

*e – Ninepatch June 2009*

# *Ninepatch*

*Stitch - by - Stitch*

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

## A FEW HELPFUL FOLK

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Following is my continuing story from BUS RIDE, A Spiritual Journey. From last month's chapter: ... *Stopped at United's terminal, my cabby asked, "Are you sure this is where you want to go?"*

*I took a breath. I wasn't sure at all, but put on a smile, "This will be fine. Thank you, Larry, for another safe ride," I extended my hand to him again.*

*He clasped it, "Good luck!"*

I rolled my suitcase down the empty sidewalk to a pair of glass doors directly under the "United" sign. Inside, one entire end of the room was counter space for that airline -- and completely abandoned. *No United flight, I guess.* I turned to look at the other airline in that space, US Air. Two blue-suited clerks still stood behind its counters.

Walking over, I called to the two clerks who stood together talking, "Excuse me! I need a flight to Grand Rapids."

"Grand Rapids, Michigan?" the closer one asked. The uniformed girl bent her head to the other, pivoted and called to someone behind a white wall somewhere, "Do we go to Grand Rapids?" Shaking her head, she turned back to me, "We don't fly there."

Stunned, I stopped and blinked. Recovering myself I asked, "Who does?"

"I don't know..." the talkative attendant said before she turned and yelled again at the person I couldn't see. Turning on her heel she frowned to me, "Maybe Northwest."

*Northwest! Of course!* I smiled. Glancing around I inquired, "Where is that ticket counter?"

The girl's eye's widened, "Oh! It's not in *this* terminal."

*Not this terminal?* My heart sank. "Where is it?"

The girl extended a slender brown arm to her right.

Thinking of airports and modern concourses with "people movers", little trains and carts that carried weary or handicapped passengers I asked, "How can I get there?"

"You'll have to take a shuttle."

*Shuttle?* "Where can I find that?"

She pointed, "Down those stairs, at the bottom go out the double doors and look for the overhead shuttle sign. One will be along."

Trying to draw a map in my head, I repeated the girl's directions to her. She nodded.

"Thank you." I turned and walked toward the elevator next to the stairs and descended to the lower level. When the door opened, ahead were glass sliders to the outside. *So far, so good.* Stepping through onto the sidewalk, I stopped. Under the overhead green lettered sign, five or six white shuttles idled two deep at the curb. I scanned those curbside: "Marriot," "Holiday Inn," and "Green Tree." Craning my neck, I checked the second row for, "Northwest." Minutes dragged. Vehicles left and other white ones arrived -- all hotels. *(Continued on the next page.)*

*e – Ninepatch June 2009*

On the far side of the two-lane, I noticed two men in blue overalls. *Maybe they know something.* I walked across to the closer man bent over a sewer pipe, “Is this the right place to get the Northwest concourse shuttle?” He looked up and shrugged, “I just work here.”

His partner looked over and offered, “It’ll come along.”

*When?* I check my watch: 9:20. My stomach clenched. *Is that shuttle still running?* Returning to the sidewalk, I watched the white shuttle parade. Finally “Northwest” nosed to the curb near the others. When the driver opened his door I asked, “Northwest Concourse?”

The driver nodded, but didn’t move. Packed for three weeks, my suitcase was heavy, but I braced myself and hefted it up three steps onto the van then plopped into the closest seat. *Rest!* It’ had been thirty-six hours since I had more than a cat nap.

Alone in the white shuttle, when it didn’t move I looked up and caught the driver watching me in a mirror over his head, his eyebrows raised in question.

“Northwest.” I replied.

The man nodded and I said, “Am I glad to see you! I need to get a flight to Grand Rapids tonight.”

Eyes on the road, the man said nothing, but leaned to his left where a little radio at his elbow produced a faint melody.

*Frances Fritzie adds, “Following God’s will isn’t always straight forward.”*

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

***-***

(Letters to the Editor)

Dear Frances,

As you may guess, I have huge frustration, turmoil and sorrow with Cate, my daughter whose accident while on drugs killed one of her twin daughters, my granddaughter. She was sentenced to ten to fifteen years for second degree murder and is now located permanently in a correctional facility.

A termination trial is still in progress, which means the judge must decide whether or not she can still maintain correspondence and visits with her surviving twin. We understand that this twin does not wish to sever relations with Cate. The hitch is that her long-term partner and father of the girls does want the relationship severed. If Cate’s rights are not terminated, then I will be able to write and see my other granddaughter also. This has been a terrible loss for the entire family. My granddaughter has ten cousins in Michigan alone and they all miss her.

