Full Circle
By Joie De Fond

It’s interesting that the national Crones Counsel should be held in Salt Lake City this coming fall since that is where my journey began. We moved to Salt Lake from California when I was a young child and that is where I grew up and lived until I returned to California in my mid-twenties.

I now reside in Mt. Shasta, California, where I’ve lived for close to forty years and this is where I was introduced to the Crones Circle when the national gathering was held here in 2015.

When I heard about it, I decided that I wanted to attend even though I knew very little about the organization. I was at a place in my life where I needed to reach out and make more connections. Having semi-retired a few years ago, I found that I was becoming isolated and a bit depressed. I live outside of a very small town and can go days without seeing anyone at all if I don’t make an effort to reach out. It was a wonderful event and just what I needed at the time. The vitality and joy of the women was eye-opening since I was feeling old and used up. I was renewed and revitalized by that experience.

I met so many amazing and lively older women that it gave me a new outlook on aging and how it can be an exciting time of life full of opportunities to blossom and thrive as a wise woman.

A few months after Crones Counsel ended, I started the first Crones Circle here in Mt. Shasta. We just celebrated our first anniversary and everyone says they truly love and benefit from our circle. We have all gained valuable support and friendship through our association.

I plan to attend Crones Counsel this fall in my old hometown and ... celebrate with all my sisters the journey of life.

Once our Honored Elder Alice Yee starts walking, getting her to stop is no easy feat!
A Never-ending Wanderlust
by Honored Elder Enid R. Williams,
Salem, Massachusetts

We asked our dear Enid to tell us about her travels when she became a Crone. Here is her story.

Like many a newly “retired” Crone, the need to travel hit me in my fifties. Though I wanted those rather expensive jaunts to be deductible on my income tax and also related to my background, I looked for medical and psychology meetings overseas. These turned out to be wonderful educational adventures.

The first one, which happened when I had just completed my first Internship went like this: Our trip overseas was sponsored by the University of Oregon, for students to visit health, education, and welfare facilities in Europe and Russia. An added bonus was the opportunity to see firsthand progress in rebuilding countries after World War II. I was impressed by the enormous amount of work going on, especially in repairing buildings and cathedrals in Germany and by concerted efforts everywhere to bring societies back to a more normal state.

We were in Moscow, Russia, when a U.S. U2 exploratory plane was shot down. As we were leaving on a bus to the airport, Muscovites shook their fists at us.

I was deeply touched to be in Norway, where, in Oslo, I “followed” my great grandfather, Soren Peter Lawrence, as he left for America.

An Elderhostel trip to Wales; and a trip with Jean Shinoda Bolen to Ireland spurred my interest in those ancestral areas. Exploring the United Kingdom was icing on the cake.

THANK YOU ALL!

I could not resist a trip for nurses to China. We toured a hospital in Beijing that was just like St. Mary’s Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, where I studied to be an RN in the 1940s. There were differences, though: relatives could sleep overnight at the bedside, and they could brew, as needed, their patient’s medicinal tea. This kind of wanderlust never ends; though I am 94, I had fun, just now, re-traveling!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LIFE

Ginger Child
by Marian E. Karpisek

Ginger Child attended several Crones Counsell and was instrumental in helping create the 2005 San Diego Crones Counsel gathering. She served as Mistress of Ceremonies at that gathering, keeping things moving through humor and song. Ginger also wrote several songs that are still sung at Crones Counsel. For many years, Ginger was the circle leader of Women of Ancient Wisdom, the San Diego Crone Circle. She will be missed.

ASK CroneTimes!

Got a techy question? ASK CroneTimes! What are YOUR questions regarding mobile devices (phones and tablets) and their uses or apps? Write to CroneTimes and we’ll publish an answer in the next newsletter.

TECH TIPS

Did you know that you don’t have to BUY e-books? You can borrow them from your public library! Your public library offers e-books for research and pleasure. Get the Overdrive app and then start browsing. And the best part about e-books is that you never have to remember to return them on time — once they expire, they are “returned” to the library automatically!

