

Ninepatch

Stitch - by - Stitch

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

FROM THE EDITOR: Following is the next section of my 2007 experience, BUS RIDE. From last month: *“Absently, I glanced at my watch: 12:45. I stared out Cincinnati’s Gate 4 at an empty parking lot. Over an hour until my new bus would arrive.”*

THE WORRIER

Sitting by my gate, I had closed my eyes and relaxed. Evidently I had dozed because suddenly I heard a diesel roar and glancing out the Gate 4, I caught a glint of sun off the silver bus as it angled into its slot. The terminal clock’s long and short hands now pointed at two. *Well, this one’s on time!* I sighed.

My itinerary had listed my original departure as 11:00 AM. After arriving passengers filed off and the driver took care of terminal business, it was 2:20PM when our boarding call boomed over the PA. Following two others through Gate 4, I noticed our new driver by the bus collecting tickets. The tall man with a clean-shaven head looked mature and capable. Most natty of the drivers, he wore standard navy pants and blue button shirt, but also sported a navy vest with a white greyhound racing across the left side. His crowning touch was a cherry necktie twisted with a forehand knot. His outfit said, “Fancy-man,” but as he tore off my next-to-last “Detroit” section, his attitude was all-business.

Stepping up the metal stairs into the cool cabin I heard The Worrier in my mind wail, “Three hours late! What will happen when I get to Detroit? David is expecting me tonight in Grand Rapids! It’ll be well after 7:00 when I reach Detroit and after 10:00 into Grand Rapids!”

I knew The Worrier. For years it had furrowed my brow, knotted my stomach, and stolen my peace. When I had first noticed this voice in my head, I thought I might be losing my mind. Suspecting a problem, I had immediately started reading for answers.

Saturday mornings, eight-year-old David and I had commonly trotted to the public library. Dropping him to look at write-ups of pipe organs, or volumes on birds, I had walked up the stacks entering the Dewey decimal shelves at the sign “100.” I’d stood and pulled mental health titles off the shelf. Too embarrassed to take such a book home, I stood and scanned sections and chapters. After many weeks, I moved on to the 155.0 - 158.0: self-help and spirituality. After investigating volumes I actually took home by authors like John Bradshaw and Melody Beattie, I decided I wasn’t crazy. I was hearing my “Inner Child.”

One Sunday as I sat quietly in church, I saw an announcement in my church bulletin for “Adult Children of Alcoholics.” I began attending pre-service discussion groups. Listening to other men and women tell of their own Worrier, Wounded Child and other aspects of “inner children,” I discovered causes of The Worrier. Using others’ experiences with positive thinking, affirmations, prayer and relaxation techniques, I eventually succeeded in quieting that inner voice.

Although those tools helped me keep perspective when I was scared, I found quieting The Worrier was not enough. That inner child wanted more.

Picturing The Worrier as a scared little girl, I had asked her, “What do you need?”

“Help” she cried, turning wide frightened eyes on me.

I had wondered, “What does ‘help’ mean to a five-year old?” My answering image had been a warm, Caring Mother. I “saw” this woman kneel down, hug the quaking little girl and say, “There, there. It will be OK. You’re going to be just fine.”

As fearful children do, The Worrier cried, “But what if...”

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The Caring Mother didn't say, "Don't be silly!" or "Stop that sniveling!" Instead, she calmly repeated, "It's alright. I have a plan."

In August of 2007, when I had purchased my bus ticket, I had considered The Worrier and put together a contingency plan for the Caring Mother to use. Remembering friends' warnings about bus delay, I thought of *not* reaching Grand Rapids by 8:30 PM on Thursday. Since I had planned to ride a City Transit to David's house, I wondered how late those routes ran.

Dialing 1-616- and David's phone, I had asked my son -- who relies on Grand Rapids Transit himself -- about night buses. I heard assurance in his voice, "Catch number 44. It'll bring you right down to 44th Street near Kalamazoo and my house."

My sound-sensitive son excitedly began telling me about the new city bus hybrid fleet, "Gillig buses are quiet... there's hardly any roar! Electric power runs them from the stop up to about thirty miles an hour!"

"How late do the buses run?" I broke in.

"10:00."