*e – Ninepatch June 2009*

Cate was totally broken up about her long-term partner’s testimony against her. He blames our family for Cate’s “behavior” (*Continued on the next page.*) and “murdering” “his” daughter. We feel he was an accessory to the accident. He denies his own substance abuse problem and had refused any kind of counseling, prior to the accident when he was ordered to counseling. (Such a mess.) The good thing is the settlement monies go to the surviving twin as much as possible, with exception of her father’s excessive legal fees.

We are trying to turn the other cheek and keep it turned, not to engage in his words. This is so hard to accept. The upside is that Cate is dedicated to reading her Bible daily with a goal of finishing it within a year. Since December 1, she has been doing this. She is ordered to have substance abuse treatment, and this is another good thing. Her wisdom now, clarity and peace at times surpasses my understanding, and she is now counseling me!

I cannot thank you and our *Ninepatch* community enough for your prayers and well wishes. Now, the harder part begins: ten years. Cate can have visitors and she corresponds regularly with wonderful letters. We are closer now than ever. I look forward to her letters and calls and am blessed that she does finally see the light. Seeing the light never happens without terrible pain, it seems.

I hope you can understand the long silence in keeping you posted. It is the worst tragedy of my life and it is difficult to convey my thoughts cohesively. In addition, I've had many physical ailments, one of which requires hip surgery on both hips, starting June 9.

Blessings to you, my friend.  
Love,  
Gail

*Gail (May'09) adds, "I need to make a prayer box again. I gave mine away when I moved."*

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Dear Frances,

How are you? It is a beautiful sunny morning here. Dad and I are the only ones up. I can hear my husband snoring away. (I hear that a lot — what a waste.)

Thanks for your letters, your ideas and your list of books I might enjoy. I hope to get to the library soon...

From the Twelve Step literature I read, “We are not equal to the task of changing another human being.” I know that in my head, but not in my heart.

I still want my husband to change. I have so many old questions that run around unanswered. Why doesn't he work? Why does he hate our older daughter so much but does anything the younger one asks? Why won't he help some around the house? Why doesn't he listen to me? Why doesn't he want to understand? Why/ Why? Why?

I feel like a victim who has no choices. I know choices exist in my head, but they never reach my heart.

I just go along. I nap, read and write to friends.  
Thank you again. Take care. God bless you.  
Love and prayers,  
LindaSue

*e – Ninepatch June 2009*

*(Continued on the next page.)*

**LindaSue** (May '09) adds, "This week on my day off from work, I am going out to lunch with some friends. I haven't done that in a long time. It's a start."

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Hi, Frances:

My mother died today.

I have a lot of mixed emotions. I first told my neighbor and friend that Mother was beginning the death struggle. I added I was feeling bad despite all of the crap that had gone on between us over the years. My friend said, "It's the end of a period of your life."

Mother was ninety years old, would have been ninety-one in August. She was a tough old bird, a real survivor. It's gray and rainy and windy, a perfect day for her to leave.

I would appreciate prayers for healing and a good journey into the great beyond for her.

Regards,  
Linda

**Linda** (Feb. '09) adds, "I don't know that I'll be much of a correspondent for a little bit. My husband is here to comfort me and he's good at that."

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Francesca,

In your e-mail with my May *Ninepatch* proposal, you said, "I've found feeling mentally better really is all about redirecting ones mind. It can be a struggle when the chips are down. Practice when things are good is an important key."

Yes. It is hard to make changes when I'm feeling down. When I'm down I can't seem to help myself and then I beat myself up over that.

Thanks to you, I'm going to let myself off the hook when I'm just not strong enough to move forward.

Love,  
Elaine

**Elaine** (May '09) adds, "Interesting that you too pray for your daughter-in-law. A friend suggested I pray for her health, happiness and well-being. That seems to cover it for me."

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Frances,

I would really like to tell you what I am going to be doing this next year, but I don't know. I have two positions that I am trying for now. Decisions have to be made, so I will know if I have either of them soon. If neither comes through, then I have other options to consider while I wait.

I keep praying over the situation and getting advice from my support group. Four Sisters who I highly trust for their wisdom and insight give me feed-back and suggestions every month.

*(Continued on the next page.)*

*e – Ninepatch June 2009*

I also keep good contact with my prioress who continues to encourage me.  
Many thanks.  
Patience

*Patience (May '09) says, "Like everyone else, churches are cutting back. People are holding on to positions and there are few openings. The competition for those places is tremendous."*

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Dear Frances,

Early this morning, the ambulance came to transport Uncle Jerry to the emergency room. He had problems in urinating since yesterday. He was doing so well and suddenly at 4.00 AM, we were at the hospital. Fortunately, there were not too many ahead of us.

