



CroneTimes

WWW.CRONESCOUNSEL.ORG

FEBRUARY 2010, VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1

REVISITING CRONES COUNSEL XVII — ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Transformation

SPIRALING THROUGH LIFE — WITHIN AND WITHOUT



by *Phyllis Schlemmer, Elder*

First and foremost, I was overwhelmed with the wonderful people involved [in **Crones Counsel**]. At the last minute, I found some time free. Although it was very difficult trying to get a reservation a day or two before the event, many people helped me. Meera found me and stayed on the phone

going through the website until Yay! I had a room.

My introduction to **Crones Counsel** was when Ann Kreilkamp came up to my table at the International UFO Congress and handed me the first edition of *Crone* magazine. She said, "This is for you." I was very busy with my books and guests asking questions so I never had a chance to really talk to her. I took the book home, read it, fell in love with the concept and sent in a

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Some Recompenses for Old Age

by Most-Honored Elder Ann Emerson, age 95

We leave behind so much foolishness — feelings of inadequacy, fear of offending, uncertainty, wondering how to fit ourselves in, resentments, hurts that we have bugged to us because we were unsure of our worth. We glory in still being alive, in knowing we can weather whatever comes and adjust. Even though it may be daunting we know we will get through it and our happiness and contentment doesn't depend on whatever the circumstance.



While we may have to think deeply to know the wisdom we have accumulated, still it springs naturally when it is needed. We don't take offense at small things or lie awake wondering how to deal with some criticism or put-down. We have learned to know our own worth, consider the source kindly, and let it go.

For me one of the greatest recompenses is to realize that I can be a help and a comfort to others — particularly the young who are still troubled about finding their place and their worth. I know now that noticing and admiring one of their strengths gives any person wonderful encouragement and uplift.

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subscription. When the second edition came, I could not wait to open it, but when I began to read the letters criticizing the first edition because of the cover, I became angry. I loved that cover. To me that woman represented courage; deep down she knew who she was and her eyes told her story. Why did some dislike her so much? She was my aunts from my childhood; she was all the glamour they maintained throughout the First World War, the first generation born in the USA, the country that you could be or do anything you desired. Today's young people have TV, video games, cell phones, and all the other trappings of the world of tech. We had a radio and the movies on some Saturdays.

I felt it was very important that I find a way to go to this **Crones Counsel**. I wanted to meet the people of **Crones Counsel**. Well I came; you conquered me and I loved everyone and every minute of it. When I arrived home, I decided I would be at the New Mexico event.

I rented a tiny building and am now in the process of opening a new business by December 1, called "Crone's Nest — A Mecca for Wise Women." I am forever grateful to Ann.

At my age of 80, I have joined a great adventure.
See you in New Mexico in 2010.



Long Time No CC: Reconnecting in Atlanta

by *Marian Van Eyk McCain*

Living in England, with a daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren in Boston, MA, I've become increasingly conscious of all the carbon emissions I'm responsible for with my annual flights across the Pond. So for the last three years, I'd been denying myself the luxury of flying out West to attend **Crones Counsel**. But I really, really missed it. After enjoying three such gatherings in the past, I'd come to think of these wonderful women as my friends, my very own "Crone Tribe."

Imagine my delight when I discovered that the 2009 gathering would be held much farther east, in Atlanta. I signed up immediately. And I arranged to fly home directly from there, minimizing the distance flown — and the carbon emissions — as much as possible.

It was wonderful to see old friends again, to sing those familiar songs, to smile and weep, drum, dance, and split my sides laughing; caught up in that unique magic that is **Crones Counsel**. I made new friends too.

The highlights for me were:

— meeting face to face, for the first time, at least five of the women from my online "elderwomanspace" network (see www.elderwoman.org/elderwomanspace.html)

— being able to attend a "real time" meeting with fellow staff members of *Crone* magazine, and

— seeing the record number of attendees from eastern states, which surely means there will be more gatherings in the

East in future. And that means I can be there again, taking part in this very special gathering of very special women.

And hey, one day **Crones Counsel** may even happen so close to Boston that I can take a Greyhound bus, the greenest option of all except for a bicycle. Or even in Boston itself. Then I *can* go by bicycle. Bring it on!



ONLINE FRIENDS MEET. From left, Katharine Houk, Win Fiandaca, Joy Winer, and Marian Van Eyk McCain.



