

e - Ninepatch January 2009

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 recap and final lines of my last chapter: Late into Detroit, my Grand Rapids connection is gone and the driver announces the next bus in the following morning. ...Collecting my suitcase, from beside the bus, I rolled it slowly into the brightly lit Detroit terminal, shaking my head. Surely there's a bus yet tonight!

SYNCHRONISTIC GUIDANCE

Squinting in the bright ivory and glass terminal, I noticed Bigvoice and others had already parked their baggage at Gate 5 and claimed seats in the waiting area. This building's lay-out reminded me of a figure- 8. I had entered a lower circular space and looked to my right into a wide passage that led into another round space whose windows faced a dark street. Seeing a curved counter through that passage, I pulled my suitcase along to ask about another bus, a car-rental or -- if I had to wait -- nearby accommodations.

A twenty-ish blond woman uniformed in navy stood behind the curved information desk and shook her head in response to my first question, "No Ma'am. There's no bus going west until tomorrow morning."

"How about a car-rental place?"

"Everything is closed now," came her flat reply.

I tried my last question, "Is there a nearby motel or hotel?"

She shook her head giving me a look: Don't- you- know- where- we- are?

"Any other place to stay for the night?"

"Not around here," came words confirming the look I'd seen on her face.

Stunned, I murmured, "Thank you," and half-turned to the plate glass window. Gazing on dark buildings and empty streets I slowly shook my head. Exhausted already, I could not imagine my state after reaching Grand Rapids tomorrow: twelve hours here and four more on the road. *Sixteen hours?* I closed my eyes, sighed and stood a few moments absorbing the facts.

Taking a breath, I opened my eyes and looked at the wall clock: 8:30. *That's when I planned to end my "silent journey" -- only in Grand Rapids!* A helpless feeling began to rise from my gut and I calmed myself. *OK... OK... It's still a good time to start talking again... I'll call JK.* Turning my back on the ivory- tiled information area, I looked through the passage and saw two stranded passengers sprawled on smooth curved benches, heads on their duffles. I pulled my cell phone from my can-vas bag. Stepping into the wide hall at the waist of the figure- 8, I pushed out the side through a set of glass doors. Alone in a quiet foyer between the terminal and more glass portals to a side street, I punched 1-352- and waited as the Florida phone rang.

"Hello," came a familiar but formal baritone.

"Hi, Sweetheart! It's your wife."

His voice softened, "Hello Sweetheart! It's good to hear your voice. How was your trip?"

I paused. "Honey... I'm not done yet." Silence filled his response time so I went on, "I'm in Detroit."

"Detroit?"

Suddenly a wave of helplessness hit me. I sniffled, then took a breath, "Yes. The bus was delayed a couple of times. Now I'm here and... well, there's no bus to Grand Rapids until ..." I paused as the enormity of twelve hours sitting in the bus terminal hit me and wailed, "...until 8:30 tomorrow morning!" *(Continued on the next page.)*

e - Ninepatch January 2009

I imagined Hubby standing in our kitchen looking out the windowed back door into our quiet green yard. Having successfully sat many a bus from Gainesville to Chicago over the past twenty years, he had approved my travel choice. Now, he was taking in my information, his mind busily working out options. After a moment he repeated, "There's no other bus?"

"None... and David ... David expects me before 10:00!" Tears welled and rolled down my cheeks as I thought of my son. I could picture him, too. By 9:00 -- his usual bedtime -- he'd be wearing his striped pajamas. But tonight he'd be sitting in his big red armchair by the phone in his living room. Watching TV, he'd be waiting to hear me put my key in his door.

Suddenly the levy that had been holding back frustration and disappointment sprung a leak. I blurted, "I have to be in Grand Rapids tonight. I gotta' rest! I have to drive to Goshen for the reunion once David gets home from work tomorrow!"

My husband's calm voice and measured words brought me back to the present, (*Continued, next.*)

"Can you rent a car?"

"No ... Jim, I'm in downtown Detroit. NOTHING is open here. The closest car rental is the airport!"

"Is there a city bus?"

