

# A Graphic Experience While Getting Chemotherapy

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## Port\*land

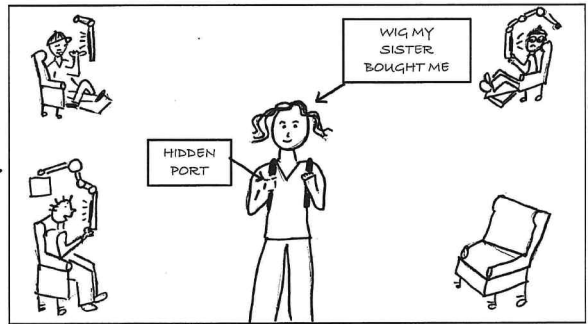
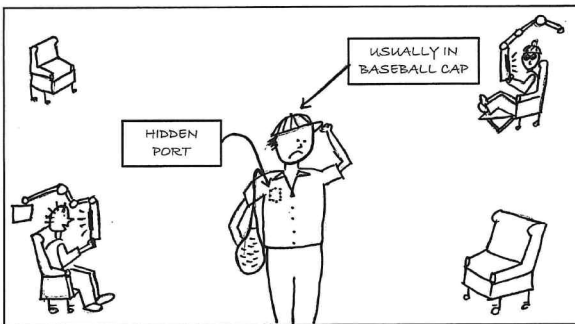
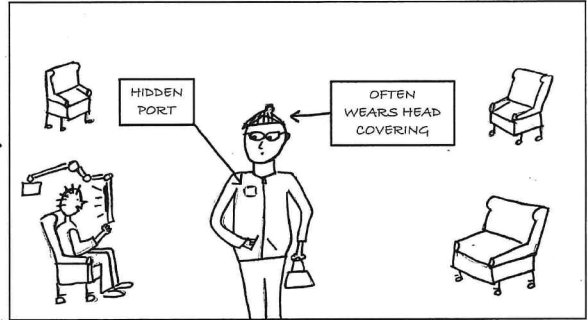
a gathering place for people with ports  
and those who love them

by Margi Rosenthal

Chemo that day started out like any other day. One by one we filled our chairs, connected to our media of choice...

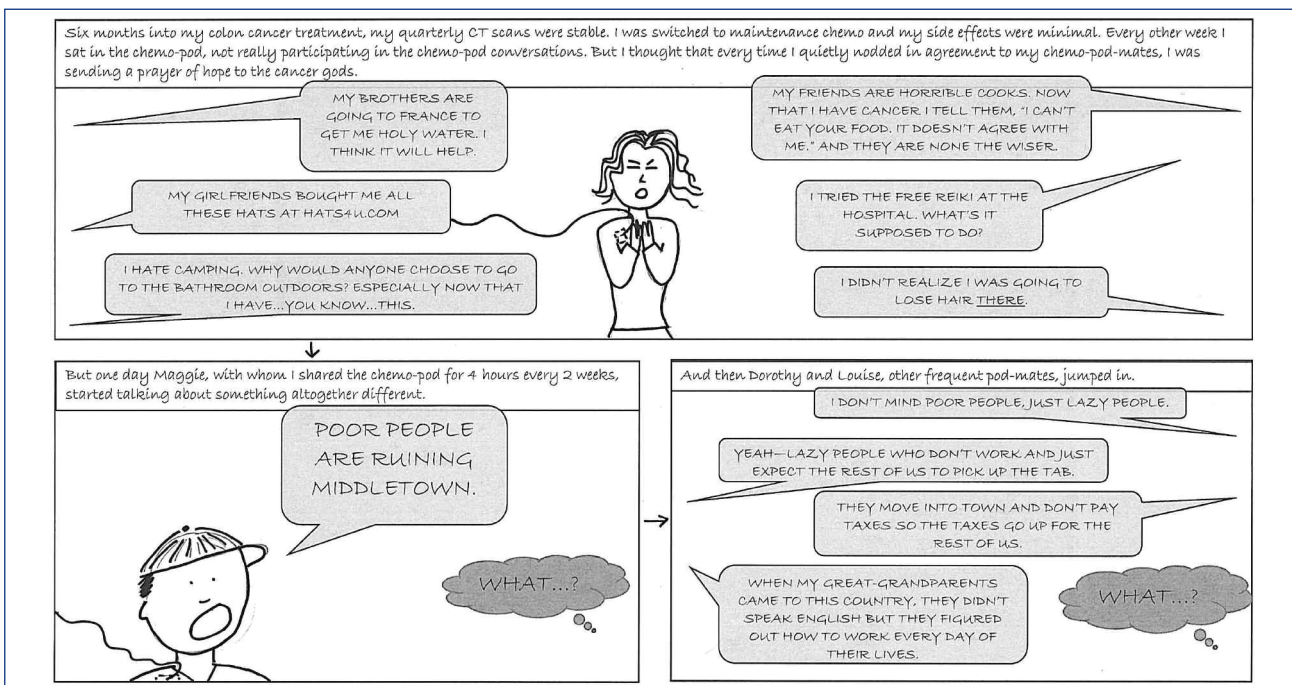
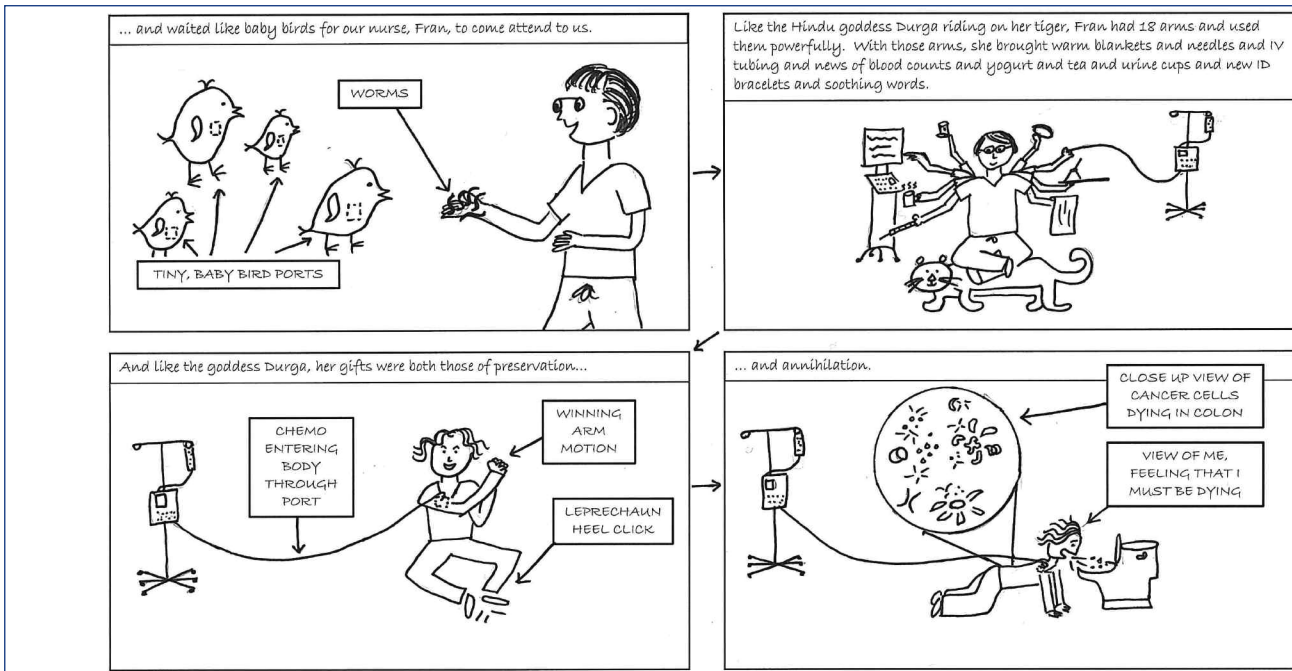