Got a tech question? Write the Editor of CroneTimes and include your email address so you can get a personal answer.
A Crone Goes on a Bike Tour in Cuba

by Suzanne Gruba

“Esperar,” a verb in Spanish that means to wait. This is my very first lesson upon arriving in Havana, Cuba, after 18 hours of travel on a red-eye from Denver and a short flight from Miami. Waiting is not my strong suit. I like for things to happen now. Never been adept at waiting in line at the grocery store, waiting for the mail to arrive, waiting for my boss to be done with his zillions of edits. So here we are, Richard, my husband of 34 years, and I in Cuba after three months of intense preparation, which included training for bike riding and purchasing and carefully packing many ordinary things that would not be readily available in Cuba. Here we are waiting 30 minutes for our bikes in boxes which are just on the other side of that boundary that I can see, asking six or eight people, “Can you get our bikes for us?,” waiting for the right person to log them in, scan them, and say we could take them away. Half of the workers seemed to be on break and were greeting each other like long lost friends with hugs and kisses. Finally the right person arrived and we got our bikes.

Then came waiting to purchase a bottle of water from an airport store that was ostensibly open, but closed for over 30 minutes to balance the books or some bureaucratic thing. Finally, I saw that the little beverage bar nearby was open and walked over there to get “dos botellas de agua” (Better get two since I don’t know where I will get the next one!). Ok, finally got the water, now we need to change some money so we can get a taxi to get to our “casa particular” (room in a private home). There is no line at the money exchange window, but there is a guard standing there and he is telling me to wait, hmm, wait? Then another guard says, “Go ahead.” so I step forward, while the other guard says, “No! No!” Yikes! Finally they agree that I can go to the window and change my money! Fortunately, I had already made a deal with a cab driver to take us and our bikes to our casa and we were on our way.

All of the above which would normally take 30-40 minutes in the U.S., took almost 1.5 hours.

I finally relaxed and became okay with “esperar” or waiting, because, after all, I was on vacation and I was in Cuba where things move in a more leisurely pace unlike the U.S. Here we are waiting for our sag (support) vehicle toward the end of our trip and I am pretty relaxed.

Traveling in Cuba is like traveling in many third-world countries:
- Unpredictable plumbing, which included little or no hot water or water pressure, toilet paper in the waste basket, not in the toilet.
- Eating wonderful fresh fruit and food that grows a few miles away.
- Black market that is alive and well and the only way to easily purchase many ordinary things.

Traveling in Cuba is not like traveling in many third-world countries:
- They do not take our credit cards in Cuba and you cannot get cash out of an ATM anywhere.
- Because of the embargo they charge us 10% extra to change our money.
- There are hardly any businesses like grocery stores, convenience stores, shopping malls; definitely no Starbucks or Walmart. This was refreshing!
- Incredibly slow Internet even in big cities like Havana.

(We may complain about Comcast, but there is only one net-CRONE ON BIKE TOUR IN CUBA, con't. on Page 4)
work in Cuba and it is owned by the government.)

- Three or four kinds of beer available over 250 miles that we traveled
- One kind of bottled water in the whole part of the country that we traveled through.
- It is a communist country.

This is what was really enjoyable about Cuba:

- Staying in “casa particulars” or private homes with a family and having a wonderful home-cooked breakfast and dinner with local foods.
- Waking up to roosters crowing in the middle of Havana and every place we stayed,
- Local family-run restaurants with delicious food,
- Beautiful, clean uncrowded beaches,
- Visiting museums, a school, a family farm, historical sites like the Bay of Pigs, a stunningly beautiful cemetery in Havana,
- Lovely, friendly people who do not hate us for our government,
- Great rum, cigars, mojitos, beans and rice, and flan.