"No. Honey, this area is DOWNTOWN Detroit. No people are here this time of night. Everything is closed. The only way to get a rental car is to go to the airport -- and -- it's m-i-l-e-s away!"

Again, tears again slid down my cheeks.

As my husband began an oral review of my situation, distractedly I gazed out the double glass doors to the side street where the yellow nose of a taxi stuck out from behind a group of men who stood together as if conferring. I looked down as my husband continued, "You're at the station in Detroit, and you can't get any kind of bus or rent a car..."

I glanced up and noticed an approaching bear of a man wearing all black. He stopped several feet from me, "Ma'am? Do you need a cab?"

Half-listening to JK, I responded automatically to the man in black. Shaking my head, I uttered a low, "No, thank you."

He turned and ambled back outside stopping at the edge of the other men. As I watched his progress, I thought, *Wait. I DO need a cab! I can rent a car at the airport!*

Interrupting JK, I interjected, "Honey! I see taxis! I have money. I can get to the airport and rent a car!"

Keeping an eye on the man in black, I suddenly saw my situation clearly: after waiting overnight in the bus station, I'd arrive in Grand Rapids beyond exhaustion and I'd still have to get another bus or taxi to get to my son's. By the time I got to David's I would have had only three or four hours to sleep before I drove to my hometown. The whole point of my bus ride was to collect David, take him to visit Indiana relatives and attend my Goshen High School class reunion on Saturday. Our class reconvened every five years and I had never missed. I didn't intend to start now.

Excited by the idea of going to the airport, I felt energy for the first time in many hours. Perked by hope, I began pulling my suitcase toward the outer glass doors and the men near the curb. I said to my listening spouse, "I'll just get a cab here and go rent a car. Go to bed, Sweetheart. I'll drive on to Grand Rapids tonight and call you tomorrow."

It seemed a solution. "OK," my husband intoned adding, "Be careful! ...I love you."

"God bless you," I responded, disconnecting as I reached the glass doors. *The man in black approach-ed me for a reason. God is showing me the way out of my trouble!*

Frances Fritzie

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

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(Letters to the Editor)

Dear Frances -

What a great issue of *Ninepatch*! I love the Nov.-Dec. '08 chapter of your bus story and its balance with the familiar (parental trip) and the unknown. Poor you if you have to be stuck in a bus station overnight.

I'm loving the mystery of "The Birth Certificate," too. I had a plausible answer at the tip of my cerebellum but it's been frozen out by my son's ice cream birthday cake.

Liz/Moscar

Liz/Moscar (Nov.-Dec. '08) adds, "Since I have been job-less, I feel like hiding. Being unemployed makes me feel like a non-person -- a garlicky escargot hidden in its shell."

Hi Frances,

You said that lately you felt like the old woman who lived in a shoe... You explained your "children" were ideas and projects and I do hear you! My actual children keep me running so you'd think there were more than two of them!

Seems I've gotten myself into a nice little spot because I've done the job change I'd mentioned this fall and am still getting used to new hours. Meanwhile I am struggling to get the apartment packed -- to hopefully move!

House-hunting goes on but bank system changes and the market are working against me. I'm finding a lot of tension between me and my friend /real estate agent. Not only is it awkward with house hunting, but my pregnant daughter also lives at her place during the week and spends most weekends here with me.

On top of it all, while I know owning a house is a smart move, I almost wish I hadn't started the whole thing. It's looking like a move will possibly come just as my grand-baby does!

<Sigh!> I'm sick of the drama and sure my friends are, too.

Hope the holidays treated you well.

Love,

Lynn/TROR

Lynn TROR (Nov.-Dec. '08) adds, "My daughter's trying to keep working and tie up her loose ends, and move back in with me. But, my son has changed his mind and wants to stay in Niagara! Kids!"

e - Ninepatch January 2009

Thanks for *Ninepatch*, Frances,

It's been a few months since I last wrote, and I thought I'd tell you what's been going on. Right now I am living with two other Sisters and am enjoying the community life we share here in New Mexico. It has been refreshing. I am job hunting. Meanwhile, I am still making lunches in the morning and working in the local school in the afternoon.

We will see where this journey takes me.

Many blessings!

