

Ninepatch

Stitch - by - Stitch

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

EDITOR'S NOTE: Following's my continuing story from BUS RIDE, A Spiritual Journey. From last month's chapter: *I pulled my cell phone out and called David to tell him I'd not be arriving by bus, but driving into Grand Rapids. As the cell rang, I pep-talked myself, "I can do this!"*

I CAN DO THIS!

Again, warm air blew in the taxi's windows. Detroit lights twinkled against a black sky. It was a long ride out to the airport southeast of the city. Eventually an overhead green sign two lanes wide pictured a little white plane and an arrow and words: "Wayne County Airport." My driver hollered, "Which car rental do you want?"

I had not thought that far. Previously, I had booked car rentals with my flight on Orbitz.com. "Umm..." Sitting forward in the seat, I glanced at the bright red, blue and green neon signs as the airports' many tentacles unfurled all around. Finally a company I had used flashed in my mind. "Alamo!" I shouted through the Plexiglas, "Is it close?"

Through the transparent shield I saw White Tuxedo make an exaggerated nod.

Soon he turned into a crowded lot and drove to one side of a blue and yellow building beneath a tall neon roof sign, "Alamo." As he parked and went to the trunk for my suitcase, I dug in my purse and pulled out two twenties and a five for a tip. He brought my luggage around, opened my door and stood waiting.

"Forty, right?" I said readying my payment and tip.

"Forty-eight," he countered.

Is this a swindle? Had I heard him wrong? No matter what the truth, at this point I decided not to argue.

"Oh. Just a minute," I said and felt down in my right pants pocket fishing up two more fives.

As I handed my greenbacks to White Tuxedo I inquired, "What's your name?"

"Larry," he responded and glanced at the Hamiltons and Lincolns I'd given him.

I stuck out my right hand, "Thank you, Larry, for a safe ride."

He paused a second then took my hand, "My pleasure."

I'm here! Smiling, I rolled my luggage into the rental office and since I was not a "preferred" customer, took up a place third in the "regular" line. Two clerks stood behind the counter one attending to a man standing in the "preferred" space. Four others sat in chairs along a glass wall where I could see Larry outside by his car. A small flame flashed in his hand and he leaned to it with a cigarette. *Lots of people are getting cars this time of night...*

A chocolate- skinned lady behind the counter called, "Next!"

I rolled my suitcase up and without looking at me the ample woman asked, "Do you have a reservation?"

I shook my head, "I want an economy car for..." I paused mentally counting. *I need the car for driving to Indiana tomorrow and the rest of my visit, too.* "Nine days."

The lady's black waved hair glistened as she turned toward me. She repeated, "Do you have a reservation?"

"No," I said. Her large gold earrings shone as she looked back at the computer screen.

(Continued on the next page.)

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I repeated the kind of car I wanted and number of days. Gold bracelets jingled as she keyed in the information.

Occasionally she stopped tapping and looked up more information.

“I want to return it in Grand Rapids, Michigan... I have A.A.R.P and Triple A.”

She tapped her keyboard with a flourish and looked up, “That’ll be \$678.00.”

My eyes widened, “Whaaaaat?”

Unruffled she asked again, “Did you have a reservation?”

“No.”

“\$678.00.”

My mouth dropped open. *Now what, God?* I blinked and asked, “Did you include my Triple A discount?”

Eyes glazed the clerk nodded, “Yes Ma’am.”

Dismayed, I looked at my feet, *Oh no!* Suddenly a you-can’t-do-that-to-me thought appeared, *I could FLY for that price! ... Maybe I will!*

Politely I replied, “Guess I won’t rent a car tonight.”

She shrugged and called, “Next!”

Frances Fritzie adds, “*The journey continues ...*”

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

(Letters to the Editor)

Frances,

I just reread your March '09 BUS RIDE chapter in the paper issue you gave me to see. I cannot imagine how you carried on. You must have been exhausted as well as scared.