In case my Greyhound arrived later than 10:00PM, the city of Grand Rapids provided choices beyond the City Transit. I could rent a car or take a taxi. Using David's old Grand Rapids phone book, I flipped its yellow pages to "car rental." Running my finger down the addresses, I saw no office existed near the bus station. A car rental agency was out, so I had dialed Enterprise, the company that advertises, "We'll pick you up!"

I had asked the young female who answered, "Can you come pick me up at the Grand Rapids Bus Terminal on Thursday, September 7?"

A lilting reply came, "Certainly! What time?"

From the air, I picked a time after 10:00, "10:30 PM?"

"Oh." Her flat tone said "No" before her words, "Sorry. We don't deliver cars after 5:00."

OK. *I can call a cab.* Thin maize pages rattled as I found, "Taxicabs": Calder City Taxi, GR Veterans, Port City Cabs... Hoping I would not need them, I scribbled their numbers on a sticky note and tucked it into a billfold compartment. *That's done.* I imagined the Caring Mother smiling and nodding.

As I climbed into the Cincinnati Greyhound, The Worrier's fears and Caring Mother's plans flashed through my mind. Settling into a seat, I heard a third voice, one I had years-ago named, The Wise One. Imageless, the thought-holder observes all happenings and thoughts, then counsels. As I sat with my eyes closed and hands folded, The Wise One advised, "Stop. No more chatter. You've done all you can. The situation's out of your control. Just ride along. It'll all work out."

About then, I heard the bus doors close and looked up. Straight-faced, our red- and -blue driver climbed the stairs and without a word, slid under the wheel. I took a deep breath and closed my eyes as the bus rolled.

Ah! S-l-e-e-p...

Frances Fritzie

*

(AROUND THE FRAME -- Letters to the Editor follows.)

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

-

(Letters to the Editor)

Hello Frances!

Ah, the hurricanes! I enjoyed your Sept. '08 -intro. About the emotional weather your aunt brought with her:

Every weekend, I call my octogenarian aunt who lives "back home" in Indiana. After hellos, she tells me about weather there. In her report I also hear the 'weather of Auntie's life.' If she says, "It's been so hot here we can hardly breathe," or "It's so cold even the inside of the walls have a chill," I know her conversation will be filled with sad or gloomy anecdotes. On the other hand, sometimes Auntie begins, "It's a beautiful day!" or "The sun is shining and the snow is sparkly white." Those days her life stories are funny and positive.

That story makes me think of a cartoon character with a thundercloud over his head. And also reminds me of many of the "victims" I have known over the years. (It is difficult to understand the idea if you *are* a victim because you don't see the darkness that you bring with you.) Even though I understand what's happening, I find it hard to talk to "a victim." Who wants to stand under that rain cloud?

God bless those who stand in the wet!

Best regards,

Linda

Linda (Aug. '08) says, "*Like life events, weather is a spectacular force.*" Editor's note: See Linda's wedding journal, "Summer Notes to Myself" in *FABRICS*.

Fritzie,

I love your metaphorical weather story in your September '08 e- issue! There's a lot to it. You ended, "I can see how my weather comments are often a projection of my general emotional situation."

I agree that discussion of weather is a parallel of one's current emotional state and I see even more of how weather affects a person. It can also sometimes be a determinant of one's overall personality and outlook. For example, the oft overcast and gray skies of the Midwest, combined with the flatness of the plains, tend to limit the distance one can see. It seems like people there often find themselves "looking down" instead of "looking out."

On the other hand, in Colorado or the Hill Country of Texas, the skies tend to be more clear and you can see mountains thirty or more miles out. Maybe this partly explains why the Midwest tends to be so conservative while Colorado and Central Texas seem more liberal (politically speaking).

It would be interesting to contemplate the effect of hurricanes, tornados, blizzards,

(Continued on the next page.)

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droughts, floods, earthquakes and seasons on the prevailing personality traits of a region.

Indeed, I remember reading that anthropologists attribute racial differences to differences in historical climate. My ideas aren't too different

All the best,
Fred

Fred (Feb. '08) adds, "I grew up in the Midwest and, as an adult, I have lived there as well as in the hill country of Texas. Perhaps this is an over- simplification, but in my experience, God seems stronger, more gentle and more forgiving when I'm looking out than when I'm looking down."