Patience

Patience (July '08) adds, "I volunteer at a school for many of the poor families living in south west Albuquerque. It is in the neighborhood and called "Navaho" but has a majority of Hispanic children. That position is great to work in. It reminded me of old teaching days -- the difference was, I didn't have to do the lesson-planning!"

Hi Frances,

Sorry to be out of touch for so long. It is getting very chilly here in the mountains, but it has been absolutely beautiful. The prediction was for a cold, snowy winter. I think I told you that we have been not traveling but staying here this winter. I am not working for these few months and my husband plans to transform our unfinished basement into an apartment that we can rent.

So many things have been happening -- some that I chose and some that I am powerless over! Guess it's good we're staying home because just when I thought my health had stabilized, I learned that I have a lump in my breast -- the same breast where I had cancer five years ago. I am scheduled for a lumpectomy in about a month. At this point there's no way to tell if the mass is cancerous or not, so I'm getting to work on not worrying, but staying in today! (Not my best thing!) At the moment I'm OK about a possible returning cancer, but at other times I get very upset, and start planning my funeral.

Thank goodness I have a spiritual program to rely on for peace. I am so grateful!

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Jane

Jane (Sept. '08) adds, "In spite of these never-ending health problems, I am still enjoying life, the beauty of the mountains, and being with my friends here."

Dear Frances,

Good morning! I had a day off from work and a little time for myself -- a little space. I thought my life was a roller-coaster before my daughter, her husband and our grandchildren moved in... Not!

It's quiet now because Molly and her husband ("the kids") are not early risers. They are night people. They are just leaving for the evening or coming in when I am heading for bed. Sometime I hear them laughing and talking or listening to music or TV while I drift off to sleep.

e - Ninepatch January 2009

My husband likes having them here -- of course he isn't working and sleeps a lot during the day, too. (*Continued on the next page.*)

I seem to have no influence on either my husband or the kids. It seems women just make peace. We adjust. I know I don't stand up for myself -- but, my husband doesn't listen anyway.

In your last letter you said, "Maybe it is time to find peace for yourself." Guess that's it! I read, write letters. I go to my room and shut the door. I pray a lot and wait for God's plan for my life to unfold. I remember a story my mom told me when I was little:

A little girl felt sad and said, "No one loves me and my hands are cold."

Her mother told her, "God loves you and you can sit on your hands."

I keep myself busy and remember, "God loves me and I can sit on my hands."

Thank you for listening.

Love and prayers,

LindaSue

LindaSue (Nov.-Dec. '08) adds, "I have my job and I have my dad. He still lives here with me. I do what needs to be done and try to remember, Only what's done for Christ will last. I focus on the idea that God has a plan for me. I wait and pray."

*

Dear Frances,

My friend, Janet in New York, passed away last week. I have been pondering our twenty-three-year friendship that started when I met her at the funeral of a mutual friend in Dallas, Texas.

Except for the few times we physically saw each other, when I was traveling for business to the East Coast, our entire relationship has been the written word -- first letters and then e-mail. I don't think we spoke on the phone more than two or three times in all those years.

When her brother sent out an e-mail to notify me of her death, he used the address book on Janet's computer. Since then I have felt so sad and uneasy. It will be hard to realize she is gone. I am sure I'll be wondering why she hasn't written -- and then remember the reality.

Amazingly, the people on Janet's list have "replied to all" with their eulogies. I am grateful for a chance to grieve with others who loved her.

I've also learned much about Janet through their stories. Our relationship was pretty much built on one window of communality. We opened it to let us see into each other's lives. There were other windows in the house of her life.

I was comforted by every story I read ... and I "replied to all," too. I wanted to share my stories of Janet.

I will miss Janet's words and the heart behind them.

In sadness,

Georgene

Georgene (Nov.-Dec. '08) adds, "Grieving with others is a very healing thing."

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

THE "TREDWAY'S FEN" PROJECT-- REVISITED

In April and May of 2006, I wrote about "Tredway's Fen" a narrow strip of land I own which fronts on Lake Superior. After clearing part of the land and building a board walk over a marshy area, I had built a shed and added a composting toilet.

