



CroneTimes

WWW.CRONECOUNSEL.ORG

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CRONE COUNSEL XIII

"Crone Vibrations"

by Marian Karpisek and the San Diego Committee

The vibrations of 200 crones filled the San Diego air, October 14-17, 2005, as Crones Counsel XIII continued the tradition of gathering women together to celebrate our age and wisdom. Crones from 25 states, as well as Canada, Mexico, England, Scotland, and New Zealand began arriving on Thursday and local crones invited early birds to join them for "Dinner with a Local."

On Friday evening, women filed into the ballroom of the Bahia Hotel to the steady beat of drums as the Opening Ceremonies began. While the directions were called in, the feeling of sacred space filled the room and set the stage for the weekend. As we sat together, we knew we were enveloped in a safe and supportive aura.

Each day began with storytelling. This is one of the most sacred and respected traditions of Crones Counsel and, as usual, we were moved to tears and laughter as, one by one, crones came to the stage to tell their stories. To better get to know each other, women next gathered in small Crone Circles to tell their stories in a more intimate setting. Power animals designated each circle and these animals

provided a starting point for discussions and sharing that ranged from poignant to humorous. Workshops were the focus of each afternoon and the variety of offerings was wide and wonderful.

Saturday evening's "Honoring the Elders" banquet featured fourteen women over the age of eighty who were centered by Laura Simon, age 99, a font of inspiration. Seated on the dais at the front of the room each woman was introduced and then spoke a few



SYDNEY SALT (foreground) and Mnimaka, Polly Whitney, Sunny Harper-Owen, and Virginia Tennes, of the San Diego Committee leading us in song.

words of wisdom that inspired and encouraged us. Following this, the elders led the way to the give-away table, followed by other women, according to their decades, where each selected something special.

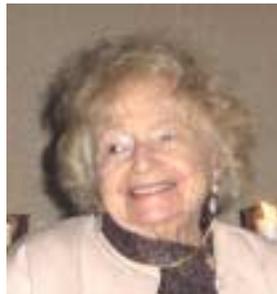
Saturday evening found a group of about 75 crones gathered around a blazing fire on the beach, despite the threat of rain, drumming up the moon. And rise the moon did although its appearance was quite brief. After the bonfire, Crone Follies enlivened the evening with dancing, poetry, singing, and skits.

The powerful Closing Ceremony touched everyone and a check for \$1270 was presented to The House of Rachel, a local homeless shelter for older women. Breakfast followed, and everyone was given a heart cockleshell to remember the heart-warming experiences we had during the gathering.

As we took our memories of Crones Counsel XIII home with us in our hearts, we discovered that we had become more attuned to the crone vibration and its emanations in the world. **"Gotta keep those crone vibrations a-happenin' within us"** until next year when we meet in Colorado.



SOME COURAGEOUS CRONES took up the challenge to learn belly dancing.



LAURA SIMON, our 99½-year-old Most Honored Elder.



JACKIE GENTRY, our Mistress of Ceremonies for the fabulous Crones Follies.

The "You" in Crones Counsel

by Sharon Hoery, President



Years ago a friend sent me a card with this saying by Willa Cather, "The end is nothing, the road is all." How these eight words say so much. Crones Counsel, Inc., now is envisioning its fourteenth gathering. Like the sea, CC has had high, high tides and low tides where her insides have been exposed. Yet, the heart of the crone still burns in the magic when women gather to sing, drum, dance, and share their authentic selves. Has the vision changed from the very first gathering? I would say no. From the very first gathering to the present, it is you, the individual, who brings to the gatherings your openness to expand and share from a place of authenticity.

Town Meetings began at an Asilomar gathering and have become a tradition. These meetings provide a time for listening and sharing — what is going right and what can be done to improve Crones Counsel, Inc. While listening to your comments, as well as reading your evaluations, you asked for more time. More time for storytelling, crone circles, and free time. The Board and the Colorado hosting committee have taken your thoughts and comments to heart. It does no good to listen unless we also take action. Crones Counsel XIV will begin one day earlier in Colorado, and there will be more time for Storytelling and Crone Circles, as well as a slot for free time to do whatever you would like.