The second major lesson was gratitude. This one actually wasn’t that hard because it was obvious that we had so much compared to the Cubans. We readily have access to so many things — food, clothing, electronics, sports equipment, housing, cars, you name it, we have access to it. In Cuba they do not. They are driving cars that are older than I am (and I was born in 1950!), if they have a car at all! In the small towns and countryside people get around on foot, on a bicycle or with a horse and wagon. I could actually ride faster than the horse-drawn wagons. That was the only thing I could ride faster than.

The biking was great. I did not ride as much as I thought I would because it was hot but ended up riding 75 miles total over the course of six days. We left Denver and it was 44 degrees and got to Havana and it was in the high 80s. So I quickly figured out that morning with cooler temps was my friend.

Pictured here riding on a cool, shady morning through the Cienaga Zapata, which was not much of a swamp because they were having a drought. We traveled over 250 miles from Havana south to Jaguey Grande, to Playa Giron (near the Bahia de Cochinos — Bay of Pigs), to Cienfuego, to Trinidad, to Matanzas, Varadero, and back to Havana.
Cementario Colón in Havana

There is a language barrier if you don’t speak Spanish. We heard that lots of Cubans spoke English, not true! Richard and I were pressed into action in our group of seven for ongoing interpretation. My husband Richard is fluent and my tourist Spanish is pretty good and was darn good by the time we left.

This lack of consumerism in Cuba was actually quite refreshing and made me pause and consider, Can I do with lots less and be happy? Probably. Do I want to? Not sure, but with retirement looming in the near future, I may be just doing just that and loving it.

Feel free to contact Suzanne Gruba at crone-suze@gmail.com if you have questions or want to share about Cuba!
WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES
by Trisha Layden

My husband Tom and I have been going to jail twice a month for 30 years now.

It all started when we became Associates of a Dominican Sisters’ group; one of the sisters involved was Patrice Eilers, at that time the King County jail chaplain, and she talked us into doing a service for the men downtown. Later we did the same for the women, first in the jail proper, then in a work-release setting. Tom still does one service every week, two every other week in town, while we both go into another facility nearer where we live two Sundays a month. Ministering in jail is not everyone’s favorite volunteer choice, nor was it mine in the beginning, but I am now truly grateful for the privilege of bringing hope into a not-so-hopeful environment.

We’ve had some interesting experiences. The women are the hardest. Downtown, the facilities room faces a corridor where inmates walk by when being taken from one place to another, and if it’s a group of men the women all rush to the window. One time we had a scared girl in a prom dress who had been arrested with her date (for drunk driving?) that very evening. The other women in the room were really taking care of her, telling her it would be okay, she’d be out in no time.

Once at Easter I brought a little bottle with a wand and a bubble-blowing solution and passed it around. One of the women commented, “You gotta be careful with handing stuff around here, remember, we’re felons!”

The men tend to be more respectful, less inclined to emotional or “sassy” outbursts, though we occasionally get a “preacher” in the group who wants to take over, or someone who wants to challenge our theology, usually just to try and get a rise out of us. Which, by the way, they don’t get.

All these folk have made mistakes of a rather more serious nature than the usual, but the ones who choose to come to our service seem to be looking for a way out of their dilemma, not just a way out of jail. Most are in for drug or alcohol treatment. Our “preach” is of the “God is unconditional Love” type. We tell them we all make mistakes, some just get caught up in the process. I also tell them about how in Medieval times if someone ran into trouble they would be taken to the local monastery where they would wear simple clothing, eat simple food, and be given a monk’s “cell” where they could pray and think about where they might want their lives to go. I add that I realize this is hardly a monastery, but that they have the same opportunity while they are there.

One day Sr. Patrice called and asked if we could go to the DOC (Department of Corrections) office to pick up a van belonging to a man who had been rearrested. He couldn’t leave it in the parking lot or it would be towed. We had space on our property, so we said yes. The man had been arrested for a minor offense (being late for a check in with his parole officer, I think). When he was released he had nowhere to go, so we said he could stay with us for a couple of weeks while he sorted himself out. He stayed five years, and we began to work with finding housing for returnees (people getting out of jail returning to the community). In the process we discovered the Freedom Project, an organization that teaches Non-Violent Communication (NVC) in the prisons. We don’t do that, but we do attend the Community Circle, an open group of returnees and other people in the community, where we share our lives and practice NVC.