At this point I was ready to construct a deck as the foundation for the yurt, a kind of stationary round tent. The week before the yurt was to arrive, my carpenter called and told me that there had been a "stop work" order put on the property.

It turns out that the next door neighbors didn't like the idea of having to look out their window at something other than woods, so they called the county building administrator who put a stop to my project. It seems since I didn't think I had to have any permits, I hadn't gone through the proper channels and hadn't gotten the appropriate permits. I didn't have the proper setbacks for my buildings either and was fined \$500 for starting building without permits. I was in big TROUBLE.

I hired an attorney, thinking he would know what to do and get through the red tape but by now the DEQ (Dept. of Environmental Protection) was also involved. That meant that the local arms of Government wouldn't act until the State DEQ interest was taken care of.

By the fall of 2007, nothing had changed so I headed south for my two-three month winter visiting. When I returned to Michigan, in 2008, the DEQ had dropped the case and I was ready to apply for a variance for the setback.

Meanwhile, this summer, my yurt was still in its crate, well covered with tarps. I had hoped to have the yurt on the deck and finished for indoor use but the deck was still open to the elements, finished for outdoor weather. I tried to reason with the neighbors but they were adamant. They wanted nothing in their view of the lake.

The variance hearing was set for August 2008 and I looked forward to the resolution of this mess. However, the officials denied me my request. Afterward, they did assure me that if I worked with the authorities to move my shed and deck to adhere to the setbacks, I would be able to proceed to erect the yurt.

That is where it stands now. In the spring I will figure out how to move things so that I am totally within the law and hopefully, two years behind schedule, be able to put up my yurt.

Who would have thought that I would have such troubles? None of this would have occurred if the neighbors had not interfered.

e - Ninepatch January 2009

It seems I am being taught once again that I am not in charge. In other words, I am powerless once I start something in motion, as to what happens. Then I have only choices as to which course I will take.

My choice is to go with the flow.

Palma (Nov-Dec. '08) adds, "If I had hindsight, I now know that I may not have had all this trouble if I had hired a professional builder, but I thought I could do it myself, so I live with my mistakes..."

THOUGHTS ON BEING MARRIED AGAIN

I do have to assure myself that my energy in this relation-ship is not so much directed by need, as by truth and/or desire.

I can get caught up in what everyone else wants (in this case what Bill wants) and forget that I have needs. I forget about myself until I start feeling a disassociated burn of anger. That's when a little switch trips reminding me to beware of becoming a "human doing." (Bill likes to "do" and likes me to "do" with him. I can buddy around with him pretty well and enjoy it. On the other hand, I want to sit and read or weave beads or play and just BE.)

Bill has 'gotten' that aspect of me, but I have had to stand my ground now and then to remind him. On the other hand, I want to be willing to share my time and "do" with him although I may not always want to right then. And, I also want to watch myself to make sure that I don't violate Bill's "cave" time.

We continue to work our relationship and it is good.

I believe I made a good decision this time.

Love,

Linda

Linda (Oct. '08) adds, "I am working on a 'Goodbye Sailboat' story. I had thought it lost, but accidentally found it and realized it needed a serious rewrite. I had written a screed on the lifestyle of the folks who had given it to me -- and much of it was not helpful or healing. I want to find a better perspective for the tale, rather than the bitter end."

MY SILENT RETREAT Visiting The Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine dedicated to Yogi Paramhansa Yogananda *Final chapter*

As I sit meditating and observing the bright blue-blossomed garden, I see a dark shadow. I study it. It seems to be a little cat that weaves in and out of the glorious blooms. Since I'm a cat person, I want to get closer. But whenever I make eye contact or approach, the creature melts away like calligraphy written on water. I come to think of this feline as "doubt." Like misgivings, It's always there casting its shadow, but disappears upon examination. Maybe it was never there at all.

e - Ninepatch January 2009

I gaze at the temple, of the Lake Shrine, a beehive filled with the honey of peace and love. Above, two hawks circle. Nearby, honeybees buzz in pale yellow roses. A gardener throws food to gliding white swans while smaller ducks tag along. I hear, "crack!" A tree limb breaks. A golden hummingbird sips from the bubbling top of the lotus fountain.