The Colorado crones are working hard to prepare "Crones Journey." The Board, which at all times must adhere to the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws of the 501 (c) 3 corporation, are also working to assure the continuance of CC by putting in place procedures and processes. These processes and procedures provide for the next gathering, as well as those to come. Having clear guidelines opens the way for better communication. Processes and procedures are living documents, always being tweaked. For it is in the traveling that we find new ways of thinking, new ways to view the world. The one thing that does not change is the word "you," for it is you who Crones Counsel, Inc., serves.

A heartfelt Thank You — the San Diego gathering was filled with your generosity. Your support provided for scholarships and a \$1,270.00 donation to The House of Rachel. Then you wrapped your arms and hearts around two crones who have done so much for Crones Counsel. Ah! Is not the journey so filled with moments of gratitude and blessings? Thank You San Diego Committee!

Magic Is Alive!

by Mahtowin

Many believe that magic is just an illusion; however, I have stood in the face of true magic and have come to know it as real.

When I am describing my experience of Crones Counsel I often use the word magical to convey the feeling I come away with after attending. At each gathering there have been those exquisite and delicious moments when something happens that I don't expect that connects me to the universal bond of our oneness and our relationship to one another. The gathering in San Diego held such a moment for Marta and me.

While we were driving from our home in Montana to San Diego our truck broke down (for the second time!). We were climbing the mountains 12 miles west of the California border when our truck began making a terrible sound. Immediately we saw a sign that indicated an off-ramp just ahead. We pulled off and the only thing we found was a service station and towing service. After waiting for the vehicle to cool down we tried again, but no luck. We called our insurance and they approved a tow. The tow truck operator took us fifty miles to Barstow where we found a repair shop and access to accommodations.

It was late in the day when we arrived at the repair shop and they were not able to look at our truck until the next day. Our dilemma was that we were due in San Diego the next morning. We decided to rent a van, transfer everything from our broken truck into it, and drive to San Diego that night. When we called the repair shop the next day, we were informed that our truck needed repairs in excess of its value. We now had no vehicle and were 1600 miles from home!

If we were to fly or take a bus we could only get within 125 miles of home. From there no public transportation is available. Financially we were unprepared to obtain a vehicle that would make the long trip. We still had obligations to meet at the gathering and decided to attend to them and let the universe support us.

On the last morning of the gathering Marta stood before the women attending and asked for help. Did anyone know of a vehicle for sale? And then it happened. Someone from the audience yelled to pass a hat ... no, a drum ... to assist us in our need. Women gave their love and support to us beyond anything we could have imagined.

Nere Lartitegui told us about a friend of her sons who sells used vehicles. She told him of our need and how much money we could pay. She also told him that the vehicle he found for these two grandmothers must be one that he would be willing to sell to her. He did not have anything in our price range but he sent us to a friend of his who did and there we found our truck, christened "Crone Mobile"; our camper topper even fit its bed!

The gratitude that Marta and I share for this gift from our beloved sisters is larger than words. To be loved and accepted as we are was so exquisite that our hearts ached. Thank you for creating a space of safety where when we are in need we do not have to pull ourselves back up but rather we are lifted by our sisters. We are honored to know women such as yourselves. *Namasté*

*"The end is nothing
the road is all."*

— WILLA CATHER

THE BRIDGE-BUILDERS:

UK CRONES CROSS ATLANTIC FOR CRONES COUNSEL XIII

by *Marian Van Eyk McCain*,
© 2005. www.elderwoman.org



It warmed my heart when, at the end of Crones Counsel XII in Las Vegas, Susan Ann said a special “thank-you” to those of us who had traveled from other countries (in my case, England) to attend. And for me, her words also planted the seed of an idea.

