

Ninepatch

Stitch - by - Stitch

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

Editor's Note: Following is a recent page from my spiritual journal.

September 2004

Dear Friends,

Sunset's afterglow lit the western sky. Alone, I drove a familiar ribbon of road that connects my husband's woodland home to town. I wound through open fields and dense woods. Along one curve, I noticed workers laying brick-sized flagstone over two block gate- pillars and their attached half-walls.

I shook my head, thinking of the time and expense the owners were putting into that entrance to a large horse farm. *That must be an important place*, I mused. Just then, I thought again of the entry to Ireland's Newgrange (*Ninepatch* July-Aug. '04). Newgrange is a massive mound, a Stone Age burial or ritual site. It was holy to Ireland's people living about 3200 BC. I visited the site during my Ireland pilgrimage of 2002.

About two stories up, glittering white stonework highlights the single dark doorway. Like the North Florida horse-farm owner, the ancient Irish felt the urge to beautify a place they valued. At the man-made hill, mica shist -- a quartz-like stone that reflects sunlight -- was laid over the ordinary building rock, calling attention to its entrance. Even then, the nearest deposit of that special stone was more than a hundred miles away.

Today, farms dot the rolling green hills of the countryside. Over four thousand years ago, the area's small mountains and valleys were thick with trees. Pelt-wearing Stone Age workers trudged dirt paths to the distant quarry. Traveling, they slept together under trees. They hunted, foraged and begged at occasional thatched huts along the way.

Once at the mine site, perhaps the same men hacked brick-like chunks from the deposit. Before returning, they loaded that stone into sacks or onto drag- poles. However they carried the precious load, their return trip was even harder. They toiled for months or even years to gather the necessary mica shist.

These men labored to glorify an energy or presence the special mound summoned just once a year -- and then only if the sun shone that morning. Perhaps these workers were chosen for their task. Maybe they were born to it or even called like pastors, nuns and preachers of today. I don't know. Surely, their lives served The Holy. Like clergy of today, their time and efforts were undoubtedly supported by a large community of believers.

Ninepatch is the closest I know to such a *calling*. Ten years ago, I put together the first newsletter. (See it at www.ninepatch9.org) However, the urge to create a newsletter was not new. During the 70's I helped second and third graders put together purple-inked dittoes of stories and pictures to celebrate the end of the school year.

Unconsciously, my inclination seemed grow. In the early 80's, I prepared a monthly newsletter for about four hundred families living in my neighborhood. Later that decade, I edited and -- with the help of classroom aides -- put together nearly a thousand handmade books with both elementary and high school students

Though I did all this, I was unaware of *any* calling. Then ten years ago, the mysterious summons came louder and more clearly. I *heard* it – and had to respond. Thus, the newsletter began. It was an effort to bring together and share the *voices* of women whose stories had helped me speak my truth.

During that summer of 1994, I read Plain and Simple by Sue Bender. In the book, she tells of finding her own voice. During that time she lived with two different Amish families. Later, she learned to make a ninepatch quilt block. The objective for this patched array is to, “balance light and dark.” I thought this was also a perfect description of life’s lessons. So, *Ninepatch* is about learning to balance life’s light and dark -- good and bad, pain and joy.

During the past ten years I was like those Stone Age workers. I spent a large block of each month collecting material. I mined reflective stories, letters, drawings and poems. Afterward, I laid them together for an issue.

Further, like *mica shist*, each contribution glittered with some spark of life’s mystery. Last, like the Newgrange’s decorated entry, *Ninepatch* articles honor an interior where writers encounter, “an energy or presence” -- a *holy* place-- one that de-erves time and energy.

I am honored by this work.

Frances Fritzie

Frances Fritzie, Editor adds, “As I spent time with *Ninepatch* writers and readers, their expression, stories and wisdom helped me grow spiritually. I am blessed to have followed this calling for so many years. Like Stone Age workers, and today’s nuns and preachers I, too, have been supported along my journey. I thank all you readers, writers and volunteers who have made all this possible.” NOTE: Additional photo links for Newgrange are: www.NewgrangeMegalithisTomb and www.witcombe.sbc.edu/scaredplaces/newgrange.html

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

(Letters to the Editor)

Dear Frances,

Your July-Aug.'04 front page is an interesting letter. When I read of the dark wood posts, it made me think of several things. They could represent guideposts or patterns. (I think this is what you meant when you referred to meetings.) Or, they could represent boundaries shutting you in -- or out? Or, as in the case of those posts in the water, they were lifesavers, since you were in "midstream." That may indicate a decision or choice you will "cling to" coming soon.