My Personal Journey – Crones Counsel 2009 and Beyond

by *Joy Winer* [see photo above]

"What do you intend to get out of **Crones Counsel** 2009?" That question was posed at the opening ceremony. I sat there dumbfounded, and then wrote, *I don't know*. Had I really come to this event, one I had heard about for years, with no intentions?

If I knew how this gathering of elder women would change my life — throw me forcibly outside my box because I was so empty of expectation — I would've run out the door.

By the third evening of Counsel, a lifetime of forces came into laser focus for me. Out of that came the word LOVE. I realized, more than ever before, that thinking from the heart was the answer to everything. For, without love, there is nothing.

A quote, waiting in my Inbox when I got home, set my mind whirling. "At a recent sold-out Peace Summit in Vancouver, His Holiness the Dalai Lama made a proclamation that stunned the crowd: 'The world will be saved by the western woman.'"

I had been reading passages from *The Intenders Handbook* by Tony Burroughs to change my paradigms from things like hoping for peace (which places the emphasis on war) to intending peace (thoughts become things).

Talk about a light bulb going on! I just spent five stunning days with a group of remarkable Western Women — what I took away from that powerful experience was Love — what I was doing was Intending. And, because I "see" feelings, the image of a button floated up in front of me — it was saffron yellow with red block letters and said, YES I WWIL (Western Women Intending Love).

[TRANSFORMATION, continued on Page 4]

President's Message



by Nancy Lehto

A new decade, a new beginning for all of us. I love the winter, especially January because it is a beginning. We think of spring as the time of beginnings, and it is, but I believe January is as well. In spring, I want to attack my goals and plans with vigor as I enjoy the sun more each day. In January, I contemplate my goals. I sit by the roaring fire, a cup of tea at hand, a good book nearby, snow falling outside the window, and just think about each area of my life and what I intend to accomplish in this new year.

At our local Crones group, the January meeting is always a favorite. We create our intention posters. I don't make New Year's resolutions anymore, but I do set my intentions for the coming year. It's just semantics, I suppose, but I find intentions easier to manage. We have such fun at this meeting, cutting out pictures and words from magazines to represent our goals and plans. The poster is a colorful reminder as the year moves forward. I am careful about what I put on the poster. Wishes do

come true. And so do intentions – with commitment, hard work, and focus.

My intentions for the Crones Counsel board are to carry forward the vision of our original Crone mothers, to get the website fixed once and for all, and to create a wonderful 2010 gathering in Albuquerque. My task is to assist the board with the focus and commitment to the work we need to do, both for the ongoing organization and for the planning of the next gathering.

I look forward to an enjoyable year for **Crones Counsel**.

What is your intention for this new year? Please share your thoughts and dreams for **Crones Counsel**, and let me know if I can be of any assistance to you.

Letter to Crones Counsel from an Elder

by Enid Williams (Meadowlark), Elder

Dear Lane [Franz, Atlanta Committee],

Your letter of June 22 was a special pleasure to receive. It is very good to know that you will be working with Betty Brown on the Thursday evening Honoring the Elders Program. I was touched that you want to come to know each of us before that special gathering.

Oh, I wish that I were coming! I have come to the difficult, really painful, decision that I will not attend this year's celebration of Cronehood, much as I would wish it was otherwise.

I would especially welcome getting to know YOU, and seeing Betty again: I admire her enormously, and I do appreciate all she has done to foster our growth as an organization — and to host this year's meeting!

[The Honoring Ceremony] has a special poignancy, a unique grace, that helps carry me through the coming year with my head held high.

You asked for our favorite honoring ceremonies, and any new ideas or suggestions. Well! The Honoring the Elders evening has been a highlight of each of the eleven years I have attended **Crones Counsel**. I remember, even before this 86-year old became an Honored Elder, that the Honoring evening was important to me



in a very healing way. (I never knew any of my grandparents, and I have felt this deep loss throughout my life).

I found women to love, to admire, to emulate, especially Ramona Adams, who is especially dear to me. In another way, the Honoring ceremony spoke to me. It gave me a more vital sense of where I am in the scheme of things, as a woman, and as a Crone. It helped cancel out the destructive messages we all receive in our culture, re: sexism and ageism. It helps us to become more whole, more centered!