Because cronehood is universal and the world needs cronepower like never before, we need to make stronger, deeper links between crones in different parts of the world.

So why not bring some others with me next time?

Trouble is, for most people here in UK, San Diego would be too far to go for a four-day gathering. Unless ... What if I offered a guided tour of California, as well? Having lived there, I know many neat places. I asked my partner if he would help me, because I no longer drive. He said yes. My idea took wings.

I belong to a UK organization called “Growing Old Disgracefully,” so I put an advertisement in their newsletter. The telephone started ringing immediately. We set a limit of four people so that we’d fit comfortably in a 7-seater minivan. Soon, four G.O.D. members had bought plane tickets for a two-week, Californian vacation.



INVASED BY UK CRONES! Clockwise from bottom left: Bea Milne, Marian Van Eck McCain, June Cottam, Margaret McIver, and Mani Partington



JUNE telling a side-splitting story about giving a pill to a cat!

adventures later, we reached Los Angeles. Here, we handed our guests into the loving care of the Angel City Crones, who put on a special potluck for them, took them sight-seeing and African drumming, and gave them a marvelous time.

“What a lovely group of women ...” wrote Mani, later, “... such a gathering of wisdom. They were so enthusiastic and interested to hear about us and our UK group ... Thank you Marsha, Alice, and all the LA Crones.”



ENGLAND AND CHINA. June visiting with Ava Su GanWei.

we were soon enveloped in their warm welcome. Crone circles enabled us to connect and share more closely and quickly find that in spite of the great diversity in age and background we were sisters under the skin.

“Afternoon workshops were skillfully run, informative, and fun. Making more new connections. What a pity we couldn’t do them all.

“There were so many highlights ... the evening banquet

Six months later, we were at San Francisco airport to welcome Bea, June, Mani, and Margaret and whisk them off on a whirlwind tour around some of our favorite things, like Yosemite, the redwood trees, monarch butterflies, humpback whales, the Big Sur coastline ...

Ten days, many walks, photographs, picnics, shopping sprees, interesting restaurants, and fun



MARGARET with Anya Silverman playing on the beach.

Alice accompanied our four by train to San Diego, where we all met up again at the Bahia for the highlight of the trip — Crones Counsel XIII.

“The prospect of meeting 200 American women was daunting,” says Mani, “... but



CHRISTINA HORST with Mani saying good-bye.

[UK CRONES, continued on Page 5]

UK Crones [Continued from Page 3]

and honoring the elders ... I enjoyed the bonfire and drumming on the beach and the hilarious Crone Follies – and what talent was revealed! ... It was sad yet heart-warming to say goodbye to our many new friends from whom we had received such a blast of love and energy.

“On the plane coming home I jotted down a list of words at random to describe the women we had met: generous, loving, colorful, charismatic, open, warm. Diversity, acceptance, energy, beauty, laughter, wisdom, spirituality, goddesses.

“Three weeks later, and after severe jetlag, the magic and the tingle are still there! I do hope some more G.O.D. members (and maybe me) will be able to attend a future Crones Counsel!”

Margaret said recently: “The number of people who have

said how well I am looking, and asking where I have been, is amazing. When I tell them where we were, and what we did, they were very envious – as I would have been if I had not been there!”

June summed up Crones Counsel thusly: “It was a wonderful experience meeting such beautiful, generous, warm-hearted women who were both serious minded, as well as full of fun. The world would have no problems if women were in charge. I came away from the Conference with two thoughts: 1. Remain hopeful, 2. Enjoy the now.”

And Bea wrote: “We were met with the greatest hospitality possible ... Crones Counsel I found immensely spiritual – what wonderful women were there. It was a unique experience for me in many ways. The first time I had been in a room with just so many women. I liked that. So you don't have to have men for fun. Well, not all of the time...”

As for me, I had a ball. Susan Ann, look what you've started!

Crones Counsel Membership

At the San Diego gathering in 2005, **Crones Counsel** initiated our new membership drive. Many wanted to know why we chose to become a membership organization and how does it benefit an individual member.