Many of the men and women we know have been designated “sex offenders,” and we’ve come to realize how exceptionally difficult it is for them. It is the popular notion that all sex offenders are predators and dangerous. As it happens, Federal statistics show that this demographic is the second least likely to reoffend. (Least likely to reoffend are murderers—probably because they never get out.) Most of the people we know want no more than to make what amends they can and to go on to lead a normal life once out of prison. They have been through all kinds of treatment and are willing to do whatever possible to prove themselves, but it is hard to find housing and work. My heart aches for them.

We all make mistakes, sometimes terrible ones. We are all human; we all deserve hope and a chance to create meaningful lives. This is why I do this work.
CRONES COUNSEL XXV
25th Anniversary Jubilee

Weaving the Silver Threads of Past, Present, and Future

Wednesday-Sunday, October 4-8, 2017
University Guest House & Conference Center
Salt Lake City, Utah

We look forward to our next gathering at the University Guest House and Conference Center for Crones Counsel XXV, where we will share in Storytelling, Workshops, Ceremonies, Honoring the Decades, Follies, and the Crone Artisans’ Bazaar. Salt Lake City, Utah, is an ideal location for fall weather. Come, renew old friendships and make new ones.

Gathering details are on the Crones Counsel website: www.cronescounsel.org.

Call or email annie Lehto, Registrar, 303-697-6016 or email her at cronenancy@q.com

See you there!

University Guest House and Conference Center
110 South Fort Douglas Blvd., Salt Lake City, UT 84113-5036
888-416-4075

TO OFFER A WORKSHOP, RESERVE A SPACE IN THE CRONE MARKETPLACE, OR BE A CIRCLE LEADER, CONTACT:

HOLD A WORKSHOP? Contact JoAnne Casey, jfincasey@gmail.com

LEAD A CRONES CIRCLE? Contact Meg Randle, meg.randle@imail.com

RESERVE ARTISANS’ BAZAAR SPACE?
Contact mARTa Quest, 2020 Hwy 99 N, #5, Ashland, OR 97520, 541-234-4383
RRandArt12@gmail.com

We need Crone Sisters to volunteer as workshop facilitators, program and ceremony planners, crone circle leaders, etc., by sharing your wisdom and creativity.

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.

Please NOTE: All contributors must be registered for the gathering. Artisan’s products offered for sale must be Crone creations.
Spring Board Meeting Report at the University of Utah

composed by Janet Morrissey, president

All six members of the Mother Board attended the annual Spring Board meeting (April 20–23, 2017) with Maggie Fenton and Kaye Chatterton being the newest members. I will highlight the major items of discussion and conclusions. I will close with ideas of “Looking Forward.” The Mother Board is working hard for Crones Counsel, and we look forward to an enlightened gathering, filled with magic and surprises. If there are questions or comments, please email me (m928@dc.rr.com).

I am enclosing the prayer-poem that opened our meeting on Friday, along with calling in the directions and drumming.  

We are here to listen  
not to work miracles.  
We are here to help women  
discover what they feel  
not to make the feelings  
go away.  
We are here to help a woman  
identify her options  
not to decide for her what  
she wants to do.  
We are here to discuss steps  
with a woman  
not to take steps for her.  
We are here to help a woman  
discover her own strength  
not to rescue her and leave  
her still vulnerable.  
We are here to help a woman  
learn to choose  
not to make it unnecessary for  
her to make difficult choices.  
We are here to provide support  
for CHANGE!  
— Northwest Indian Women’s Circle

REVIEW AND SUMMARY

The Board was presented with a review and summary of the year’s (April 2016—April 2017) accomplishments. Collected and assembled by Janet and Kathy.

Appreciation is given to Carol Friedrich who contributed much time and energy to this endeavor, particularly with the guidelines and forms. All of our existing booklets and forms have been updated, i.e., Standard Operating Procedures, Orientation, Scholarship/Grant forms, Planning the Gathering booklet, and Intent to Serve form.