The most memorable ceremony for me was in Boulder, Colorado. We were interviewed by some younger Crones, and the summary was presented to the group. I loved it! — because I am fascinated by women's lives, how they became the special folks we know and love now. Yes, it is time-consuming, but I believe it is valuable and wonderful to know more about the women we honor. (I think that it is a helpful, even therapeutic experience for the Honored Elders, too.)

I have ever been touched by the imaginative and charming gifts that are given to the Elders: a crown, a lovely scarf, a stone, a pendant.

Each year, I feel so blessed, so loved, as the ceremony unfolds! I don't know about the others, but for me, this Honoring has a special poignancy, a unique grace, that helps carry me through the coming year with my head held high. I realize that, even as my physical powers dwindle, I still have some unique gifts to offer my community: of wisdom born of long (hard) experience, of an ability to love all living creatures, and an ability to understand and to forgive.

TRANSFORMATION [continued from Page 2]

My world flipped inside out. I wrote letters to the Queen of England, Michelle Obama (I remember her loving arm around the Queen), the Dalai Lama, Oprah (Oprah!) — started a website — became more “public” — not easy for such a private person.

Now, as I think about this inspiration spreading, I visualize circles of women all over the world — each woman a beautiful pearl, all strung together, interlaced with every other women’s circle — strands and strands of luminescent pearls encircling our precious Mother Earth. Intending love. It’s that simple — and that profound.

WWIL you?



A Chance to Make Connections

by Julie Horst

I had a wonderful time at **Crones Counsel** XVII in Atlanta. The location (Simpsonwood) was gorgeous and I experienced much of what is known as Southern hospitality by many people there.

The theme of this year’s Counsel was Transformation and I believe many women did experience a transformation of some kind by the time the closing ceremony occurred (and if nothing during the previous days transformed you then most likely the “birthing” process at the closing ceremony did!).



As usual, it was terrific to see old friends and to hear the stories of new wisdom they’ve discovered in their lives since we last spoke. I make new friends every year and by the time I see them again the next year, I’m already counting them as old friends. I look forward to **Crones Counsel** every year, so that I can check in with friends and check in with myself. It’s a chance to make connections, to learn, to grow, to share stories, and in the sharing discover something new about life and living and womankind.



Everyone Brought Such Healing Energy

by Yvonne V. Pennington

Crones Counsel was a wonderfully transforming time for me. I loved the storytelling and honoring the elders. The setting was great near the river and nestled in woods. I’m so glad the Counsel accepted the invitation to come south. Everyone brought such healing energy. After I told my story of being stalked, the healing circle that surrounded me was profound. At that moment I became fearless and the nightmares stopped. I am now resuming my neighborhood walks that I’ve done for more than 20 years. I’ve become a crack shot. He needs to be way more afraid of me than I of him. What a blessing we crones are to each other. The dancing was wonderful. None of us ever dance enough.



Celebration Time

By Mary Randolph

Anticipation was high. I was in Atlanta for my fifth **Crones Counsel**. This gathering was so warmly presented, so well planned; it flowed as if by magic, with glints of genius throughout. I had such a good time I’m still crowing about it.

I enjoyed seeing old friends. I loved all the color and the dancers’ silent welcome. The intention card — what a great idea!

Highlights included meditation in our wisdom circle, workshops — both spiral dances, writing, plus the art DVD, and partying with my neighbors. I connected with other artists, met wonderful new people, and created a “change purse” to symbolize my personal transformation. I loved the “artsy” table of “shiny” things, especially the jewelry. The stories of the elders were inspiring. The town meeting proved interesting and I spoke up! I caught myself smiling a lot, even at total strangers, as I walked around enjoying a new environment.

The follies were creative and funny. The birth canal event, renewing. I departed Atlanta in the warmth of loving friends and friendly strangers. I left with a peaceful, hopeful feeling as I await **Crones Counsel** in Albuquerque next year.

Spiraling and Transforming in the South

by Betty Brown, Atlanta Committee

Well, y'all came. Mothers and daughters, sisters, 11 elders, new and old friends, crones from far and near — all to enjoy the sisterhood of this stage of life. There were 57 new crones — one from England, New York to Washington, Florida to California, 95 years of age to 42 — it was a happening!

And, as the committee welcoming song stated — We all shared, laughed, sang and drummed, spiraled in and out transforming things, circled 'round as stories bounded, honored what our elders know, provided workshops ranging from sex to age, offered talent for the show — yes, Atlanta became Crone Party Town for four days in October.