(Continued on the next page.)

I breathe in peace. A footstep sounds behind me and I am suddenly back in the material world.

After three days I left the shrine and picked up my real world responsibilities. Back home a month later, I gaze into the eyes of Paramhansa, my guru/teacher in a small picture propped against my computer.

I sit and contemplate my photo of the Lake Shrine behind him and consider practicing my lessons learned: live simply and appreciate the beauty within and without, my higher power is watching over me with infinite love, and to be self-realized is to be higher power realized.

Liz/Moscar (Nov.-Dec. '08 adds, "I am always a part of the flow -- I know I don't have to be at my garden retreat to experience this and am grateful for my time there."

MY FIRST SHOWING

Although I have been collecting postage stamps intermittently for over fifty years, it was not until October '08 that I allowed a portion of my collection "out" for a public exhibit.

The theme of my exhibit was "Fun with Duplicates." I created a stamp collage for the title page. Ironically, it was the most difficult page to make.

I added thirty-one other pages from my albums to show. Each page, or group of pages, had its own theme. A few of the topics were: the Lunar New Year, Sojourner Truth, gardening, Elvis, John Singleton Copley, the U.S. Flag and the Statue of Liberty.

Many philatelists (stamp collectors) collect mainly mint (unused) stamps or very rare used stamps and old envelopes for investment purposes. When I was a kid, that kind of hobby was too competitive for me. I gave it up for many years until I realized that stamp collecting did not have to follow anybody else's rules. It didn't even have to involve a major amount of money.

I soak used duplicates off my mail, and friends also save stamps for me. When I get together with other collectors, it's more to socialize than to buy, sell and trade. I think my collection reflects this attitude.

Carol (Sept. '08) I love free associating when I look at stamps. Each of my album pages uses duplicate stamps to frame a postcard, photograph or story. I began creating these pages about fifteen years ago and now have quite a varied collection.

OBSERVATIONS

A heart attack in my early forties changed my life from active participation to a more passive observation of everyday events. Although I could no longer engage in

e - Ninepatch January 2009

professional listening and observing, I still found reflecting on the actions of my fellows to be of keen interest.

My new watchful existence as a couch potato made me appreciate the level of voyeurism that exists within our culture. We watch our fellows in a variety of compromising, embarrassing, tragic and humorous situations.

(Continued on the next page.)

From our living room couch the world unfolds on TV. Starving children with big eyes and even bigger bulging stomachs stare at us as we finish our dinner. Wars in remote areas of the world flow before our eyes, thermal images on night scopes showing ghostly figures that run in shadowed light to suddenly fall silent or disappear in a blinding green / white flash of phosphene brilliance. In airports, waiting rooms, and cues at shops we watch the world on parade.

I am as guilty as most. I watch and wonder at the lives of those that enter into my space and my mind. Some are as close as the person pushing the grocery cart next to me in the food shop. Others are like the distant astronauts who float weightlessly in space, the Earth only a prop gliding slowly below them.

Amongst these images every now and then one brings a laugh and I stop to absorb the scene, savoring it as a fine wine or an exquisite bite of food.

Wallace (Apr. '08) says, "In a way watching others makes it easier to be aware of my own absurd behavior."

THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE

Part III

In his father's old toolbox, Le has discovered a birth certificate for "John Johnson." Le has been asking his brothers and a Registrar of Deeds and to find out if it might be for his father, who he always knew as "George Johnson." The mystery continues.

I hadn't noticed it before, but there in the lower right hand corner, was evidence that on November 23rd of 1943, some-one had obtained this copy of John Johnson's Record of Birth! Now I wondered, "Who had obtained it and for what purpose?"

By then in 1943, Brother Bob had volunteered for the US Navy and was on active duty on a sub chaser. I had been drafted into the Army in January of 1943, sailed away from the US in July, and was by then attached to the British Army in England.

I speculated that since Bob and I were now in the military, that Dad -- if he was really John Johnson -- had decided to change his name to "George Herman Johnson" -- the name by which we all knew him. But, why the name "George," and why "George Herman," since he had a younger brother named Herman?