In our “Town Meetings” during the last two gatherings we discussed how to keep Crones Counsels affordable. At our Las Vegas gathering women present at the meeting suggested adding membership fees as a way to help defray administrative costs. The Board spent the next year and a half developing a membership plan that would have a sliding scale to make it affordable and also lend itself to those who would like and are able to support the organization.

In the past, registration fees have had to be split between the cost of a gathering and the yearly administrative costs, which include advertising, *CroneTimes* printing and postage, CPA, Utah non-profit organization annual fees, spring Board meeting costs, office supplies, website mistress, down payment to the hotel for the following year's gathering, and various other administrative expenses. Due to these costs, a portion of registration fees have to be held aside to make sure that the organization can remain financially viable.

With the introduction of the new membership plan, **Crones Counsel** can cover our financial needs and use the registration fees for the gatherings. This can benefit the women who attend the gatherings in numerous ways. If all of the fees can be used for the gathering then we will be able to provide more meals to attendees, which would decrease your costs of attending. We are currently offering to any member a small discount in the registration fee for our Boulder gathering in 2006. We are hoping that with enough members we will be able to provide a few rooms at no charge for some of our elders who might need

some financial assistance. There are many possibilities and the potential is limitless as to what the addition of membership might bring to **Crones Counsel**.

Will you be excluded if you are not a member? The answer is no. Everyone is welcome and invited to join in the celebration. If you are on our mailing list you will still receive *CroneTimes* and any other information that is sent out during the year.

This is a new program for **Crones Counsel** and will take time for us to realize all of the benefits that can be derived. The Board is open to the process, and as memberships continue to come in it will be able to divert more money toward the gatherings to benefit the women who attend. While the Board has financial responsibilities we must also be very diligent in keeping **Crones Counsel** a place of counsel for all women. We must listen to all in our Town Meetings and then implement your wishes when we can. While we are legally bound to have a Board of Directors, we must always remember that we stand in service to the women who make up **Crones Counsel**.

Even if you are not planning to attend a gathering, by becoming a member you will be supporting other women who otherwise might not be able to experience the magic of **Crones Counsel**. We hope you will consider becoming a member. **Crones Counsel** is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization and contributions are 100% tax-deductible.

To become a member, or to donate to **Crones Counsel Inc.**, log on to www.cronescounsel.org where you may pay by credit card, or send your check to **Crones Counsel Inc.**, P.O. Box 485, Ekalaka, MT 59324.

Basic membership is \$35.00, Elders (80 years and older) \$20.00, and Supporters \$50.00 and up.

My Thoughts on the Flight Home



by Beth Morris, Crone,
Flowery Branch, Georgia

I claim myself Crone. In saying, “I claim myself to be Crone” I willingly, proudly, take on the mantle of the “old woman.”

Archetypically, Crone is one of the three aspects of the Sacred Feminine – the Maid, the Mother, and the Crone. The chronological age is generally

after 50, but when a woman has traveled her path, has loved and been loved and also dealt with the problems that come with being woman: onset of puberty, childbearing and raising, the betrayals of trusted ones, divorce, death, finding herself responsible for support of her children or the care of aging parents, near-poverty, all exacerbated by the challenges that all women endure when living in a time when the male energy and patriarchal culture dominates life on this planet, she is entitled to call herself whatever she wishes.

I choose Crone. In choosing Crone, we are claiming a confidence gained through meeting and dealing with whatever our lives, culture and/or fate, karma, have faced us with. We can now, with confidence, declare ourselves wise women, deeply spiritual, emotionally stable, and competent to live our lives completely and fully in the knowledge that we have “stood our ground and done what we had to do” and we will carry forward in that strength for the remaining days of our lives.