I like to read and am into a very unusual book, The Big Necessity by Rose George. It is about the unmentionable world of human waste and why it matters. I would never have picked the title off a shelf and delved into it, but two good friends recommended it. I am learning a lot and enjoying this well-researched topic which we prefer not to talk about.

The information about the use of biosolids as fertilizer in the USA was new to me and a bit scary. I learned that the world-wide lack of sanitation kills more humans than HIV and tuberculosis, or malaria. It is important information which is written with liberal use of wit.

In May when I am back home in New York, I'll be reviewing Ann Patchet's, Run for my book club. Run is a page-turner with wonderful characters but it didn't measure up to Bel Canto, my favorite. Unfortunately, for me, no novel ever will.

Read Run anyway.

Blessings,

Louise

(Continued on the next page.)

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Louise (Oct. '08) adds, "Today my husband and I had lunch in Cedar Key then hiked in a preserve near there. What beautiful North Florida weather!"

Hi Fritzie,

No, I haven't been in my cave -- though it might have been a good place to be for the past three months. A barrage of events has peppered me in 2009. I've become a reluctant grandfather, our Korean student had a "nervous breakdown" and had to withdraw from Texas A&M (for only one semester -- we hope) and returned to her family in Seoul, and our house caught fire at 7:30 A.M. on Inauguration day (also my birthday) taking our ten-year-old cat, Zack.

The good news is that our insurance company is being helpful, and our dog, Molly, made it out of the house after trying to rescue Zack.

That's why you haven't heard from me. That's my excuse. I've never been good at multi-tasking, and adding another birthday hasn't helped.

More later, gotta' run. I need to catch up on reading that last two issues of *Ninepatch*.

Fred (Oct. '08) adds, "Your description of feeling like you had "lost" your path and felt "like an ant running around smelling the earth for its trail back to the nest" was both heart-rending and heartening. Glad you seem to have found your way back!"

Frances,

Tonight I am having trouble sleeping and got to thinking of heavy topics like war and cancer. I often hear people talk about "battling" cancer. When I had my previous bout with the disease, I made a conscious decision not to "battle" cancer.

In a fight or war, one side wins and the other loses. That means if I die from cancer, I lose. But, I am not a loser. Even when I die -- and one day I will die from something!

I don't see myself as a cancer victim, either. I have had the disease of cancer and may have it again. Someday I may even die from it.

But until the day I die I will live life to the fullest and enjoy each day as much as possible. That will make me a winner!

Maybe I can go to sleep now!

Thanks for listening.

Jane

Jane (Mar. '09) adds, "Now maybe I can take this attitude and use it with whatever causes pain and swelling in my joints at times. I need to learn to accept it."

*

Frances,

Now I am here at the rehab with Uncle Jerry. He says they are filling him up with lots of pills and it makes him not want to eat. So I sit with him and supervise. Today we had breakfast and lunch together. *(Continued on the next page.)*

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When I am here with him, he can walk the halls with a cane, and start to get stabilization back into his legs. However, when I am not here, he has to roll himself around in the wheelchair. It is far too dangerous for him to walk by himself. (I am typing this email from the dining area. Everyone is gone now and Uncle Jerry is next to me, sound asleep in his wheelchair.)

Next week he will undergo laser surgery for his prostate. We have our fingers crossed that the operation will be a great success. Hopefully, he will be coming home in a month or so. I cannot wait. Uncle Jerry has the spirit and the determination to get better.

Warmest regards,
Lotte

Lotte (Mar. '09) says, "I grew up in a Jewish/Roman Catholic environment. I remember my great uncle, a Catholic Monsignor, sometimes prayed with all of us in Latin and later he did it again in Hebrew. Uncle Jerry and I could use some blessings."

*

Frances,

I have heard a lot about *Ninepatch* from Le ("The Birth Certificate" and "More Family Name Mysteries.") Actually, he usually forwards them to me by e-mail. I have enjoyed reading them.