Obviously they don't mean the same thing in each case.

Bless'd Be,

June

June Poucher (July-Aug. '04) adds, "The coming darkness could mean uncertainty; unable to see clearly..."

Hi Frances,

I've been wracking my brain trying to remember the title of a book I read that included a similar image to the one you describe in your *Ninepatch* letter. In the story, some children live near a river. They keep a box of their treasures tied by a rope to the most distant post of a collapsed dock on the river. The water is described as, "dark," and the current, "swift." It takes courage to even consider trying to swim the distance to retrieve the box.

I remember the descriptions because I have a fear of dark water. When the book described the times a child swam out to it, and when you describe how you swam to the post and clung to it, I could hardly breathe for thinking how I would panic in the same position.

My visions of life's journey paths are always on dry ground — which I'm sure has some deep -seated meaning that I should try to explore.

Our morning here is cool and the birds are singing. But, soon I will have to close up the house to keep out the heat.

Well, I'd best go for now,
Georgene

Georgene (July-Aug. '04) tells more about her ministry with The Garden of Innocence (June-July-Aug. '04), "This weekend we attended a service at GOI for seventeen children. They had so many little ones that they had run out of poem donations. Thus, they asked to use the poem I wrote for *Quenby* (June '04) for a little girl named Rosie. I gave my permission and my husband, John, read the poem during the service. Now, I've started on a poem for a little boy. John shared with me about the boy he and his ex-wife lost to miscarriage. He said that in his heart he had named that child, Christopher. We can't suggest that name because there has already been a "Christopher" buried in the Garden, but I can use some of what John has shared with me to write the new poem."

Hi Frances,

Look in the trunk of your car for the dance shoes. I was positive that I had "lost" mine while at the class reunion. In fact I could just "see" them tucked under a chair at the motel! But, prior to calling the motel, I decided to take one-more-look in the car. LO and behold! There they were tucked behind my golf bag.

Carpe diem,
Le

Le (July-Aug. '04) adds, "So far, all I've done here at my northern home the last four weeks is work, read, clean house, watch foreign movies and get reacquainted with neighbors and friends. I've read about ten books. One I just finished is, *The Famine Ships* (The Irish Exodus to America) by Edward Laxton. (Thought that you -- being interested in Irish — would want to read it.) I found it very informative and probably also indicative of other nationalities and their plight. I remember the story of my grandfather, Chris, who left Denmark at age fifteen, about the same year.

Frances,

For a while now, I've been meaning to let you know that **Georgene's** story about *Garden of Innocence* (June and July '04) was very moving. It sounds like very meaningful volunteer work. I was particularly touched by how the volunteer work allowed her husband, John, to open up and share with Georgene the experience of losing a child to miscarriage.

Take care,
Peter

Peter (July-Aug. '04) adds, "I've been enjoying the summer in Chicago by visiting the beautiful new Millennium Park down-town and taking in a Cubs game at good ol' Wrigley Field. My partner and I are looking forward to visiting Italy the second half of September. It will be my first time to Europe!"

Frances,

I am in California right now caring for my mom. Her Alzheimer's continues to progress but there is a good part. She is now on a medication that has maintained her wonderful personality.

While here, I am also visiting my sister, who lives up in the northern section of the state. She was diagnosed with cancer last year after a colon tumor attached itself to her appendix and the appendix burst. You can imagine the extensive damage to her body as a result. She is taking chemo but continues to develop tumors.

The unfortunate part is that it could have been detected earlier -- before the appendix burst. She had been complaining of severe pain, but it was not listened to. So ...

Love,
Patience

Patience (June '04) tells about her June pilgrimage, "My pilgrimage to Spain, France, and Italy was marvelous. We followed the footsteps of St. Dominic and St. Catherine. We also had time in between for reflection and to just get the flavor of the cities we were in. Thankfully, we didn't do much of the typical touristy stuff. It was a spiritual uplift and will hold me for many years."