Everyone also seemed to appreciate the conference and retreat center in the suburbs of Atlanta, which provided comfortable rooms, all meals together, and many spaces for group and intimate conversations. Particularly our Central and Western crones enjoyed touring antebellum sites in Roswell and having a family-

style luncheon of typical southern cooking. Space and time was provided to those desiring impromptu forums or just time to walk the labyrinth. The XVII gathering's goal was to be a container for ... Transformation.

Following are some samples of what I, only one person, was told. Can you imagine what “magical” opportunities occurred for every individual there?

“I delighted in seeing my friends receive a standing ovation and hearing the constant laughter, and personally feeling so contained, supported, and loved.”

“I healed old wounds during an impromptu forum with women of shared experiences.”

“Calling the four directions during the opening with a deceased Crone's drum was incredibly moving.”

“Doing meditation with a crystal bowl was a unique experience, as well as dancing to the drums with wonderful Crone women.”

“My whole body recalibrated while playing the crystal bowl and I experienced profound peace for the first time in a long, long time.”

“I witnessed a powerful rebirth by a woman who had originally



been born cesarean.”

“The storytelling was so real, so honest, so heart felt that it brought me deeply into connection with myself and the women who shared.”

“It was so wonderful that we raised \$1,700 for homeless single mothers and children and more scholarships for our crone sisters.”

“My favorite part of CC was Honoring the Elders. The magnitude of love flowing to our elders and the magnitude of their combined wisdom and experience erased all my old beliefs about aging. I have a new archetype for eldering.”



“All the group healing for an organ transplant, ceasing of a stalker, a baby at risk, an important sale of a business, and others was awesome. We just came together for the need and I could feel the Crone energy pulsing through our bodies.”

“I made connections with several women from my area and believe we will start a local Crone group.”

“I connected with another women who has the same debilitating health problem and got her a doctor who specializes in treatment of the rarely diagnosed problem.”

“I laughed so hard during the follies that tears of joy streamed down my face transforming my whole being.”

And, the comments go on and on. But that's why we go to the gatherings, isn't it Crones? We go for connection, to share and receive little miracles of love and joy. Personally, I will continue to experience this joy for a long time to come. I encourage Crones to step into the experience of helping to bring together a gathering in their area. Miracles happen anywhere with any person/people.

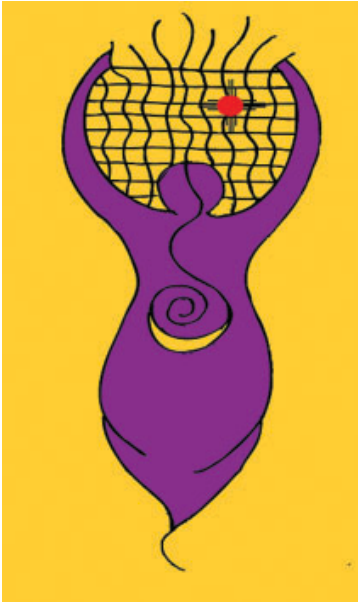
*See you in Albuquerque for WEAVING.
“Bright lanterns are lighted. Our friends
are invited” – September 22-26.*



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Crones Counsel XVIII

Wednesday-Sunday, September 22-26, 2010
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

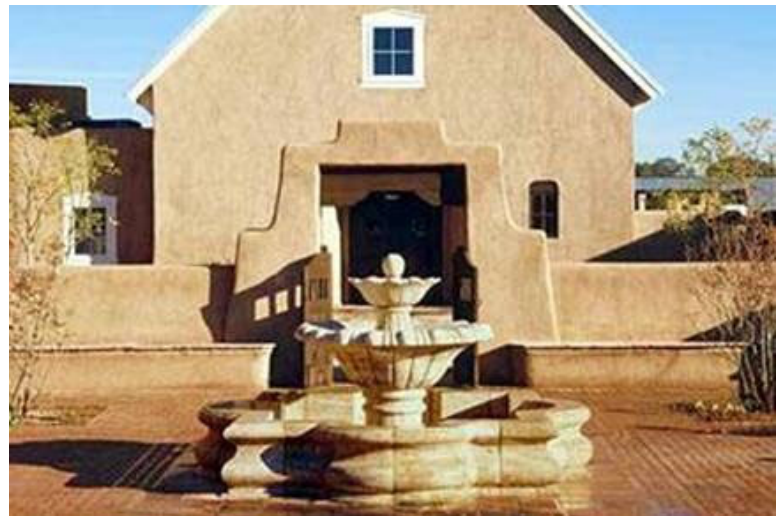


We will gather in beautiful New Mexico, land of enchantment. We weave our intentions and dreams into a blanket of friendship. To savor the people and the history of their land, we will stay in Hotel Albuquerque – a short walk to Old Town, which is filled with art galleries, restaurants, museums, and historical buildings