PORTACATH [pawt-e-cath], noun, also: PORT [pawrt], A SMALL SILICON DEVICE IMPLANTED UNDER THE SKIN, ATTACHED TO A PLASTIC TUBE (A CATHETER) EASILY HIDDEN UNDER CLOTHES. OFTEN USED FOR ONCOLOGY PATIENTS TO DRAW BLOOD AND ADMINISTER CHEMOTHERAPY



SPECIAL FEATURE

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SPECIAL FEATURE

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WHAAAAAAAAAAT?

If I were hearing this from my daughters or my friends, I would challenge them on this conversation.

SHOULDN'T WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE BENEFITS WE RECEIVE FROM SOCIETY--SCHOOLS, ROADS, BRIDGES, RETIREMENT BENEFITS--BEFORE WE START THROWING STONES?

Or if this were the subway or the park and I didn't know the people speaking, I would walk away.

But here I was in some in-between space. I didn't really know these people but I sat them every two weeks for hours at a time. We were all attached to IV poles of hope, plugged into the 30 x 30 foot infusion pod. We were stuck with each other.

How different was that from people living in poverty connected to their food stamps of hope or housing vouchers of hope?

HEADING TO A HUMAN BEING.

HEADING TO A HUMAN BEING.

But what about what my pod-mates had said about those lazy people? Weren't the 4 of us not working and expecting others to pick up the tab? Weren't we all on disability or SSI or being cared for by family and friends while we placed our lives in the hands of Big Pharma and our oncologists and our nurse, the goddess Durga?

Besides, I felt like I was working. Working on being awake when my daughters came home from school. And nice to my mom. And available for my former students' emails. None of which was paid work but made me feel productive.

So if my sisters-in-arms felt productive, too, then perhaps they felt justified in taking down poor people who they assumed weren't working. Without really thinking that everyone has their own cancer to fight. Often without a Hindu goddess. And each with its own set of side effects.

Which, of course, reminded me that Dorothy, Louise, and Maggie may be fighting other demons that I knew nothing about. Or maybe it was only justification for crawling into my chair, getting under my blanket, taking out my laptop and just hoping they would stop talking soon.

I WONDER WHAT CAITLIN JENNER WOULD DO IN THIS SITUATION.