Dear Frances,

Hello again. You are right! You said when you got home and picked up your mail, you looked forward to getting a few personal letters mixed in with your pile of bills and notices. We all get tired of ads and bills.

My husband and I have our summer routine of work and long weekends. Thursday and Friday are free days to do what we want. Saturday it's off to the race track where my husband works as part of a pit crew. Then Sunday, it's church. We do enjoy the rhythm of our lives. (Maybe it isn't "rhythm," it might be just routines or habits we have made or share.)

You mentioned an occasional problem with, "worrying about the future and not being able to accept the *good stuff* when it comes along." Yes, that will probably always be some part of my life. I, too, am thankful worrying doesn't happen very often—any more.

You said JK had seen one of these episodes and tried to calm you. I think men are all alike. When I get into one of "my moods," my husband tries to talk sense to me, too. It seldom works. Finally, he just lets me wear myself down to a place where I can finally, *Let go...and let God*. Then our health problems or trouble with Anita look different. Life goes on, one day at a time.

We are going on longer vacations this summer, too. We are going to Michigan's Upper Peninsula to look for more lighthouses. This time we will take a ferry to one and ride in a plane to see others—a first for me!

Take care of yourself. (Don't be so hard on yourself.) Relax and have fun!
Love and prayers,
LindaSue

LindaSue (July-August'04) adds, "We went to another funeral this week — my husband's cousin. So sad. It seems like the only time that family gets together anymore is for weddings and funerals. That's sad, too! But, my husband and I are fine. "

-----F-A-B-R-I-C-S-----
(Our Experiences.)

LOOKING BACK --

Memories of Rudy

At last I think I can share a memory (I am finally having some happy ones!) of my dog Rudy who recently died. One of the small pleasures my dog Rudy and I used to share was a 'welcome home' chat every day after work. As I changed clothes and cleaned up, I'd ask about his Day. For example, I'd ask, "Did you have a nice nap?" and "What about lunch?" Sometimes he'd answer in a grumble. He'd lean into me for scratches and pets.

As I asked each question, I'd picture him doing each thing I asked. (I'd heard somewhere that dogs 'pick up' on our thoughts. Using visualizations while training allows people to 'show' dogs exactly what they want of them. Though I can't recall where I'd learned it, the fact was, visualization had become a habit.

Once I asked, "Did you have a nice walk?" I pictured Rudy strutting around the block. But, to my surprise, the picture in my mind changed. Instead, I saw him in the field across the street with my son ... but no walk.

"Is that what happened?" I asked. Rudy leaned all the harder into me, grumbling and moaning plaintively. I got the definite impression he felt short-changed!

On a whim, I asked my son, "Did you walk Rudy today?" He only grunted while Rudy danced around behind me, still grumbling and nudging my hand.

I knew my son was as likely to fib as he was to slough off chores, so I asked him if perhaps I should check with the neighbors to be sure... (Suddenly, I had my son's full attention.) ... I continued, "... because I hear you just threw the stick for him in the field and that was it."

His jaw dropped. "Who told you?!"

"Rudy did!" I chuckled inwardly. "And now you can take the poor thing out for a real walk, please."

After that, I paid more attention to the pictures that came to mind when I chatted with Rudy. Most times, when I asked him about his doggy day the things he seemed to say were 'wrong', were 'right'. For example, I'd find that he hadn't been fed, or that he had been scrapping with the cats, or that he'd been antsy all day

and gotten scolded for it .(A few times, the kids even called Rudy a tattle-tale, but they learned not to try and hide the truth.)

The only problem though, was that once in a while, Rudy would tell me he hadn't been walked, and I'd find out that he had.

"Do dogs *lie*?" I wondered. Perhaps I simply misunderstood what Rudy 'said.'? Or maybe was it that he simply felt short-changed and wanted to get another run around the field?

All I can say with certainty is that Rudy seemed to fib for all the same reasons people do -- a desire for attention, jealousy, and to get things the easy way.

TROR (May '04) adds, "I miss the chats Rudy and I used to share ... fibs and all! He might not have been the only dog I ever knew who could talk, but he certainly was the most consistent and creative."

There is only one IS.

James (July-Aug. '04) expands, " To me, this means recognizing reality for what it **is**, rather than what I would like it to be."