Weaving

Imagine the look of a blanket started, but the weaver has momentarily stepped away. The frame is the intent, many

years ago, of women who wished to gather to share stories and wisdom the years have given them. It is in learning and reaching that imbues the good and sturdy heartwood that anchors the warp threads, those threads that are perpendicular to the frame. They symbolize the before — 18 Crones Counsels — that connect to this frame reflect the commitment



of time, energy, and women who hosted and attended the gatherings. The weft threads, which weave in and out on the horizontal plane, are the women who have participated. The threads are woven in and out of the lives of not only those who were there, but the lives of all they have touched in one way or another. This has created a beautiful pattern that is reflected within and without each person blessed with Crone energy. The unseen but acknowledged weaver is The Crone. She, in her wisdom, is who holds the common thread that binds all of us together and keeps bringing us back to gatherings in person or in spirit to help us all be who we truly are.

TO OBTAIN A REGISTRATION FORM:

1. See Page 7 of this *CroneTimes* – there is a registration form included,
2. Call our registrar and ask for a form to be mailed or emailed to you, [see Page 11]
3. Go online and print one,
4. Register on line at www.cronescounsel.org

Weaving the Warp and Weft
of Crones Counsel in
beautiful Albuquerque!

CRONES COUNSEL XVIII

Wednesday–Sunday, September 22-26, 2010 — ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

REGISTRATION FORM

Please print clearly

NAME: _____

NAME YOU WANT TO BE KNOWN BY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBERS: _____

BIRTH DATE: _____ EMAIL: _____

We need your birthday for ceremony.

We communicate primarily by e-mail.

Please provide.

If you have one, please include.

Is this your first time? Yes__ No__ How did you learn of CC? _____

Do you have special needs? _____

Do you want us to assign a roommate to share a Double Room? Yes__ No__

If you have a roommate preference, please indicate her name _____

<u>CC FEE:</u>	<u>Before 9/1/10</u>	<u>After 9/1/10</u>	<u>Elder (80 & above)</u>	<u>Amount</u>
	\$185.00	\$210.00	\$100.00	\$ _____

I wish to support my Wise Sisters with a 2010 donation to:

Outreach fund \$ _____ CC Scholarship \$ _____ Crones Counsel \$ _____ \$ _____

TOTAL (Fee and Donation): \$ _____

Please make check payable to **CRONES COUNSEL, INC.**, and mail to:

Crones Counsel Registrar, c/o Judy Neihart, P.O. Box 9446, Salt Lake City, Utah 84109
Phone: 801/466-3923

To pay by credit card, please register online at www.cronescounsel.org

SCHOLARSHIPS:

Scholarships are available on a limited basis. For information on scholarships and any registration questions please contact Judy Neihart at the address or phone number above.

REFUNDS:

Cancellations up to July 31, 2010, will be given a total refund minus a \$25.00 processing fee.

Cancellations between August 1 and September 9 will be given a total refund minus a \$50.00 processing fee. No registration refunds can be given after September 10, 2010.

On Page 8, please sign

Liability Waiver and Assumption of Risk Agreement

CRONES COUNSEL XVIII

Wednesday–Sunday, September 22-26, 2010 — ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

ALL WORKSHOPS, PROGRAMS, CEREMONIES, AND CRONE CIRCLE LEADERSHIP ARE DONATED TO THE GATHERING BY WOMEN WILLING TO SHARE THEIR WISDOM AND CREATIVITY. OUR GATHERING RELIES ON YOU WONDERFUL WOMEN.