There are always giant steps in emotional growth for me; there is this deep feeling of being known for who I really am... and loved. There is a knowing that I am part of something which goes much deeper than just being at Crones gatherings with women of my own age and generation although that is the only place and time that this growth happens for me. There is spiritual growth, which words are inadequate to describe. As a spiritually grounded person, I am sure you have been in situations wherein the present moment is unfolding on many levels. One, in which you are aware of your own physical presence and what is going on around you, and at the same time, your spiritual awareness is observing from another plane, and there is an unarticulated knowing that much, much more is going on than

*“Be a part of the heart of Crones
Counsel. Give voice to your wisdom.
Hear the wisdom of your sisters.”*

— MNIMAKA, 2002

(literally) meets the eye. And I may not ever “know” intellectually, “what this was all about”. I do know that something happened that filled me and others with love.

In one very moving moment, I sat alone, tears of love streaming down my face. Anya Silverman, who also had tears streaming down her face, sat down beside me, put her arms around me, and said, “I can’t let you sit here and cry alone. Where ever, except at Crones, is love for each other so freely given and accepted.

That’s what happens with me. At Crones, I have been deeply and blessedly immersed in the archetypal, and the metaphysical. At Crones, I found a sisterhood I did not know existed. At Crones, I have also been in the company of great heroic, creative, vigorously alive, loving women – Old Women. I would dwell here forever, but my work is done and my growth is continued out here, where I physically live. We are all wildly different; we are all the same. We are the Wise Women. We are Crone ...

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

If you are serious about expanding the message of **Crones Counsel**, we need your help. At present there are seven wonderful, exciting, committed Crones on the Board. However, we cannot do it alone! Believe it or not, there is work that goes on all during the year between gatherings that make it all happen. We are looking for two more women who are passionate about taking the message of **Crones Counsel** to others. Maybe YOU are the ones we are searching for. You may nominate yourself or another individual. The criteria are:

- › be at least 50 years old,
- › have attended a minimum of two **Crones Counsel** gatherings,
- › be able to attend the annual Spring Board meeting and the Fall meeting at the National Gathering,
- › have e-mail and be able to open attachments for all board communications,
- › have prior involvement and commitment to women and Crones work,
- › must be available at all times during the gatherings,
- › have the ability to work harmoniously with a group,
- › participate actively in Board e-mail decision-making,
- › must be able to make a five-year commitment

If you are interested, please contact Kianna Bader, 9425 Montevideo Dr., Wilton, CA 95693,

kianna4064@aol.com, for an application form.

Applications must be received by August 20, 2006.

MARJORIE SPEECE

A Sparkle in Her Eyes

by Marji Nash

A sparkle in her eyes, a smile that wouldn't quit, and a glow I'd never seen before – that was Mother (Marjorie Speece) after her first Cronos Counsel in 1996.

I was in Colorado for a visit and knew nothing of this thing called Cronos Counsel. I was meeting Mom and my sister, Walta, for supper upon their return from CC IV in Boise. I knew that Mom (then 84) would be exhausted, so expected the meal to be a quick one.

Was I in for a surprise! Mother walked into the restaurant, animated, carrying a leather rattle adorned with feathers, and overflowing with stories of the Crone – stories of a floor exercise workshop led by this dynamo from California, stories of drumming and dancing and a full moon, and stories of the stories told by other Cronos.

Who was this woman who called herself Crone? A woman now embracing and connecting with women whose lifestyles and life experiences were so very different from her own; a participator rather than an onlooker; a woman proud to have been honored, and to have accepted the honor, for being eldest of the Elders.

Mom loves life. She continues to open herself to new ideas and experiences. She likes to ask questions and truly wants to hear the opinions of others (and will be quick to say "Speak up" or "Microphone" when she can't hear). She's less judgmental. The deep creases once etched above her upper lip have softened, nearly disappeared, as she no longer automatically purses her lips in disapproval.

Mother has found her voice. She will be the first to tell you that she "has come into her own." And no one is as surprised

as she is — this just isn't what she had expected at age 93. She will go on to add that none of this would have occurred without the support, love, and sharing of the women at Crone Counsels.