New criteria were created for Scholarship/Grant, Public Relations, Marketing Director.

The original logo was found and replaces the current one. Business cards were designed and produced.

Follies guidelines are in the process of being developed.

Social Media (Suzanne Gruba)

Skype is used monthly by Board for meetings. Facebook is used for the current gathering with a member from the committee assigned.

Several women are assisting the Web Mother.

Website reviewed and edited continually.

New forms added to website.

Local Wisdom Circle contacts available on website.

Gathering (Mother Board [MB])

A wrap-up meeting at the conclusion of the gathering was held with committee members.

Emergency contact has been placed on registration form.

Archives Committee (Kathy Puffer)

The committee of four has met and has begun collecting materials.

The University of Utah is the repository and the guidelines have been accepted.

Collections (MB)

Pictures of the gathering banners are on the website and discussion of how to disseminate them is ongoing.

AV equipment is in the process of being sold due to expense of storage and transportation.

Budget (Kay Marie Bouma)

With careful management of our finances, we remain solvent.

Because we rely totally on income from the gathering, we work at increasing our numbers.

The Board discussed the registration fees and considering the pros and cons; a decision was made to increase the fee by $10.00.

Gathering 2017, the 25th Anniversary (Kaye Chatterton)

Please consider registering soon and getting your room reservations. The Board toured the University of Utah’s campus and stayed in The Guest Hotel. You will be pleased with the Hotel’s accommodations and breakfast. I believe there is some-
SPRING BOARD MEETING REPORT, con’t. from Page 8

thing for everyone at this site. There will be places to walk, but for women who need a shuttle, it stops outside the hotel.

A commemorative Memory Book is being created to celebrate the 25th anniversary.

Gathering 2018 (MB)
The Board is delighted to announce our 2018 gathering will be held in Bellingham, Washington.

We thank Anne Richardson and her committee for providing us the opportunity to visit Bellingham and for carrying on our tradition.

Additional comments (MB)
A Facebook in-service was given by the Web Mother.
Suzanne, who is our Web Mother and Vice President, will be leaving the Board after the fall meeting. However she will remain the Web Mother.

Our by-laws state that we may have more than one VP.
Kaye Chatterton and Maggie Fenton agreed to fill this role.

Looking Forward: (MB)
The idea of a regional luncheon is being considered, pending a more detailed report. This would be done to attract women in a certain area to acquaint them with the concept of “Crone” and encourage participation.

Our tri-fold brochure is being updated and revised.
A member of the Board has been appointed to oversee the Local Crone Circles.

Public relations and marketing ideas are to be investigated, discussed, and a timeline created.
A site for the gathering for 2019 is in the search mode.
Discussions continue to be held on increasing the concept of “Crone.”

The Giving Table
by Janet Morrissey

Fifteen years ago at the Crones Counsel gathering in Asilomar, I received this piece of art from the give-away table. This was my second gathering, and I found this idea of sharing an item of value to be a way to become part of another person’s life. Each woman is asked to bring a gift from home to place on the table, something she values. It’s a special gift from one Crone to another Crone.

The Honored Elders are asked to choose first, and then the decades in descending order are called to proceed to the table. Over the years I have received some beautiful gifts. One year I didn’t bring anything for the table. This is optional. A woman saw some earrings she knew I’d like. She told me to go and get them. I said I couldn’t. She said, “Yes, you can. I brought two items for the table.” So I did.

Another year I got a Georgia O’Keefe calendar with her beautiful flowered pictures and another year some amber earrings. And so it goes.

But my second attendance at the gathering was extra special for me. I remember seeing the wooden art piece and thought it was so beautiful and unique. I was pleased that it was still there when it was my turn. I do not know who made “Her,” but I felt the love and care that was put into this piece called to me.