When you e-mailed me, you commented on my Internet name, "Lucydidit." You asked, "Who is Lucy and what did she do?"

"Lucy" was born about thirty-two years ago. My husband and I were living in St. Louis, MO. in a home that had a rear-entrance garage. At the time, both our children were away at school. It was the spring and the yards were top-soft, thawing out from the harsh winter.

I had driven to the airport to pick up my husband from a business trip to the Middle East, but he drove home. When we approached the garage, he noticed a deep tire-rut running along the edge of the driveway. He grumbled, "Who in the H--- did that?"

It seemed like a dumb question since I was the only one living there while he was gone. Out of thin air I said, "Lucy did it!" That is how Lucy was born and since then, everything that goes wrong is Lucy's fault.

It is wonderful having an alter-ego. I've had quite a lot of fun with it.
Keep up the good work. I know many people enjoy what you do.
Sincerely,
Judy

Judy is married and the mother of two grown children, a girl and a boy, and a grandmother of three. In her spare time she enjoys gardening, jigsaw puzzles and crosswords.

(*AROUND THE FRAME* continues on the next page.)

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Hey Frances☺

Just wanted to let you know we've gotten moved and the new baby's doing well. Moving chaos? Oh Darlin'! You have no idea. Let's just say I still haven't had a chance to take a bath in my soaker tub and it's looking like it could be a long while before I do.

Good news is I finally have my apartment (and my daughter's) cleaned out. (I did that around work today.) So, other than doctor appointments, my business in Niagara is pretty much done. That should take a bit of the pressure off.

I will write again soon when I get a moment.

Love and blessings,

Lynn

LynnTROR (Mar. '09) adds, " Now if I could just get the tub tap fixed and the gas stove connected..."

*

We are all aboard the same time-ship.

James (Mar. '09) adds, "Only our location aboard differs."

Frances,

I have really wanted to work with the very poor, but for now this does not seem the path that God wants for me. I am not sure where my job hunt will all go. Time will tell.

I have been advised by people I trust to just stay open right now, so that is what I am doing.

Much love,

Patience

Patience (Mar. '09) says, "God has a way of presenting us with what is best for the people we serve and for us, too."

Hi Frances,

It's been 2009 for a while now, but nothing has changed. I still work and my husband doesn't. The kids still live downstairs. Molly, her husband and their children seem happy -- always in and out with their friends.

I still try to mind my own business. In my time away from my job, I write letters, work on my hook rugs and read. I liked that Gary Smalley book, A Time to Mend, and I wanted my husband to read it. He did, but he said, "What you say is *like us* is *nothing like us!*"

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He doesn't think we have any problems. Maybe my feelings are just a "woman" thing?
(Continued on the next page.)

You mentioned I might like a morning TV show with Joyce Meyer. I never heard of her. I don't see her listed, either.

I'm still looking for peace.

Take care!

Love and prayers,

LindaSue

LindaSue (Mar.09) says, "I keep spending time with my dad -- that's a blessing."

Hello Frances,

Even though I seldom reciprocate, I always appreciate that you write a personal note when you send out an edition of *e-Ninepatch*.

I've been rather preoccupied trying to keep my business above water financially. My credit card debt load is high and I added to it a fair amount this year, just to survive. I finally decided not to borrow any more money, which means I can't make my credit card payment. So, my business -- and personal -- future is in a most precarious state.

By necessity, I'm living one day at a time. Sometimes, I feel hopeful, and sometimes I feel absolutely gut-punched and forsaken. Incredibly, I feel hopeful more often than I feel lost... and that is a function of Grace.

Anyway, I wanted to at least acknowledge your e- issue, and tell you how much that means to me. Life, distilled to its most basic elements, has a way of pointing to what really matters... and what doesn't.

What you do matters. You matter.

Thank you.