Frances,

Today, I don't even know where to begin... Well yes, I do! I am writing to you as a sounding board and a friend.

My daughter's two-hour surgery to remove an ovarian "cyst" turned into a five- hour operation where they removed a tumor the size of a watermelon. It was cancer. We prayed and prayed!

The good news (? Is there good news?) is the biopsies done during surgery show 90% non- spreading cancer cells. The other 10% are from another growth on the other ovary and some lymph nodes and have not yet been determined. We are waiting on edge for those results.

Thanx for listening, Frances.
Luv to you and yours,
CaT

CaT (Sept. '08) adds "My daughter lost an ovary and is cut up pretty badly: 52 stitches from sternum to pelvis. I actually wish the surgeon had taken the other one as I am afraid she is a walking time bomb! But, she's only twenty-eight, never married and no children. So, we wait."

*

Hi Frances,

I'm in Atlanta staying with my sister and her husband and using his computer. I'm off to Ohio in my car early Saturday morning. My sister and her husband will follow driving their Suburban.

While I am here, every morning after my sister goes to work, I go over daily readings aloud with my brother- in- law. In the evening, we all watch Oprah's weekly program on the book by Eckhart Tolle, A New Earth. Simply stated, the ideas relate to getting into the moment and not holding negative thoughts. Using the concepts in the various books we read has helped me get back to sleep when I wake up worried. For example, when I wake up during the night, I concentrate on the softness of the bed, feel of my pillow, the quietness and the feel of the sheets on my legs.

It's just the beginning, but I feel a pleasant change in consciousness and I'm hungry for more.

Wishing you many blessings.
Dottie *(Continued on the next page.)*

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Dottie (Sept. '08) adds, "I also read A New Earth every night before I go to sleep."

Dear Frances,

Thank you for your letter and the spiritual magazine you sent me.

I do keep praying, "God's will be done." I tell myself, no matter what I do, God's way is the only way. That is how I keep going. Even if my husband doesn't get another job, or problems between my dad and him never end, only God knows where all this is going.

I pray and talk positive to myself but none of it is taking away my upset. Right now I am angry at my husband because he seems to have given up. He isn't even looking for a job!

I don't want to give up. But maybe that's what I have to do: just, *Let go and let God*. Maybe that is the answer to everything. I never seem to get through one state of affairs before another one comes along.

Recently my married daughter, Molly, called and talked to my husband. (She is a daddy's girl.) She wanted us to go out to dinner with her family to have a "family discussion."

They were late to arrive that evening. My husband and I had given up and ordered a pizza when they finally showed up. She was anxious to talk. She told the three kids to stay in the house and we adults trooped out to the garage to talk. My husband set up folding chairs for everyone.

It seems Molly has lost her job and now they are losing their house. They have nowhere to go and want to come live with us! They had a whole plan worked out: they want to make our full basement into an apartment. That would mean putting in a bathroom, kitchen and even something called an "egress window" -- a way to escape without using the stairway in case of fire.

It was a shock to me. I was speechless. But the next thing I heard was even more alarming -- my husband said, "Sure!"

Later he told me, "It is a sign! They can pay rent and half the utilities. We can do this."

Can we? I don't want to work all day then come home and be a built-in babysitter.

Now, he is over at her house helping them pack. Maybe it is a sign. Maybe it is God's will. After all, I just told you I had better, *Let go and Let God!* Here I go! Pray for me.

Thanks for listening, again.

Love and Prayers,

LindaSue

LindaSue (Sept. '08) adds, "My dad lives with us and says he wants to leave. He wants just the two of us to get an apartment. If I leave, the kids can't afford our house, either. My husband says if I leave, he will too. He will just disappear. He'll have nothing to do with anyone's plans."

AROUND THE FRAME continues, next page.

Hi Frances,

I enjoyed reading the Sept. '08 e- issue. Congratulations for starting the *Ninepatch* project and keeping it going!

My monthly book club will be discussing The Book Thief written by Marcus Zusak. The story is pretty intense -- so much so I can't read it at night. Maybe you have read or heard about it.?