Could it be that Dad was -- in his own way -- extending the life of a guy buried in Boot Hill whose name was listed as "George Johnson" and was "hanged by mistake?" I know my dad had been aware of that headstone. He made several references to it over my growing up years.

Brother Bob and I wondered, too, about the secrecy. Why didn't our folks mention the name change to us? Was dad ashamed of his name? Maybe this was the reason. I remember-ed years ago in that locale, it was a racial slur to be called, "Yonny Yonson, frum Wisconsin!"

Le (Nov.-Dec. '08) adds, "I needed to complete this investigation by visiting the Circuit Court in Bessemer, Michigan. There I would inquire as to when, Dad changed his name from John Johnson to George Herman Johnson -- and if a reason is given."

***Silence is oft misinterpreted,
but never misquoted.***

James (Nov. -Dec. '08) adds, "Words spoken will not retreat."

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

**MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS,
FRIENDS**

**When bonding with a lasting friend,
one who supports and praises,
I learn she's read her kindness
from her mother's loving pages.**

**Her heart's at peace; she's clear
and firm;
her center's full and blessed.
That's where her Spirit shines
its light;
it's where her friends find rest.**

**In growing up I glean from life,
the need to gladly lend
the kindness to a daughter
I would bestow upon a friend.**

**When Mother is not present,
My heart's so like a flame,
I'd press my hand upon its spark
and call upon her name.**

**If mother had not been so kind
and I had not forgiven,**

the hand I'd press upon my breast
calls Mary forth from Heaven.

Gail (Nov-Dec. '08) says, "So many women I have encountered have not forgiven their mothers, and consequently repeat-- unwittingly-- her selfsame behavior. I speak from personal experience. Interestingly, I've found that the way a daughter responds to her mother, is the same way she interacts with her women friends."

NURSING STAFF

Nurses on the run
Seems like never done

They serve with dignity
Providing patient surety

Yes they are kind
Keeping you in mind

For they know someday
They'll be where you lay

So if you're there for a while
Be sure to give them a smile

Simon Stargazer III (Nov.-Dec. '08) adds, "If you've ever been hospitalized, you'll know what I mean, if not, keep this and next month's thoughts in mind whenever you are..." Also, see Simon at: <simonstargazer@gmail.com>

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

YOUR HOUSE BY THE WATER

(The 2009 Self-Discovery Game)

A FIRST READER'S RESPONSE

Included with our last issue each year is a self-discovery exercise which we hope readers will use to get to know themselves better. My calendar read, November '08 when *June Poucher (Nov.-Dec. '08)* sent in her drawing which appears to be, "A wide stream flowing past the home with a narrow footbridge across it."

In *Kokology 2*, the games' authors, Tadahiko Nagao and Isamu Saito suggest this might mean, *You keep an intimate circle of personal relations, while holding the rest of the world at arm's length. That may make you a little harder to get close to than others, but it also means that when you call someone your friend, you always mean it.*

e - Ninepatch January 2009

In at least partial agreement, June explains, "I chose the river with a footbridge. I think that means I guard my privacy. I like some company, but I am selective about whom I allow to get close. That is why the footbridge is narrow; it allows only one person to cross at a time. The house is leaning a little but it is old; both of us are tired! ;-)

Frances, Editor adds, "Please send us your house by the water!"

SHARE WITH NINEPATCH

The new year offers several opportunities to be involved with *Ninepatch*. We are hoping to see your sketch of your home by the water. If you are shy about drawing, you can simply describe your setting, too.

Another opportunity to share is replying to our "Monthly Question." While there were no comments sent in this month, we continue to offer questions. Our February question is, "**What is the longest line you ever stood in?**"

A third subject is our theme for the first half of 2009: "*How do you really feel about being / not being a parent?*"

A last idea is "open." Frances LOVES to read letters stories, poems and e-mail, so send her some "ink!"

*

Ninepatch January Birthdays:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| <i>Dorothy</i> | <i>4</i> |
| <i>Nancyann</i> | <i>10</i> |
| <i>Fred</i> | <i>20</i> |
| <i>Liz/Moscar</i> | <i>25</i> |

MORE ABOUT NINEPATCH!

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e - Ninepatch January 2009