Mike

Michael (April'08) adds, "My worst times are when I project death, doom and despair into the future, like the prospect of losing my home and being homeless. It is all so intense!"

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

I KNOW MY NAME —
BUT DO OTHERS?

Guess making name errors runs in our family. My name has sometimes given me problems, too. The correct spelling of my name is "LeRoy." (That is with a capital

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“R!”) But so often when I give someone my name they spell it with a small “r!” That to me is misspelling my name. *(Continued on the next page.)*

But my official records have other problems. My birth certificate lists my birthday as May 18th, but my baptismal record says May 19, 1924! I have always used that date as my birthday.

When I applied for a passport in Lakeland, Florida some years ago, the clerk noticed the discrepancy on my birth date and called in the head of the department for a consultation.

The head lady asked, “Which of these birth dates is correct?”

Well, I was ready for that. I boldly told her, “May 19th is the day I was born. I recall on the wall of the delivery room, the calendar was turned to May 19!”

The lady looked at me, and I looked at her -- never blinking an eye. Finally, she slapped her hand on the counter and said, “So, be it!”

Some of us do have correct name problems, name *spelling* confusion, and even birth date discrepancies. Many errors are not by our doing, but just the same we will probably never overcome spelling and date confusions or solve all the mysteries.

Carpe diem,

Le

Le aka LeRoy (Mar. '09) “I am not sure why I claimed May 19 as my birth date over May 18. Maybe I just prefer the number 19!”

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

(Reading, Viewing and Listening)

BOOKS, BOOKS!

There’s no bookstore in the small rural Florida town where I live, so I buy a lot of books from Amazon.com. When I finish I give them to ladies at the bank and other people I know. (Maybe *Ninepatch* should have these?)

Right now I’m telling everyone I see, write or talk to read, Shantaram by Gregory David Roberts. It’s a magnificent novel. I won’t tell you what it’s about -- just read!

M.Joan (Sept. '08) adds, “Years ago I wrote a page about how I felt on visiting an Indian town and market in Guatemala. I hope to share it -- that is once I find it!”

(INSTRUCTIONS continues on the next page.)

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

This historical novel was written by Geraldine Brooks, who is the Pulitzer-Prize winning author of March.

At the center of the story is an actual Hebrew religious work, the Sarajevo Haggadah, which was created in fifteenth century Spain. It is one of the first religious books to contain illuminated images.

The volume survived several centuries of religious conflicts. It was recently saved from destruction during the shelling of Sarajevo's libraries.

The story is brought together around Hanna Heath, a rare book conservator. As she attempts to preserve the manuscript, she discovers small clues such as a wine stain, a strand of hair and salt crystals which enable her to trace the book's history.

Brooks brings to her readers exciting chapters about the people who risked their lives during turbulent times to preserve the book.

The Haggadah's history alone is compelling, but Brooks fleshes out the story even more with an appealing love story.

June Poucher (Mar. '09) adds, "Brooks has a great gift for storytelling."

NELSON DEMILLE'S SPENCERVILLE

Keith Landry just couldn't get over the love affair that he had in the 1960's with Annie Prentis. When he was drafted into the military to serve in Vietnam, they went their separate ways, but it was because she was afraid of losing him and becoming a widow.

Almost 20 years later, he is laid off from his government job. It is then that he returns to his hometown of Spencerville, Ohio to find his beloved Annie married to one of the most loathsome, sinister men there is, Police Chief Cliff Baxter. What's more, he finds that the police force has it out for him but most of the townspeople are sick of Chief Baxter and want to see him removed as Police Chief.

Annie Baxter is determined to leave her husband by any means necessary and return to the man she has always loved. At the same time she knows her police chief husband would rather die than see her leave him.

Keith and Annie are determined to secretly run away, but face two obstacles. First, Keith's old employers want to promote him to a high governmental position which will keep him in town. Worse, Cliff Baxter gets wind of elopement plans and uses his men to try and get his wife back by making it look like Keith Landry kidnapped her.