Thanks for making me think about my personal servant, too.

Louise

Louise and her husband, both retired, divide their time between New York and Florida. She enjoys opera, book group, classes at Osher Institute for Lifelong Learning, working in the yard, and walking. Her favorite book ever is, Bel Canto by Ann Pachette. EDITOR'S note: See Louise's Monthly Question comment in *MANAGING THE HOUSE*.

Intentions and results may differ.

James (Sept. '08) adds, " Those working a plan will decide its success or failure ."

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

MY SILENT RETREAT

Visiting The Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine
dedicated to Yogi Paramhansa Yogananda

Part II

As I sat in the quiet flowering garden by a memorial to Gandhi, I watched a shining tan hummingbird looping in and out of the clustered blue trumpets. The colors seem to float, assuming their own shape. I noticed the flattened khaki body of the little bird on its mission into the sweetness of the blossoms' hearts and out: Zloot! Zloot!

A couple passed by, holding hands and laughing. I had the urge, by pointing out the hummingbird, to draw their attention away from their world and into mine. However, I recalled my desire to be on a silent retreat and reined myself in. (*Continued, next.*)

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As the couple forged onward and the hummingbird flew away, I realized that there was more to this silence I desired. Maintaining my silence may prove to be harder than I thought!

Despite my dreams of austerity and asceticism, while on retreat I managed to gain poundage -- perhaps due to the joys of eating in companionable silence. I shared a dining table with three to five others. I relished the vegetarian food without being shackled to the duty of polite conversation with strangers. Used to eating quickly, I took over half an hour to eat lunch on my first day. I savored every piece of lemon pepper tofu and vegetable medley. I contemplated the texture and taste of each bite.

Noticing how one flavor permeated another was a sensual treat. Each morsel of mango speckled with mint presented its individual flavor -- one tasted of citrus, another had that chemical tang, others mingled with the taste of the jagged-edged mint leaves.

As I rediscovered the joys of eating, I became aware how often I distractedly shovel food in-to my mouth without even considering its flavor, feel and aroma.

Liz/Moscar (Sept. '08) says, "Little does my teenage son realize what treats await when we incorporate silent eating into our home routine."

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SELF- DEFENSE LESSONS

When I was eleven years old, my father thought it was time to teach his youngest daughter (me) how to defend herself. I am left-handed. While practicing one of the moves he had demonstrated, my left hand came in touch with an antique beveled mirror about five inches thick in a monster of a cabinet. I broke the looking glass with my hit.

I cut my left middle finger, ring finger and little pinky. The surgeons laid my hand open and repaired the muscles and ligaments. It took the surgeons nearly seven hours to stitch my hand back together.

My father had warned the doctors to give me sufficient anesthesia or I would wake up in the middle of the delicate operation. However, I woke up in the middle of it anyway. My yells threw the surgeons and nurses a bit off balance. Anxious, they made certain I got another big dose of sedative and I was out for the rest of the procedure.

I walked around for two long years in a special- made plaster for my middle three fingers. Once I was able to move my fingers again, I was assigned to play the piano eight hours a day -- lots of scales and other finger exercises!

Lotte (July '08) adds, "I have had some unusual experiences with anesthetics."

SUMMER NOTES TO MYSELF

JULY 15

Seems like I have been bouncing all over the Midwest. I just returned from a trip to Wisconsin, *por si solo*. It was fun -- an agate show. Wonderful and relaxing. Now my partner, Bill, and I are taking a week long sailing trip on Lake Michigan. We have deserved this. Last year was hell when Bill nearly lost his eyesight.

Just before I began this entry, Bill left to go apply for our marriage license. We'll be tying the knot when we return from sailing, (Continued on the next page.)

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so this trip is a pre-honeymoon cruise.

Lots to say, no good long writing time available to say it! Maybe I'll take my laptop along on this cruise...

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AUGUST 12

So much has happened: I returned the sailboat to the prior owners. Bill and I did sail to South Manitou Island (part of the reason for returning the boat).

I nearly sold my horse, Katie, but a trainer looked at her and I relented. Instead, I plan to send her to be trained later this year.