The hospital has put in a Foley catheter and tomorrow, here I go again seeing his doctors. Reports say his infection is still there. This ER doctor gave him another drug. Perhaps this will clear the infection.

Warmest regards,  
Lotte and Uncle Jerry who is sound asleep.

*Lotte (May '09) adds, "I am cooking beef bouillon from a filet mignon. I have added thyme, onion and a bay leaf. The recipe my sister gave me said to cook four hours. I will give Uncle Jerry two cups of homemade bouillon. According to my sister this will improve his health drastically and hopefully it will clear his infection."*

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

WHAT COMES AROUND — GOES AROUND

Last Thursday afternoon, as I was leaving the supermarket, I noticed a lady with a cane who was struggling with an electric shopping cart. I stopped and asked if I could help her.

She said some of the carts have a defective steering gear and she wanted one that worked. She thanked me for the offer to help, but said her husband is parking the car and would be right in. All I actually did was make an offer of assistance, but as I left the parking lot I had a feeling of being rewarded.

The next Sunday, my lady friend and I went to a dance celebrating Mothers' Day. They held a drawing for a bouquet of roses in a vase and they pulled out my number!

As I was carrying the bouquet back to our table, I motioned my girlfriend to stand up and receive the roses. She did, I kissed her, gave her the roses and everyone applauded.

Again, I noticed the energy of my good deed had come back to me. *(Continued.)*

*e – Ninepatch June 2009*

*Le (May '09) adds, I am busy packing, before a long circuitous trip to South Dakota where I'll spend the rest of 2009."*

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**MY FIRST RV TRIP -- *Learning the Ropes***

It was my first weekend for camping in my new RV. I'd never done camping alone so my son-in-law went with me to help set up at Thousand Trails Park.

We got there Friday around 3:30PM and hooked up the electric. (Luckily, everything worked well.) First we walked around the park. It had a camp store with some groceries, clothes and RV supplies. We also saw two outside pools, a baseball field, horseshoe pits and miles of trails.

Rain set in when we returned to the RV. We sat comfortably, listened to music and read with the sound of rain on the roof as a background.

My daughter arrived after work. Then we all relaxed, knowing she was safe and off the road. Later we walked down to enjoy the hot tub before bed. Rain pattered on the roof all night.

The following morning, the sky was grey but held no rain. After my son-in law left to go home, my daughter and I took a long walk thru the campground. The Thousand Trails is on a river off The Chesapeake Bay so there is a also a fishing dock, boat ramp and small natural swimming area.

In the early afternoon, my daughter and I practiced setting up the RV. We hooked up the sewer hose and we loosened and lowered the awning. I needed to know how to do many things.

We explored again during the afternoon but when drizzle began, we ran back to the RV, put on our pj's and went to bed.

Sunday morning we put everything away and headed home. My first outing went smoothly.

*Diana (Feb. '09) adds, "When we got home I felt like I had done enough to be more comfortable with the duties of setting up my traveling home. I'm already planning another trip -- this time alone."*

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**JUNE**

**Ninepatch Birthdays**

June Poucher	17
Serena	18
JW/Joy	18

*(SPECIAL TOPIC is on the next page.)*

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

(What’s the hardest phone call you ever made?)

**DURING A TRAGEDY**

There was a string of difficult phone calls I had to make when making the arrangements for my daughter's funeral. She lost her life in a tragic accident on her own block six years ago this August.

The incident leapt to mind when considering the new special topic for the rest of the year. But the specific phone call...well now, that needed some sorting out.

I rolled them all around: the calls to family members, pastors, police, lawyers, district attorneys in three cities, the newspapers for the notice, the friends who would help at the memorial service.

But the call that was, “The hardest phone call I ever had to make” had to be the one to the funeral director to make my daughter’s arrangements in an out of town area. In fact, I remember I was so scared by that one phone call, understanding the finality of it as just having been thru the arrangements of my husband's funeral only two years prior, that I asked my son to actually do the dialing of the phone. But, of course, eventually I had to speak to the director and also meet with him.

