experiences from that journey. So, at this point in my life, parting with the revenue to fly overseas for that adventure was the *best money I ever spent*.

Now I see that making that choice signaled the beginning of a new cycle in my life—one where I would be more adventurous. Normally, I am conservative and watch pennies. However, this was a case where I spent what I consider a lot of money on something for no “earthly” reason.

Instead, in choosing that Ireland journey, I followed some urge I have tried to explain but still escapes description. At that time I did not “think” about my decision. Instead, I asked myself, *When I am lying on my death bed and look back, will I wish I had done this or not.*

That journey brought me in contact with other seekers, and it required me to place my life into the planning of others. More importantly, it gifted me with unusual sights and mystical experiences I savor to this day.

If that is not worth cashing in some *shekels* don’t know what is!

Frances, Editor adds, “Accepting an adventure is always a mixture of fun and fear of the unknown. Sometimes I also find myself lonely, missing comfort of the ‘known.’ Often, changes distance me from people I have grown to love and enjoy.”

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

THIS ROAD

**This road that I went down before,
As a scared and lonely child,
I’ve been down this road before,
It left me defaced and defiled.**

**Now this road that I’ve been down
before,
It was cruel and inhumane,
This same road that I was on before,
It was ruthless and insane.**

**This road that I was on before,
It could leave a person stunned.
This road that I was on before
Would leave a child shunned.**

**This road that I was on before,
The average hasn't traveled.
This road I was on before,
It leaves your soul unraveled.**

**This road that I am speaking of,
It should be obsolete,
You see this road I'm telling of,
Is not made of concrete.**

**This road that I am speaking of,
It's a father's way of life,
The way he treats his little girl,
It leaves her world in strife.**

**This road that I was on before,
I thought I did depart,
But now this road I traveled on,
It's broke another heart.**

**This road that I was on before,
Its name is sexual abuse.
Now this road that I traveled on,
It just won't turn me loose.**

**I am traveling on this road again,
Now my daughter's heart is broken,
So many people turn away,
And leave the worst unspoken.**

**This road that I've been on before,
Now she has traveled, too.
This road that we've been down
before,
I wish for no one's shoes.**

**Sexual abuse - it happens everyday,
And you wonder where it starts,
But don't know the price you pay
'Til it breaks your daughter's heart.**

**It's the worst abuse of any kind,
(It happens more than you know.)
So keep this very road in mind,
And beware what "love" can show.**

Now we've both been down this road,
And know the sadness it brings.
Soon we won't be on this road—
And our hearts will finally sing.

Now we've both been down this road,
And from it we'll depart.
And when we leave this road
 this time,
We'll both have brand new hearts.

We'll leave this road we were on
 before,
And we'll hold out heads up high.
For the reason we traveled this road
 before,
Was not our fault—not she, not I.

Now we're not on that road
 (No more!)
But scars may never heal.
For on this road we were on before,
The pain is very real.

Still, our hearts are fresh,
 our world is new;
This road we'll take no more,
For in ourselves we can be strong,
Of this we know for sure.

Pamela is finally happily married. She has three children: a 21 year-old, a 17 year-old and a 12 year-old, the youngest being her only little girl. She enjoys playing her electric bass. It's something she's always wanted to do, and finds it somehow fulfilling. She adds, "You can't change your relatives, but you can change to whom you relate."

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