WORKSHOPS: *Contact:* Kianna Bader, 9425 Montevideo Dr., Wilton, CA 95693
kianna4064@gmail.com, 916/687-7507

MARKETPLACE: *Contact:* Patricia Layden, 17341 Military Road South, Seattle, WA 98188, yeslife@earthlink.com, 206/244-4264

CIRCLE LEADERS: *Contact:* Sally Reed, 265 Elder Avenue, Millbrae, CA 94030
sareed650@aol.com, 650/697-8433

PLEASE NOTE: *All contributors must be registered for the gathering. Artisans' products offered for sale must be Crone creations.*

LIABILITY WAIVER AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT

WAIVER – *Anyone attending a Crones Counsel gathering must sign a waiver of liability, just as you would when attending an Elder Hostel or other such event.*

PLEASE SIGN AND DATE THE FOLLOWING:

I have read the activity description and voluntarily enroll in the Crones Counsel gathering. I understand and realize activities involved in the program involve risks, which may result in injury to me. I knowingly and voluntarily assume all such risk, which I may sustain in connection with the above program, including but not limited to injury sustained while traveling on highways and over rough terrain, forces of nature, falling, slipping, and any accident or illness, which may occur while I am enrolled in the program.

Furthermore, in consideration of the permission granted to me to participate in the above program, on behalf of myself, my heirs, and legal representatives, I release and discharge Crones Counsel, Inc., and its officers from liability for any injuries, property loss, or damage I may sustain while participating in the above activity. I fully realize and accept the responsibility to myself and my companions to carry out all program activities according to Crones Counsel procedures and in a safe and prudent manner. This release does not apply to acts of gross negligence or wanton and reckless conduct.

I also agree I shall be responsible for any expenses incurred or damages suffered, as a consequence of my personal injury or property loss or damage; that I shall carry adequate accident and health insurance for this purpose; and that I shall not hold Crones Counsel, Inc., responsible for such expenses.

Signature

Date

My Life As a Crone

Okay, I'm eighty years old now. Have been for a couple of years. Noted by my family with a whoop-dee-do weekend celebration in September of 2007. At **Crones Counsel** meetings, first in Seattle and then in Atlanta, I was among the honored elders. I sat up on the stage in my wheat-colored satin pants and Belgian brown velvet top, grey hair brushed so the thin spot wouldn't show, glitter on my face, and profound gratitude in my heart.

For starters, gratitude for health. So far, so good, and that is the basis for the fun in this quarter of my life. Healthy enough to walk two miles a day, on errands or for pure pleasure. In the pearly early morning light or around the block before bed time. On the beach in this resort town above Monterey Bay, or to the movies, bookstore, or market. Not such long walks as I took in 1986, 1987, and 1988, when I participated in peace walks of several thousand miles in the United States and Russia, but, still, long enough to keep me moving. I think that's the trick: keep moving. And drink water. One of life's rules: never pass a water fountain without taking a drink.

Another health practice: massages. Because I live alone, my skin yearns for touch, and virtually purrs during a massage. Massage therapists have said that during sessions, toxins are released. "Drink lots of water the next 24 hours." Lately I've been getting Feldenkrais therapy and feel my joints loosening. It's easier to go up and down stairs.

In addition to maintaining good health, I recall Joseph Campbell's admonition: "Follow your bliss. Doors will open and guides will appear." For years, I've dinked around with writing little stories. Just as I was turning eighty, I gathered more forty stories that had languished about the house and put them into a book. My first book! Imagine! I had fifty copies printed and gave thirty-five to members of my family for Christmas, gave fourteen to people who contributed to a charity I liked, and kept one for myself. Friends said they wanted copies. From a publisher, I ordered more. I did book signings, talked to civic groups, and was listed on Amazon. Quite a leap from a stocking stuffer to Amazon ... in a single bound, like Superman. And all that was fun! So I encouraged audiences to write their memoirs, talked about my conviction that we owe our stories about growing up in the twentieth century to the next generations. Some balked and said, "Oh, I can't write all that stuff. It'd be too long. Too much work."

I answered, "So, you don't have to start at the beginning. Start with something you like, feel passionate about, enjoy, need to work out, want your children to know about you. Anywhere. Start anywhere. After I rewrote and polished the little stories, I sorted them out on the bed, more or less in chronological order, gathered them, and took them to the printer. Voila! A memoir titled *Tell Me a Story* because a granddaughter asked me tell her a story. "Tell me a story, Gran. Tell me about my daddy when he was my age."

That was more than two years ago. Since then there is a second book, *To Make the House Complete*, about a woman (me!) who in her sixties and seventies moved into four houses — two in Mexico, one on a farm in Oregon, a beach cottage in California — and a marriage, all needing work. She's keeping the cottage. The second book is one continuous story, a new format for me. More new experiences with the craft, with people, more frustrations with the computer, including learning about social media. I didn't know what that meant, but saw a notice that for \$20.00, a two-hour workshop on social media

for writers was offered at the book store about a mile away, so I walked up to see what it was about. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, Red Room, websites, PayPal, Skype — all new to me. Mass confusion at the keyboard until I found a computer tutor who comes to lead me through the new vocabulary and the new maze of the e-world.