Perhaps, as you look at the photo, it may be hard to see how real and accepting she is, truly a Goddess of Nature. Her arms formed by a wooden branch are perfectly curved and reaching upward, calling me into her center. Her center is woven of colorful yarn made into a diamond shape, representing the Native American Indian symbol or a Mexican symbol of the “Eye of God.” The God’s Eye is symbolic of the power of seeing and understanding that which is unknown and unknowable, the Mystery. (Wikipedia).

There is a large diamond shape from her neck to the arms and down to below the center point, creating four cardinal points representing the four directions and the elements: earth, air, fire, and water.

As I walked away from the table, I heard, “I’m glad you got it.” I am also. I had wished I had talked with the artist about her creation. If she is reading this, I would love to talk with her and thank her. I would tell her that her Goddess is well taken care of and kept in my sacred place on a wall where I do my daily practice.

Often we do not know the worth of a gift upon receiving it. It may take years to realize the value and importance it is playing in our lives.

Blessings

Blessings
Our Crone Council sprang from a women’s meditation group that met on Monday mornings at the Unity North Atlanta Church. They were Dixie, Debbie, Kathy, Sherry, Barbara Joy, Nancy, Iris, Drea, and sometimes Sonia or I would drop in. We always began the gathering with a heart check, which was a chance for each woman to share her feelings. The meditation group met for several years before our discussions lingered more on how aging was affecting us. Our age range then was 50 to 75. Drea brought The Queen of Myself by Donna Henes to one of the meetings. Our self-esteem needed a boost so we could step into the next phase of our lives with a positive outlook. We began to talk of honoring ourselves and some liked the idea of a croning. Speaking of ourselves as Queens and Crones introduced new language and ideas. Only a few of us were even comfortable using the word Crone as an identity.

Drea and I had been attending Womongathering (now Where Womyn Gather), a women’s spiritual festival near Scranton, Pennsylvania, since 2004 where we were croned and sat in the yearly Crone Council. Drea had been facilitating croning rituals at the festival for a number of years.

In June 2012 Dixie and Debbie wanted to step into the next phase of their lives with a ceremony. Drea and I shared our experiences with croning and encouraged everyone to think about creating this special ceremony. Dixie and Debbie invited special friends and prepared to be honored. The rest of us created a sacred space in the Unity parking lot with flowers on a canopy and in each corner we placed candles and sacred objects to honor the elements and directions. A small group of us and friends of the honorees walked the labyrinth next to Unity and made a procession to the canopy with Sonia leading us in Spiral Rhythm’s sacred chant: “Grandmother, grandmother I hear you calling. Grandmother, grandmother I hear your stories on the wind.” Drea led the empowering ritual. The magic had begun.

The meditation group continued to meet at Unity, but the croning ritual birthed another group that reached beyond those who attended Unity. Ria who had been invited to the croning by Kathy wanted to know, “What’s next?” She and her friend Mary K didn’t attend Unity, but were moved by the croning ritual and wanted to meet at another time and talk more about what being a crone meant. Drea agreed to help organize the new group. Most of those in the meditation group were willing to join a second women’s group; a Crones’ Council was in the works. The first meeting was held in August of 2012.

Everyone invited more women to join us and Drea started creating an email list. We decided on a monthly gathering at 10am on the second Friday with a potluck brunch to follow. Ria and Mary began offering their homes for a more intimate gathering space. Kathy offered her neighborhood clubhouse with adjoining swimming pool for summer gatherings. Other women have opened their homes through the years.

As the months went by Drea began to call the meetings together with a simple statement of purpose that she created:

*We gather to share our stories and to counsel with each other.*

**WILD SCALLYWAGS HERSTORY, con’t. on Pg 11**
Nesting
by Kaya Kotzen

This is what the holidays have been this year, a time of nesting. From Thanksgiving through to Christmas, from the flu to pneumonia and back again.

Not a time I would care to repeat but something I have gotten through.

Nesting,
Comforting and caring for myself and allowing myself to be taken care of. Leaving all my responsibilities on the shelf and just resting and letting my body mend.