Bill and I may or may not be riding motorcycles to his family property in Canada this coming weekend. We're going, but may go by car instead.

I won two grand champion and one reserve grand champion awards (I beat myself. Ha, ha!) with my beadwork at the Newaygo County fair.

I'm not "a Mrs." yet. Thursday is the day.

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AUGUST 23

Bill and I were finally married on August 14th. It was a small ceremony with just two witnesses. Bill's dad came to witness and so did our neighbor, who has become my good friend.

Afterward, we drove to Ontario, Canada for several days.

I have been thinking about our sailboat's fate. It seems an important part of our lives. Now Bill and I talk often about what kind to buy. We plan a retired cruising life. Maybe I will write about it later.

**

Linda (Aug. '08) adds, "More to come about the sailboat."

THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE

A Family Mystery

Part I

I had moved it aside many times, and this time it seemed as though it wanted my attention. "It" was a small 2 ½ by 4 inch brown parched envelope of the kind seldom seen these days. The box I was rummaging through was an old wooden tool box created, I guess, by my grandfather Christ, and then used by my dad George, and now I've had it around for about three decades. The envelope had a half moon shaped cut out on the open end which facilitated removing the contents. Picking it up and turning it over, I saw that there was a window, and on the content inside were the words: "BIRTH RECORD" County Clerk, Gogebic County, Bessemer, Michigan. Name: John Johnson.

Who is John Johnson? True, we had a large extended family, but I knew all of them, and there certainly was no John Johnson! Or was there? Upon removing the folded sheet inside and looking closely, I found the name of the parents to be: Christ Johnson whose residence was listed as Ironwood, MI., and the mother listed as Cenia Johnson also residing in Ironwood, Mi. Both were born in Denmark, and listed as "legitimate".

The Johnsons were my grandparents on my father's side! *(Continued on the next page.)*

Le (June '08) adds, "I'm thinking about the old tool box. There were the usual wood-working and early mechanic tools, like Ford Model T wrenches, a Model T

carburetor control knob, and a 'Cruiser's Tape.' (This instrument is an unusual tape which men would use to measure the number of board feet in a given tree, before it is cut down.) Some of the other tools in the tool chest were familiar, but others still defy my understanding."

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- - I-N-S-T-R-U-C-T-I-O-N-S- -

(Reading and Listening)

LOVING FRANK

Although it is her first novel, Nancy Horan has written this outstanding book of historical fiction which is on the New York Times bestseller list. She is a writer and journalist whose work has appeared in numerous publications.

The book is based on the scandalous affair of Frank Lloyd Wright and Mamah Borthwick Cheney. It covers the period from 1903 to 1914. In the moral climate of that period, divorce was a shocking indictment of one's values and worth.

Even though Frank and Mamah withdrew to Europe for a couple of years, the press continued to hound them and their lives were in constant upheaval.

On their return to America, Frank began to plan the building of their home in Wisconsin. Built on the edge of a hill, it is named Taliesin which means 'shining brow.' It is famous the world over. Living at Taliesin, they took up a quiet life and Frank tried to revive his flagging business.

Loving Frank is more than a great novel; it is a work of art containing timeless truths about human nature.

June Poucher adds: (Sept. '08) "I bought the Random House Readers Circle edition of Loving Frank which includes an interview with the author. I found this fascinating as she explained how she came to write the book and how she conducted her research."

MORE ABOUT -- THE SECRET

Last month I wrote about "The Secret" -- the law of attraction and how it works on what you want and even what you *don't* want. There's more about how this law works. For example, Rhonda Byrnes' book, The Secret, says it's good to think positive to have a better life since thoughts bring reality. But, when one's mind is thinking like a 4th of July firework finale, how can one accomplish this?

Lisa Nichols, another contributor to The Secret and a personal empowerment advocate, tells us it is easy to monitor our zillion thoughts. She says a person has two sets of thoughts: good and bad feeling producers. *(Continued on the next page.)*

Depression, anger, resentment, and guilt don't make you feel empowered. Those are the bad feelings.

