

GOING 'GA-GA' IN THE GUGGENHEIM*by Gree van Daatselaar-Somsen [53]*

In an experienced and relaxed manner Joe Marstello [2868] is driving his car through hectic and busy Manhattan. This City of New York is always impressive again. Coming from Long Island you first see the beautiful bridges. Then you really have the idea of being in the centre of the world. Fascinating!

We are in a company of four on our way to the *Guggenheim Museum*, in the heart of Manhattan. It is May 15. Though Jan and I have already seen quite a lot of New York over the past years, a visit to the Guggenheim has always remained a heart's desire. And now this heart's desire is going to be fulfilled and even more than that...

'Okay, I'm going to take you there on Tuesday', Joe says. And so we – Mary [2869] and Joe, parents-in-law of our son Bart [1622], and Jan [679] and I – are driving along Long Island Expressway towards the 'Big City' on this beautiful Tuesday morning.

Joe is looking for a parking place. No, a place to stop the car, for: *'don't even think of parking...'* Meanwhile he – with a newspaper on the front-seat - is looking for a quiet place for himself and the car. And he is successful. After having lived and worked in New York for many years Joe knows this city extremely well.

The *Solomon Guggenheim Museum* on the corner of Fifth Avenue and the 88th Street is of a breathtaking architectural design. The circular floors, getting bigger as you climb, radiate an imposing, serene beauty.

Yet this Guggenheim Museum will contain another surprise for us, apart from the beautiful collection of paintings by ancient masters to modern virtuoso.

'Let's first have a look and afterwards we may buy something in the museum shop', we have agreed. So we ascend to the first floor. All the walls are circular and the view and the incidence of light are surprisingly beautiful. The first paintings we see are the early and late Mondriaans. That gives a very good Dutch feeling, so far from home.

All of a sudden there are surprised cries, laughter, amazement, hearty embraces. We are standing face to face with Theo [227] and Josette [394] Somsen. The chairman and the vice-chairwoman of the Somsen Foundation – Theo and Gree - meet at the Guggenheim. How stunning. Theo

and Josette arrived only five minutes ago. And so did we. 6000 miles from home..., what a coincidence!

They are staying with their son Marnix [228] and

daughter-in-law Alette [3757] in Manhattan. Just like us they could not resist visiting this fascinating museum.

It looks as if everything has been timed to the minute. After some time each of us go their various ways.

Yet this meeting gives some extra glamour to the rest of this day!

Later, on the way home to our mutual children and grandchildren, we cheerfully tell Joe in the car what happened in the Guggenheim. He is enthusiastic on the spot. He regrets that he has not met Theo and Josette but when I start making plans that I will write about this event in Somsen Horizon nr. 8 he is inventing one funny title after another.

The best one is:

'Going "Ga – Ga" in the Guggenheim' ■

Guggenheim MUSEUM

Note: Just as we are going to press:

The enormous devastating wounds that were inflicted upon the heart of Manhattan and Washington on September 11, 2001 and upon the hearts of all Americans and their friends all over the world, keep filling us with intense feelings of sadness again and again.