*CaT (May '09) adds, “These calls combined with the original one I had to ANSWER telling me of my daughter’s death and accident made me jumpy for months afterwards. When the phone rang, I first jumped, then cringed as I meekly said "hello" to the unexpected.”*

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***The future  
is cloaked in challenge.***

*James (May '09) adds, “Little stimulation comes from living in the past.”*

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*(Continued on the next page.)*

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

THE SHACK

Has anyone read The Shack by William P. Young? It is quite good -- I recommend it. It is about a father whose little daughter gets brutally murdered. God invites the father to visit Him, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit to revitalize his faith, answer the father's pain-filled questions, and help him solve the crime.

Some of the more strict churches have discouraged their congregations from reading this book. I've heard this is because God first appears to the father as a Black woman. (Her reasons for doing so are wonderful.)

The only discontent I have with the story, is the lack of importance "God" puts upon corporate worship. My church services and congregation are very important to me.

*Joy (Oct. '08) adds, "I am thinking about sending The Shack to my daughter. She is an "unchurched" person and I think she will get a whole lot out of this spiritual exploration."*

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A BOOK CLUB

I've been doing a lot of reading lately and have joined a book club. For that group, I read Olive Kitteridge by Elizabeth Strout. It recently won a Pulitzer Prize. It's a series of short stories. Olive appears in each of them, sometimes as the main character, sometimes as a peripheral character. The stories examine her development during her adulthood. In general, I did not find her to be a likeable person, but it was an interesting book.

I have also read, Prisoner of Tehran, a Memoir by Marina Nemat. It was hard to put down. It's a story of a woman who was sent to prison in Iran at age sixteen. Just as she was about to be executed, she was saved by a guard. The guard forced her to become a Muslim and marry him. He told her if she did not comply, he would kill her family.

A third title I enjoyed was, The Sum of Our Days by Isabel Allende. She is Chilean and has written many books. This one was a letter to her dead daughter. I just got another one by Allende out of the library: Ines of My Soul. I want to get into it, but first I want to finish, Cruel and Unusual by Anne Marie Cusac.

That one is about the culture of punishment in the US. Very interesting.

*Jane (Apr. '09) says, "This month our group is reading Little Bee by Chris Cleave."*  
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*e – Ninepatch June 2009*

*(Continued on the next page.)*

NIGHTS IN RODANTHE

This novel, written by Nicholas Sparks, is a wonderful love story. Set on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, it brings together two lonely people at difficult times in their lives.

Three years earlier, Adrienne’s husband had left his family for another woman.

She met Paul at a small seaside inn she was tending for a friend. As they became acquainted, she learned that Paul’s wife had recently divorced him.

A surgeon, he admitted to Adrienne that he had been too dedicated to his profession. Over the years he had lost the love of his wife and respect of his son, also a doctor. To atone to the boy, Paul had sold his practice and pledged to work alongside his son in Ecuador for a year doing volunteer work using his medical skills.

Adrienne promised to wait for his return.

*June Poucher (May ‘09) says: “This book is reminiscent of Bridges of Madison County by Robert Waller. It demonstrates how a few special days can transform one’s life.”*

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

(Our Knowing and Our Spirituality)

**HEROES**

**With honor we decorate the graves  
of those dear souls who gave  
their lives to keep us free,  
save our country, guide our families.**

**We raise our flags  
for courage shown,  
for those who did not return,  
for families torn.**

**We remember those heroes,  
ordinary men**

**Who became extraordinary over  
and over again.**

**We weep for God seeing  
his people fight,  
brother against brother,  
an ungodly plight.**

**For all we pray, for all we mourn  
and we give thanks that they were born.**

*e – Ninepatch June 2009*

*(Continued on the next page.)*

*Gail (May '09) adds, "While I worked at a assisted living village, I wrote this poem for their newsletter, keeping in mind the many heroes we celebrate. We usually think of our soldiers, and, yes, of course, we honor them. We rarely think of our civilian families who held it all together in the absence of those soldiers, and who have now died also. When I was young, we honored and remembered our grandparents on Memorial Day, by going to their grave, tidying the grounds and leaving flowers. Today, I believe their Spirit is with us anytime we recall them. They are not present only at the grave, but I continue to like the ritual."*

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**WIND**

**Just before he died  
They repossessed his house.  
It was a storm.**

**He lost his mother's hair band,  
His grandfather's briar chair from  
Scotland,  
His heather cashmere cardigan,  
The beat up dog bowl, and  
the wooden elephant  
his daughter had carved for him in Sixth Grade.  
The movers took away seventy  
Thanksgivings,  
as well as children's skinned knees,  
four traveling salesman jokes  
and myriad October woodstove  
fires.  
There was nothing left – memories of  
wrestling with his brother  
on the lawn,  
and bourbon-on-the-rocks  
before dinner  
were taped in boxes  
and thrown in a truck.**