As I write this, I realize my point is that to try new things, learn new skills, to be excited about life, to be curious and open-minded is vital to having a good time, so these years will, indeed, be golden.

Recently the local newspaper sent an interviewer to me who asked why I think I have been put on this earth. Big question. My answer was, "to learn everything I can and to have fun doing it." One of the things I've learned is that my ego seems to have withered and almost disappeared. At a younger age, when I was interviewed, I thought I was taking an important step toward a higher profile, a more recognized position in the community. Last month I noticed that none of that matters any more. I was pleased with the publicity because it might get me more gigs to talk about my passion for memoir writing. And maybe inspire others to take the workshops I've begun to offer. But, in the main, it was just pure fun. My only concern was that in the photo I might look fat.

I can almost accept a thicker middle, knobby hands that remind me of my father's, a saggy throat, feet that need orthotics. All signs of advancing age, but they are only superficial. The real sign is that we are wise enough to appreciate what we have. The real celebration is that we are here! What fun that can be!



by Donna Love,
Elder

About CroneTimes

CroneTimes is the official newsletter for **Crones Counsel Inc.** It is published twice a year, in January or February and July. When you attend a gathering, you will receive the next four issues (or two years' worth). It is also on our website: www.cronescounsel.org.

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Editor/Designer: Marta Quest

Editor/Reporter: Kianna Bader

Contributors (this issue): Nancy Lehto, Enid Williams, Ann Emerson, Sally Phillips, Donna Love, Yvonne Pennington, Julie Horst, Joy Winer, Phyllis Schlemmer, Mary Randolph, Marian Van Eyk McCain, Betty Brown, Lane Franz. *Photos by:* Jeanne Cannon, Maggie Fenton, and Marta Quest. *Thank you!*

CONTINUED

Jackie Gentry's Journey to Wholeness

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Jackie was very much missed at **Crones Counsel XVII** in Atlanta Georgia this year. The Board had a huge card for all to sign and Crone magazine asked everyone to do a bit of art to send to Jackie. Connie Dawson, the MC, announced that the Follies this year were dedicated to Jackie, our esteemed MC for so many years. Kianna and some of the other women who had sung in Jackie's choirs each year led the entire group in singing some of Jackie's favorite songs. A video of the entire Follies was made and sent to Jackie and everyone waved and sent their greetings. Yes, you were sorely missed Jackie. Below is a recent report.*



CHRISTMAS DAY WAS FUN! I got lots of presents and enjoyed wearing my Holiday vest and earrings.

almost two weeks, most of the time on a breathing tube. However, Jackie is a fighter, and she bounced back from this. We then moved her to a nursing home in Silver Spring, Maryland, that also has rehabilitative services. Her health is stable and much the same as it was in July and August.

Jackie is getting better hygiene care and more attention than she received previously. She continues to be alert and attentive, especially when people visit and when she reads cards, emails, and notes. I am convinced that she is "in there" and just hasn't quite figured how to "get out" and communicate to us. Updates are now typically posted about every two weeks.

Go to www.caringbridge.org/visit/jackiegentry for further updates.

Christmas Day, 2009

By SallyPhillips, Jackie's partner

The past two weeks have been okay. The sacral wound has continued to improve; it is much smaller now, but still needs constant attention. Jackie clearly "mouthed" the words "Merry Christmas" to one of the nurses as she was leaving yesterday!

Jackie moved from Prince Georges Hospital Center on March 27, 2009, to University Specialty Hospital in Baltimore, where they have a special coma emergence program, as well as a ventilator-weaning program. In subsequent months she was breathing on her own and had the tracheotomy tube removed. She made considerable improvement on the coma scale (eye tracking, mouth movements, a few actual words, swallowing, etc.). She reached a plateau in June and then regressed in July. This may be related to brain hydrocephalus, which we hoped would be corrected by a brain shunt to drain the fluid (end of July). Her cognitive deficits are still listed as severe, and we are still waiting for improvement. The only movements of her arms and legs are reflexive, flexor contractions especially in her right elbow, right hand, and both knees. The bones are all healed, and we are moving her limbs daily so that they will be ready for her to move them herself.