This novel was so full of surprises I found it impossible to put down. When I think of Nelson DeMille, I usually think of political thrillers such as Night Fall and Wild Fire. Spencerville demonstrates Nelson DeMille is good at writing in other genres as well, in this case, a romantic suspense-thriller.

Bookworm (June '07) adds, "Give this book a read and I'm sure you will be so enthralled you may finish it in one or two sittings!"

*

(INSTRUCTIONS continued on the next page.)

BOOKS ON MY BEDSIDE TABLE

A month ago, I pushed my bedroom furniture around and now my “bedside table” is actually a chair! However, the wood and cane seat holds my current reading material quite well.

Stacked on it right now are more than books. There are two magazines in plastic which came to my address as a trial subscription with another woman’s name on them. (Who *is* she?) One of these nights I again will turn the glossy pages of “Self” and “Glamour.” There’s also magazine from my church and a newsletter from Maryland-based Shalem -- a group I went on a pilgrimage with in 2001.

“Old Florida Journal,” is a small new magazine which a writer-friend brought to share. It’s filled with tales which the cover claims are, “Mostly True - Always a Good Story.”

“Book Page” the free monthly magazine from Books-A-Million has several dog-eared pages and is waiting for me to carry it to my public library. Since I never have enough time to read all I find interesting, I enjoy reviews.

Last is the one book I am enjoying, Mothering Mother, A Daughter’s Humorous and Heartbreaking Memoir,” by Carol O’Dell. The volume also has an appendix listing organizations which provide help for those dealing with aged relatives. The author also included an index for those who want specific information about, for example, dealing with Parkinson’s Disease.

It’s a thoughtful and entertaining 192 pages.

Frances Fritzie, Editor

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- - S-P-E -C-I-A-L- -T-O-P-I-C - -

(How do you really feel about being/not being a parent?)

PROUD PARENT

Sarah Elliott (Feb. ’06) comments on the topic, “I can say I am proud and happy to be the parent of two adult children.

My daughter, Jenny, is a college professor who is currently writing a book. That’s what she does, but that’s not who she is.

My son, Ben, is an over-the-road truck driver. He is an active recovering member of a Twelve Step Program. He stays in touch, often by phone, with the men he sponsors. He gives freely of his experience, strength and hope, but that’s not who he is, either.

While I am proud of my children’s accomplishments, I am most pleased with their basic characters, because that’s who they are. They have integrity. They are both sensitive, insightful, honest people who can be trusted to do the right thing, simply because it is the right thing.

(Continued on the next page.)

My life is richer for having been able to watch them grow.
I am honored to be their mother.”

Editor’s Note: This parenting question will remain until June ’09. Our next Special Topic will be,
“The hardest phone call I’ve had to make...”

-T-H-R-E-A-D -

(Our Knowing and Our Spirituality)

**BEFORE WE’RE DEAD
And so it should be said
(Before we’re finally dead)**

**We must rely on others
(Not just fathers and mothers)**

**For help in getting through life
With its pleasures and strife.**

**While they all help us to make it
through,
God makes it happen for me and for
you.**

Simon Stargazer III (Mar. ’09) gives an update about Pat now, “...and so, we continue to live with the Lords blessings, which continue to be bounteous. He continues to show us that He will not give us more than we can overcome, with His help. Because of various problems, including degenerative disc disease and spinal stenosis, Pat has elected not to go for a prosthetic device. So, during the past two years, we have made various improvements to our home, and purchased a Pronto electric scooter, and this past fall, a handicap van with an electric lift ramp for her. The recent economic stimulus check from the government will be used with some other money to purchase an aluminum ramp for the back porch so she will have a second safe exit from the house in the event of a fire. Through all this, I remind myself I didn't count on having to take care of her like I do, but I remind her that we both joined this covenant with God and that our love surpasses the situation, and al-ways will. I wish I could make her feel better about it. I have told her I would take her pain if I could... wouldn't any of us for our spouses?”