AWAKENING

Hot flash. Mind starting to stir. Up to pee. More heat and thoughts. Finally, I decide to read, so I turn on the reading light. I haven't done this in months.

It's 4:50 a.m. My thoughts keep interrupting my reading concentration. I hear the first song bird of predawn - a lark ? ...then what sounds like a child's wagon being pulled along the sidewalk. The low, faint rumble gets louder and turns out to be a high-flying plane.

I untangle myself from the covers and decide it's a decent hour to rise. Maybe I can write my impressions down and check my email, or maybe just read somewhere where I won't disturb my husband.

As I leave the bedroom with its open window, the sound of the bird fades. I go downstairs to collect my sweat shirt and wonder where my cat Wrigley is. He usually greets me... has he gotten himself locked in somewhere? Will I find a mess to clean up?

I settle down at the computer to find the file I call "Diary, Daily Entries." Writing is another thing I haven't done in months. As I begin typing, I hear the bird again-- ever so faintly through the closed window. Then Wrigley comes padding in, leaps up and settles himself onto the chair beside me.

All is well.

Carol explains she is just starting to recover from a bad case of writer's block.

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

Editor's note: In June, several Ninepatch readers who live in Florida gathered for a Read Around. This is a forum where each reader tells about recently read books. Lynan, Helen, Joan H., June Poucher. were kind enough to also write up their comments to be printed. This month, here are Lynan's "book reports."

THE NEW DRAWING ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BRAIN

This book is by Betty Edwards. She tells us that we do not have to have a special talent to draw. Betty says that drawing is a skill that can be learned by every normal person. If you can write legibly—she assures-- you have the dexterity to draw. The first step is to learn how to see in the special way used by artists. For this, there are drawing exercises.

Finally, you must draw every day. Keep a sketchbook handy and sketch anything. As you are having your cup of coffee in the morning, grab your sketchbook and draw a cup, a coffee pot, a spoon, a chair or a person. You must exercise your artist vision so you don't get out of shape. Otherwise, your drawings will tend to look childish.

If you want to improve your drawing skills, this book will definitely show you how you to achieve your goals.

THE MEMORY BOOK

By Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas, this book teaches you how to recall numbers, shopping lists, names, appointments and many other useful data.

One tactic is to improve your memory through *association*. For example, it's easy to find Italy on a map because you associate Italy with a shape of a high- heeled boot.

Now, if you have to remember things in sequence, the *link* system should be used. To illustrate this idea, assume you have to remember these four items in sequence: **egg, mailbox, earring, pickle.**

All you have to do is to picture absurd images to associate the items together. A bizarre picture might be: A egg frying on top of the mailbox. The next silly picture might be: A mail-box wearing an earring . And finally, add the image of an earring piercing a pickle. Now, can you remember the four items in sequence?

Try it! Make a list of ten items and link them together this way. Then see if you can list them in sequence! You'll be able to remember the list backward and forward.

Now you have mastered the power of your memory. There are many other memory tips in this book. The more you practice these hints, the better your memory will be.

PIGS IN HEAVEN

I am presently reading a novel titled, Pigs in Heaven by Barbara Kingsolver. It's a story about a mother who has adopted a daughter from the Cherokee Nation. The mother is drawn into conflict because she adopted the daughter illegally. I like the characters and the humor in this story. So far, I am enjoying the book. It's entertaining.

Happy Birthday Ninepatch! -- September 2004 -- Ten years in publication!

Lynan (May '03) adds, "As a rule, I do not watch a lot of TV. But, the day former President Reagan was buried I became a couch potato. As I watched his funeral, I was deeply affected by the scenes and tears came to my eyes. I felt like I was at the funeral in-person."

FOR MYSTERY LOVERS

My mom, Kathryn, and I both read Janet Evanovich. Janet has two different series. The first group always has a number in it. For example the first three are, One for the Money, Two for the Dough and Three to Get Deadly. Nine of these are out in paperback. The tenth is still in hardback at this point.

The main character is Stephanie Plum, a new bounty hunter who is learning her trade in a part of Trenton, New Jersey called "The Burg." Evanovich is good at character development. The author also has an ensemble of cool characters around Stephanie's adventures.

