Crone's Many Faces

The theme of this year’s gathering is SACRED PLAY. We will have lots of opportunities to play together and let our inner child come forth. Like the city where we will gather, we hope to bring forth the many faces of the Crone.

We gather each year to celebrate ourselves and all that is woman. We embrace our untold stories and those of our sisters as our own. We share our joys, our tears, and our knowing that we are related to that same umbilical cord of the Great Mother of us all. Each year Crones Counsel, Inc., affords us the opportunity to come together again to embrace old friends and open ourselves to new ones.

We hope you will join us this year as we explore and play within the possibilities of being the wise women the young women need as role models. They are waiting for us to lead the way. We are the ones they have been waiting for.

Register on-line at www.cronescounsel.org or contact Arlene Madsen, Registrar, P.O. Box 135, Farley, MO 64028, asmadsen@earthlink.net
We are always looking for workshop leaders to share their knowledge with the women who attend the gathering. Our workshop leaders are women who are also attendees and offer the gifts of their knowledge without recompense. This has always been one of the most generous of gifts to the gathering. If you have a workshop you would be willing to share, please contact Renee Durkin at renedurkin@aol.com.

CRONE FOLLIES
Saturday evening will provide us with time for our little girls to come out and play. Bring your talents and your musical instruments, and get ready for an evening of fun! Once again you can "strut your stuff" for one another in the fabulous Crone Follies! If you don’t think you have a talent to offer, then be prepared to cheer for your sisters who offer entertainment from the ridiculous to the sublime! Saturday evening is showtime! Don’t miss this great event for play and fun with outrageous women, and the little girls inside them.

CRONE CIRCLES
Crone Circles have been known by many names, depending on which gatherings you have attended you may know them as Clans or Wisdom Circles.

CRONE ARTS & CRAFTS
Crone artisans are welcome to bring their wares to sell. We always have a wide array of beautiful items made by our own crone sisters and available for purchase by you. Here is where you will find those unusual handcrafted items, books by authors present at the gathering, CDs and tapes from musical women artists in attendance, and much more.

Through the years this area has become one of the focal points of the gatherings and serves as a meeting place for visiting and shopping.

Anyone interested in being a participant in the vendors’ room this year, please contact: Marta Quest, P.O. Box 261, Ekalaka, MT 59324, 406/775-6664, e-mail bwv@midrivers.com.
To create an atmosphere of an intimate setting Crone Circles will gather together each morning. This is a time to meet on a more intimate level other women attendees. It is the place for first timers to have an opportunity to meet women who have attended before and can answer questions and embrace them into our larger circle.

Mnimaka has agreed to chair Crone Circles this year and will be looking for experienced women to lead individual circles. If you would like to participate as a circle leader you may contact Mnimaka at her e-mail address: mnimaka@sprynet.com

EMPTY CHAIR

The “Empty Chair” will again be set up in the main meeting room to remember and honor those sisters who are no longer physically with us. You may bring a picture or write her name on a piece of paper (available on the table) to acknowledge and honor her.

It is an honor to serve as President of Crones Counsel, Inc., and I look forward to learning from you and working with you as our organization grows even more exciting!

Reflecting on last October’s experience in Boise, and anticipating the fall 2004 gathering in Las Vegas, it is a delight for Crones Counsel again to have national gatherings that are planned and carried out by local groups!

We are grateful to the crone groups and individuals who are working now to plan future gatherings, and it is great to see the character of a specific setting and personalities of the host crones shine through the program at each site.

Locally-directed gatherings also are influencing a role change for the Crones Counsel Board: No longer carrying out the myriad details of annual event planning, Board members now are focusing more on overall management and policy, outreach to new participants, linkages to local crone groups, and communications with other organizations that focus on the well-being of older women.

The Crones Counsel operates on volunteer talent, time, and energy, and we appreciate the work of all the individuals involved — those who plan the gatherings, offer the workshops, develop the newsletter, maintain our database, serve on the Board, and more. Currently we could use help on some aspects of maintaining our website www.cronescounsel.org; if you have had experience with this kind of work and would like to help out, let us know by sending me a note — jhhgentry@comcast.net.

Thanks!

Make your plans now to participate in the Las Vegas gathering! I’ll see you there!
Crones Gather in Boise, October 2003

by Susan Ann Stauffer, a 54-year-old Crone in Training, who wishes to thank all who made Boise happen

As I sit at the computer, the Crone doll Julien Puzey made for me in 1998 stands sentinel. She stands witness to every Crone, every Crones Counsel, every word I put on paper about the 11 years I have danced with Crone. She is watching now as I write about the Crones Counsel in Boise, Idaho, smiling gently, trusting I will write something that captures the event.

We were welcomed the first evening by a drumbeat and a story, “and the voices of the women ... the old faces ... were heard ... in trust, listen to your heart ... reach out.” The return, the remembering, the renewing had begun. Later in the evening, after we understood what a “snippet” was and where the bathrooms were, Clans were formed. We found out that we had a Crone from the Horse Clan who had spent two months in jail for attempted murder. The Snake Clan hissed “snake power, women power, goddess power,” and the Bear Clan became the Bare-Breasted Clan right before our very eyes. We found out that “Crones Can Fly Higher than Eagles.” Was there ever any doubt?

The next morning we found out about “furniture disease” at storytelling. Ramona Adams explained it for us: “Furniture disease is when your chest drops into your drawers!” We learned about “rosebuds, roses, and rosehips,” “walking each other back home,” and “snow geese” who show up to let us know all is well on the other side of earth-life. We heard from poets, authors, filmmakers, artists, thanatologists, and grandmothers. We were let in on the fact that the bags under our eyes were really our boobs. In each storytelling session, we remembered how great it is to sit listening and laughing and crying with a bunch of old Crones.

The Saturday Night Follies were magnificent. They always are. This year a beautiful woman came all the way from Australia. She sang for us. Every bone, every cell, every tickle on the wing of prayer was enlivened, awakened, and renewed. We all fell in love.

The Honoring the Elders held some special moments. As I was standing with the 50-year-olds out in the hallway silently waiting to enter sacred space, my attention became focused on what was happening with the 70-year-olds. In single file, they too were waiting. One tall regal Crone put her hands on the shoulders of the Crone in front of her and began silently blessing her. Soon hands were laid on each woman in the line and the blessing was passed along. I cried.

Once in the Honoring room, I began to look to see just who was there. I was so pleased to see the two 90-year-old women, five or six 80 year olds, and a whole section of 70 and 60 year olds. As the music flooded into my soul, I knew I had returned to the place I love — being in the presence of radically alive, respected, creative, earth-centered, salty old women. When it was mistakenly stated that 60-year-old women’s passion is waning, a rebellion broke out. A whole cadre of women waving black roses stood up in protest and collective affirmation of the spirit of Crone who was most certainly alive and well in Boise 2003.

“And the voices of the women ... the old faces ... were heard.”