**Ninepatch Birthdays
APRIL:**

Lotte's Uncle Jerry 21

BIRDS AND BIRDERS

For Bob and Carol

**It's difficult to tell
the birder from the bird;
they both will fly to distant spots
and utter not a word.**

**The markings for each one
come from the self-same nest;
the eyes framed with binoculars,
the black stripes on the breast.**

**A person might well ask
if birds keep people counts;
perhaps they sort by sound and
smell,
by gait and weight amounts.**

**Their names describe them well;
to Bob or bop, to trill,
to Carol on their merry way,
they sure do fit the bill.**

**Consider now their flight;
there's glory when they soar;
they rise above this earthly plane,
and fly from shore to shore.**

Gail (Mar. '09) says, "My family members, Bob and Carol, literally fly from coast to coast to 'find' a special bird and to round out their bird counts. Bob sometimes drives four hours one way. They've been to Alaska and New England birding, as well as to the McAllen on the Texas/ Mexico border, and from Arizona to Newfoundland."

DATES ON CALENDARS

**Many old calendars lay in a drawer
at my house.**

**They list events in my life:
church responsibilities,
meetings and activities,
guests and fellowships,
job changes and moves,
trips and holidays,
hospital visits and stays,
births and birthdays,
weddings and anniversaries
and
deaths of family and friends.**

**I can look at them and recall
what I did and when.**

**But there is not a hint about my real life – nothing about how I felt,
what I loved or feared,
things that brought special joy
or deep sorrow,
reasons for smiles or tears,
pleasures of being with others
or the loneliness
of being
alone.**

**Feelings are found only in my heart
and remembered in my mind.**

**Most will be
forever locked away in time.**

**What secrets do your calendars
withhold?**

Jo Ann is a widow with four grown sons and a daughter who has predeceased her. She also has twelve natural born grandchildren and two step grandchildren. After many years of being a missionary in Nigeria, now she continues to serve her church as a deacon and Bible study leader. She also enjoys tending the many camellias which brighten her yard and her life with their white, pink, fuchsia and reds.

(MANAGING THE HOUSE is on the next page.)



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

GET TO KNOW ME
(Our Question of the Month)

“The first words out of my mouth in the morning are...”

I thought this topic would be easy... until I became “present” to my morning. One morning I realized that I don't actually talk “out of my mouth” for a while. I talk to myself in my head. A lot.

I thank God that I am alive, I ask my cat, China, why she insists on walking across my bladder at 5 AM, and I lay in bed working out my day, thinking a little prayer here and there, and trying not to move much so that my feet stay in a warm spot.

It appears that there are two things that usually come out of my mouth first. If my husband is in the room when I'm ready to get up I say, “Hi, Sweetie!”

But usually, he is in the shower and the first words out of my mouth are, “Excuse me! I gotta' pee!”

Georgene (Jan. '09) says, “So much for profound words... it's clear that I don't have any first thing in the morning. Though I am a morning person, I realize I'm a lot chatty in my head than I am out of my mouth -- until I sit down for breakfast.”

**

Next month's question:

“People say I look like...”

Welcome!

*Paloma Hazel Pamela,
Daughter of Ninepatch Director,*

Christa

Born: February 14, 2009

4lbs. 10 oz.

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May blessings light Poloma's life's path.

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Ninepatch, Inc.

PO Box 358445,

Gainesville, FL. 32635-8445

ABOUT Ninepatch, Inc.

*ISSN 1094-3234

*E-mail: Ninepatch9@AOL.com

*Web site: <http://www.ninepatch9.org>

*Annual newsletter donation rate: \$15-\$35

*The IRS recognizes Ninepatch, Inc. as a non-profit corp.,
category 501C3.

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