One of my favorites is information source and later friend, the self-proclaimed full-bodied ex-hooker Lula. Another is Stephanie's outspoken, funeral - home-visiting Grandma Mazur. When a gal needs a hand, arsenal - toting colleague Ranger and fellow berg- born cop, Morelli are on the spot.

The author's second series of Stephanie Plum novels all have the word "full" in them. For instance, the first one is, Full House. Two others are, Full Tilt and Full Speed. In my opinion, this second set is "fluffier." They contain more detail and the mystery part is not as good.

All stories are an easy-read and *fun!*

Dorothy (June '03) says, "I've said it before, but it doesn't hurt to remind people to take care of themselves. Ladies, remember your monthly breast exams and annual mammograms. Everyone, check the batteries in your smoke detectors!"

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

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT

As in other years, our interim report appears in the birthday issue. This year's report (June '04) compares favorably with the previous year's report which was done in April '03 .

<u>April 2003</u>	
Cash carry over 12/02	\$302.43
Contributions	345.00

Happy Birthday Ninepatch! -- September 2004 -- Ten years in publication!

Donations in kind	.00
Total	647.43
Expenses	350.29
Bank Bal. 4-03	297.14
<u>June 2004</u>	
Cash carry over 12/03	402.93
Contributions	460.00
Donations in kind	5.98
Total	868.91
Expenses	418.78
Bank Bal. 6-04	444.15

Thanks to **June Poucher** (July-Aug. '04) who continues to serve *Ninepatch* as both Treasurer and Board Member.

Frances Fritzie, Editor

WEBSITE REPORT

There are further developments on the site. I am working on a few new items. One is a new game. I have added several new links: pets, weather and travel connections. I am also renewing a bulletin board/guestbook. Pets, weather and travel links are brand new.

Further we have begun a trail of a new idea -- a *Ninepatch* calendar. I hope a monthly calendar will show when prayer circles meet, cut and pastes parties occur and other gatherings. We might also feature upcoming special topics and even board meetings. Is your birthday coming up? Readers might enjoy seeing others' birthdays and special events posted.

Once all this is going smoothly, I'll get back to trying to get more new readership online -- continuing to add *Ninepatch* to search engines and such.

Lynn/TROR (Also see *FABRICS* this issue) adds, "I'm always trying to think of ways to make *Ninepatch* Online interesting to *Ninepatchers* and to newcomers. If anyone has ideas or suggestions, please send them in!"

THOSE NOTES

Paper readers get an extra treat with every issue. Stuck to the front page is a colorful personal message, or quote. When I began *Ninepatch*, I knew everyone. Since I didn't see most of them regularly, I also wrote them a small personal greeting. Later, as editing, business, publishing and mailing duties -- as well as my personal life-- grew, friends came forward to help keep *Ninepatch* more "personal."

Each note-writer gets a list of names for a three-month period. At the end of this time, names are shuffled to provide more variety. Their thoughts and quotes are added in the spirit of friendship.

Web readers also get a personal touch. **Lynn/TROR**, our webmaster, writes a friendly and thoughtful *Welcome* to every newsletter's cyber posting. Further, I write each e-reader a little note before attaching the e- issue.

Happy Birthday Ninepatch! -- September 2004 -- Ten years in publication!

Thanks to **Georgene, Gail, Merry Mary**, and **James/Jim** who write sticky notes and have been so faithful in sharing their words. Thanks, also, to **Lynn/TROR** who does an exceptional job with our website: www.ninepatch9.org

Their gifts of time, effort and self are greatly appreciated.

Frances, Editor adds, "If you are interested in joining our sticky or cyber note crew --we welcome you! There's always space at the writers' table!"

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Where 2004 readers live:

California 4
Florida 19
Illinois 1
Iowa 1
Massachusetts 1
Michigan 14
N. Carolina 1
New York 3
Oregon 1
Pennsylvania 2
S. Dakota 1
Texas 1
Virginia 1

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

In her report for the Board meeting in June, Membership Coordinator, **Carol** (See *FABRICS*.) documented thirty-six mailed *Ninepatch* readers. (Thanks Carol, for keeping helpful records!) At the same meeting, **Frances**, told of sixteen e-issue readers. Since we cannot count our website visitors, we number our June '04 readership at fifty-two.

ABOUT US:

This issue is has a September 2004 copyright.

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