Sometimes it was not easy, this letting go. My mind was not always sharp, my thoughts not always clear, my emotions conflicted, feeling stuck, unmotivated, as well as unable to move forward.

Long time that it was, it was necessary for this time of bodily healing, almost completed now, thank you God.

On the way out of it, more clarity, insightfulness and creativity blooming again. Finding my way back to life, lots of gratitude.

Weight loss, turning now to gain. Glad to be tasting and eating the things that I like, feeding the body again, as it exerts itself once more, knowing the pounds will come off again, or not.

No matter, I will get back in shape. I have come to appreciate nesting, that sense of home, and of well being, of being comforted by the familiar.

Even here in the desert, inside a mobile home without a big yard and with only concrete for a porch. When I am whole and well inside myself, I can nest wherever I am.

Journal Keeper
By Kianna Bader

Many times my mother spoke of going to her Home in Heaven. Preparing, she labeled all the family photos, wrote notes to all her grandchildren.

Destroy my diaries when I’m gone, she told me. And so, a dutiful daughter, I did that — tossed them into the kitchen trash.

Years later, I found in the barn a dusty box with more diaries. I read them without guilt, I told myself: pages of cramped words in minuscule script.

Lists of daily plans, meals eaten, phone calls — who called, how long they spoke, invitations to her siblings: to lunch, to dinner, to church — invitations, I know, mostly unaccepted.

At the end of her life, she begged friends for rides to church, with promises of lunch afterward. What emotions were unwritten — hidden in small scribbles, in a mother’s shorthand I couldn’t read.
WILD SCALLYWAGS HERSTORY, con’t. from Pg 11

graphs of women embodying a Goddess on Earth (2017). Our discussions with these guests took us to a crone’s place in a Red Tent and to traits of goddesses that crones can embody.

We engage in a wide range of discussion topics at our meetings. We’ve had crones like Betty Brown share her adventures of traveling solo around the world. A holiday during the month of the meeting might inspire a discussion of memories of holiday traditions that crones have continued and that they have changed. Topics often center on how significant women in our lives have affected our lives. We share challenges and adjustments to our lives created by divorce, death of a significant person, needs of children and grandchildren, retirement, new careers, health issues, economic difficulties, and artistic pursuits.

Our email list has grown to over 125 women ages 45-85. Most meetings are attended by 16 to 22 women. About half are regulars and the rest attend depending on schedules and topics that inspire them that are announced in the monthly reminder email Drea sends out the Sunday before the meeting. Two women have died and a small number have moved away. The Atlanta area is a melting pot of southern women and women from many different states and many different countries. Ria and Marian are from Holland, Heather from South Africa, Jen from South Korea, Adrienne from Ireland, Sonia from Venezuela, Yael from Israel. Our storytelling is rich in perspectives of lives shaped by many cultures and beliefs. Our common ground is our trust and honesty is sharing our lives with each other.

Fourteen women have been croned in five ceremonies through the years, usually in the spring or fall. Ria’s beautiful backyard is a favorite site. This spring two more women have expressed the desire to be croned. Drea organizes a special meeting for those who wish to be croned to ask questions of those who have already been croned. Once a woman decides to step into her cronehood, no other requirements are asked of her except to decide on a crone name. Drea and any woman who wishes can help create the croning ceremony. Some enjoy decorating, others create altars, bring gifts, sing, or drum.

Drea and I have bought a ranch home in a small neighborhood that we are using as the Drema Women’s Center. Crones meet there to drum twice a month, to tell stories and to sell their art in our annual Art in the Garden, to teach a class if they wish, and on some holidays to enjoy a festive party. Our Crone Council is full of vibrant women so we added the additional name of Wild Scallywags. We’ve consistently gathered most every month since 2012. Our council inspires us to continue to grow, listen, and honor ourselves.

103 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION:
Our beloved Honored Elder Ann Emerson, a resident at the Golden Prairie Home, celebrated her 103rd birthday on May 31 with family (daughter Lynne in pink on left) and friends.