We had a scare in early September when she had major respiratory distress and infections that were not responsive to the usual antibiotics. She was in Mercy Hospital in Baltimore for



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My Daughter's Transplant Saga

by *ila Benavidez-Heaster*



A special thank you to the women who attended the **Crones Counsel** gathering at Atlanta, Georgia. Your standing ovation on Thursday morning, with all that hooting and hollering, woke up “that which is called by many names,” and while rubbing her eyes she muttered, “Okay, okay, I hear you!” Can you believe it? I got the phone call that evening after the Elders’ Celebration that the parents of my daughter Lavaun’s transplant donor were getting ready to pull the plug. Lavaun was in flight from Portland, Oregon, to the transplant unit at UC San Francisco.

As I made arrangements to fly out of Atlanta, thank goodness I had Susan Ann Stauffer and Katherine Barr to pull me together.

I got into San Francisco at 4:00 pm PST on Friday afternoon. Lavaun went into surgery that evening at 11:30 pm and came out at 5:30 am Saturday morning. The surgery went well, but what would be discovered later is that she had a heart attack while on the operating table. This was the first of many little glitches she would experience along the way.

After Lavaun became stable, she was transferred to the regular pancreas/kidney transplant ward and everything went spiraling out of control. A second surgery was required.

Lavaun was finally released from the hospital on November 20. We stayed at the Residence Inn for the next month.

On December 18, Pam flew with Lavaun to Portland, Oregon, where she continues her recovery.

Lavaun is well steeped in prayer circles, prayer bundles, healing light and love from all my communities. Tears well up and spill over gently washing my cheeks. I am immensely grateful.

A Short History of the CRONES COUNSEL BANNERS

by *Kianna Bader*



Have you ever wondered from where all our beautiful banners came? I have. Now I have the answer and I want to share it with you. I discovered that four of our **Crones Counsel** banners (numbers I, VI, VII, and VIII) were made by professionals at a very high cost. All of the rest were lovingly made by our own Marta Quest and Mahtowin. Marta

contributes her expertise in layout design and Mahtowin does the actual cutting and sewing. We are deeply indebted to both Mahtowin and Marta for all they have done and continue to do for **Crones Counsel**. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

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A Blessing on Our Elder Crones



by Melody LeBaron, Atlanta Committee

You crones are our teachers, our guides, and our mentors, and as your younger sisters, we ask this blessing upon you:

☾ With gratitude for the path you each have trod, making the way easier for us, we bless your feet. May you al-

ways stand in the truth of who you are and move forward with grace and ease.

☾ We bless your knees, that part of the body that bends in reverence and humility. May you always be able to kneel in gratitude, and have the flexibility and strength to follow the call of Life wherever it takes you.

☾ We bless your loins, your wombs — and the fruit thereof. Not just your children and posterity, but also all of the creations you have birthed into the world — artistic, literary, scientific, environmental, spiritual.

☾ We bless your navel, the center of the body that the yogis call the “hara.” It is when this part of the body is open and strong that we create powerful lives. And so we bless you that you will always have the courage to feel your emotions all

the way through, and that you will allow Life to flow through you, blessing all in your path because, as Elders, you have both the power and the privilege to do so.

☾ We bless your hearts, that forgiveness will be your constant guide, that the broken places will become strong, that you will share that strength with us.

☾ We bless your voices, that your speech and song may be strong with wisdom and guidance.

☾ We bless your heads, that you may always be open to the promptings of your intuition, of nature, of the Divine. If we could, we would anoint your heads with oil, placing it on the crown of your heads — that sacred place where as babies we all had a soft spot that allowed light to still penetrate to the pineal gland. We ask that each of you will feel the divine light of your own soul, and be fearless as you follow it.

☾ And finally we bless your hands — the hands that have cared for others and have given your gifts into the world. May your hands be open now, not just to give — but to receive. May you model for us all how powerful a woman can be as she receives love. May you show us all that the true gift each of us brings to the world is not what we DO, it is who we ARE.

☾ With gratitude for your lives and your lessons, we bless each of you with our love.



HONORED ELDERS: Ann Emerson, Maggie Rowlett, Ramona Adams, Lee McRae, Betty Wigington, Christina Horst, Marvella Kaplan, Kathleen Kernan, Donna Love, Betty Rockwell, Phyllis Schlemmer-Carmel.

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