**They didn't even leave him the  
record snowstorm  
of '78.**

**In the end they sent him to the  
hospital  
where he died in a white room  
with no windows.**

*Gil Murray is married and has four grown children. He enjoys painting, camping and biking. He says, "As I collect birthdays, (Continued on the next page.) I marvel more and more at everyday miracles of everything such as toenail clippers, crashing surf, satellite broadcasts and seven-year-old girls playing hopscotch. I am grateful for the affection of all who read this. I send my warm feelings to you. We are such a fleeting community."*

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**GOD WHISPERS**

**I wonder if it hurts to  
    be the beautiful Breck Girl?  
To walk in patent leather stilettos,  
Hair bouncing erotically on a dirty  
    city breeze,  
Hometown girl made good.**

**I wonder if it hurts to be transformed  
    reborn to soaring wings,  
Emerging to unfold wet, curled weak  
    wings,  
Drying in summer's brief gift of  
    breeze**

**I wonder if it hurts to be loved?**

**I wonder if it hurts to have another  
    needing to be near,  
To brush another's face as they sleep  
    beside you,  
To flutter with pleasure in response  
    to another's brush?**

**I wonder if it hurts to be me?  
To remember a dream I never was,  
To make snowflakes for Christmas  
And paper doll cutouts for garlands?**

**I wonder if it hurts to be still and be  
    quiet,  
To hear God's whispers on a blue tin  
    roof in the  
Deafening roar of the world swirling  
    about the house?**

*Devora (May '08) adds, "I've had a hard time hearing God's whispers and always felt I couldn't hear until God shouted. I want to be more attentive to the whispers of God."*

*e – Ninepatch June 2009*

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*(THREAD is continued on the next page.)*

**EVERY FIVE YEARS**

When I was 5, I was so sick  
    I couldn't play a lick,  
When I was 10 I was in love  
    with Dale  
and time passed as slow as a snail.

When I was 15 I lived at  
    boarding school  
and learned to apply  
    the Golden Rule,  
When I was 20 I studied at college  
    to pass the tests  
and get more knowledge.

When I was 25 I used the  
    Power above  
to help me out when push  
    came to shove.  
When I was 30, I had a baby girl  
    and my heart was in a whirl!

When I was 35 I had a boy  
Goodness! What a bouncing  
    bundle of joy!  
When I was 40 promotion  
    brought me much strife,  
When I was 45 it was more staff  
    and for me, a new wife.

When I was 50, work took  
    too much and I stepped down,  
When I was 55 I was still movin',  
    but now to a new town.  
When I was 60, I got a new job  
    -- a happier, better place,  
When I was 65, I was ready  
    to quit the work race.

When I'm 70 I will be retired,  
'cause now I'm tired of bein' hired!

**So, now tell me... about your FIVES!** (Continued on the next page.)

*Simon Stargazer III (May '09) explains, "Directly out of college, I started working in a hospital. As serendipity would have it, my knowledge and my "git up and go" attitude al-losed me to latch on to opportunities. Life went on. Now I have worked eight years where I am, and hope to retire in less than a year."*

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**- - Y-O-U-R- -H-O-U-S-E- -  
O-N- -T-H-E- -W-A-T-E-R- -**  
(The 2009 Self-Discovery Game)

**AT THE WATER'S EDGE**

My dream is to reside next to a stream where the rushing waters flow over the rocks. Maybe there is even a little waterfall. The sound of the water is music to my ears. Wildlife would gather along this stream and pretty wildflowers would grow upon the banks. I love to gaze upon beautiful scenes and maybe I would even try to capture the view in watercolors.

The rocks could be used as stepping stones to cross over to the other side. This is for those who are adventurous. However, for those who are timid, there is always the bridge.

In Kokology 2, the self-discovery game's authors, Tadahiko Nagao and Isamu Saito suggest choosing this location might mean the following: "... The relationship you saw between your home and the water nearby reflects your desire for social distance and personal space... (suggested by) a wide stream flowing past the home with a narrow footbridge across it is: *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.*"

*Lynan (Nov.-Dec. '08) adds, "I can't be too isolated. I am not a hermit."*

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**OOPS!**

**No Monthly Question is in this issue.**

**In May, I forgot to list June's topic!**

**Here's our query**

**for July:**

**"The thing that scares me most right now is..."**

*e – Ninepatch June 2009*

**Editor, Frances**

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