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Author Rhonda Byrne makes a point about bad feelings, “As you feel bad, and don't make any effort to change your thoughts and feel better, you are in effect saying, *Bring me more circumstances that will make me feel bad.*”

Lisa Nichols also says there is a flip side. You have good emotions and good feelings: excitement, joy, gratitude and love. When you celebrate the good, you'll draw to you more of those feelings and experiences that make you feel good.

Our feelings tell us if we are on the right track or the wrong track, too. When you are feeling bad you need to focus on things that will put you in a happier mood. Listen to your favorite music, think of the person you love, look to nature or work on your hobby. Do whatever it takes to get back on a better track.

Another chapter talks about the powers of gratitude and visualization. Do you wonder what gratitude has to do with “The Secret?” If you make a list of all the things that you are grateful for, these thoughts shift your thinking to a new direction. You are no longer dwelling on the negatives in your life. Thinking about things that you are grateful for will only bring more of the same into your life.

Visualization is a tool often used by inventors. These people were able to see a picture in their mind of what they wanted to create. By keeping that picture in their mind and believing they could make it, “The Secret” combined with a dose of imagination and faith brought reality.

Byrne's book also describes in detail how to go about applying “The Secret” to money, relationships and health.

Lynan (Sept. '08) adds, I was so captured by these ideas, I also bought two other books on the same concept: There is More to the Secret, by Ed Gungor and Beyond the Secret, by Dr. Lisa Love.

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

I LOST A LEG

*Written for Pat Altman and her
Surgeon, Thomas Trainer, MD,
Who lived it.*

**I lost my leg the other day
My favorite surgeon took it away**

**But he left a phantom in its place
Just to take up the new space**

**I felt kinda dumb
To think I'd succumb**

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To a phantom who's insistence
Was that my leg was still in existence!

But, I could swear
That it's still there!

So when I ask you to rub it today
Humor me and do what I say

It'll feel better when you're done
And I'll say "Thank you Hon!"

Simon Stargazer III (Sept. '08) says, "We both rely heavily on God's protection in all things, while realizing that He won't put us through anything we can't handle..."

MOTHER MOUNTAIN

My tomboy fingers scooped out pots
for marbles in your earth.

My arms gathered branches to build
forts.

These feet climbed stony pathways
to your peak.

I ate the fruits of your black soil
soaked

in sweat of my father's work.

I breathed in maple trees and dirt.

Your green shoulders hold the
memory

of each one who touched your lovely
dress,

each one who walks, each one at rest.

From the flatlands of the brown
Midwest,

I summon strength from your granite
ground,

guarding the river rolling to the sea.

East winds stir your mountain clay.

I hear you say, "Return to me."

Gail (Sept. '08) adds, "My longing to return to my mountainous home in Vermont prompted this poem. My memory is rich with the landscape portrayed here. The place I live now is among the tall oaks and white pine. Sometimes I see the mountains in the cloud formations on the horizon and I am satisfied."

MANAGING THE HOUSE -- Ninepatch Business, follows

- -M-A-N-A-G-I-N-G- - T-H-E

-- H-O-U-S-E --
(Ninepatch Business)

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

October's prompt: If you had a personal servant who would perform only one task a day, what job would you ask him/her to do?

Elaine (Mar. '08) says, "On one level, my personal servant would be a workout trainer who would lead me through a daily routine. It would also be easy to choose a servant to clean my house or cook meals. However, instead I would have my personal servant be someone really interesting who would come in and talk to me for an hour a day about current events, religion, family, books, aging issues and ideas.

**

Louise says, "I had a gut level response to the question posed last month. If I had just one person to do something for me each day it would be a personal secretary to write out a schedule and see that I keep to it. On my list would be: meditation, spiritual reading, exercise, con-tact with people I care about, and doctor's appointments. As part of the job, this person would keep everything moving along smoothly. I would not have unpaid bills, unread e-mail, weeds, dust and flab. I would always be "in the now." (Is it possible to do that for oneself?)

As part of my exercise regime, my personal aide would also plan my food intake -- keeping me away from sugar and things made with white flour-- and never allowing me to get 'hungry crazies' like when I get into potato chips!"

**

November's prompt:

"In what field of study would you like to take a two-hour crash course?"

OCTOBER Ninepatch Birthdays

- Ilene 6
- Georgene 15
- Christa 26
- Anna 27

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