This past October, Mom, Walta and I attended CC XIII in San Diego – Mom's ninth Counsel, our fifth as a threesome – and she's already looking forward to seeing all of you in Boulder, Colorado, next year.



WALTA RUFF, beloved mother MARJORIE SPEECE, and MARJI NASH heading for the Bahia Hotel for their yearly Cronos Counsel.

Who Are We?

CRONES COUNSEL, INC., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring and celebrating the lives of older women. We use the word *Crone* to refer to and reclaim the original meaning of the term: A Crone is an elder woman who embodies wisdom, one who embraces both the light and the dark sides of her life. At our national gatherings, we conduct workshops, exchange information, and enjoy singing, dancing, and drumming. As we listen to each other's stories, we share laughter and tears, always honoring one another, especially the eldest in our midst. As a result, we are able to go out into the world with more power, knowledge, and energy for the paths that lie ahead.

♀ SACRED MAKING OF RELATIVES CEREMONY
♀ NEW MOON LODGE
♀ DAY TRIP TO MEDICINE ROCKS STATE PARK
♀ STORYTELLING
♀ SINGING
♀ DANCING
♀ DRUMMING
♀ HERBOLOGY
♀ NUMEROLOGY
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BUFFALO WOMAN'S Vision
presents
My Sister's Sister
Celebration of Womanhood
A WEEK'S RETREAT
July 4-10, 2006
Gather as a tribe of women united by our will, not by an accidental genetic link. Make the journey to the soul and hold with reverence what we find. We are bound not by blood but something more profound. We are a power more palpable than parchment, more sacred than what anyone proclaims. By choice our paths are joined. Dream of a world we collectively envision for the future.
WE ARE OUR SISTER'S SISTER.
Come to that place!
At Beautiful Camp Needmore in Ekalaka, Montana.

CRONES COUNSEL XIV "Crones Journey"

WEDNESDAY, SEPT 27-SUNDAY, OCT 1, 2006

at the Millennium Harvest House in BOULDER, COLORADO

*"Gonna take a Sentimental Journey
Gonna head for Crones Counsel
Gonna make a Sentimental Journey
Just can't wait – can't you tell?
Got my bags, got my reservation
Gonna renew old memories,
Like a Crone in wild anticipation
Won't you come along with me?
October, that's the time we meet, October
Won't you join me out in Boulder?
Come and drum and sing, and everything;
We'll have a fling.
Always knew we'd have a celebration
It will be grand, don't you agree?
Colorado, beautiful location;
Won't you take this journey with me?"*

**COME, JOURNEY WITH US!
ENRICH YOUR LIFE AND SPIRIT!**

Take a journey across the Rockies into beautiful Colorado. When you arrive at Counsel in Boulder, you will be in sacred space. We will gather to share our respective journeys with moving storytelling, wonderful workshops, and meaningful songs, drumming, and ritual.

You will be surrounded by sister support, with connections safe, inclusive and empowering. If you are returning to Crones Counsel, we welcome you back. If you are new to our Crone gatherings, we welcome you to the awesome power and energy that is created when Crones gather.

Our Elders will be honored with a special ceremony and we will all be treated to a fun and rousing talent show put on by you. Our *Crone Marketplace* is not to be missed—many crafted items created by Crone sisters.

*Come journey with us. Bring your stories,
your songs, your drums and yourself.*

The *Millennium Harvest House Hotel* is unique in its décor and western hospitality. The friendly and attentive staff is looking forward to our unique **Crones Counsel**. Go to www.millenniumhotels.com for more information about this Boulder Hotel.

The Hotel is located in downtown Boulder, Colorado, just a short shuttle ride from Denver Int'l. Airport. It is

near the beautiful campus of the University of Colorado, right on the Boulder Creek Path, a popular jogging, walking and biking path, which leads to the famous Pearl Street Mall.

The hotel has graciously agreed to reserve your room three days before and after CC XIV at the same low gathering rate to allow you to see more of Colorado.

COLORADO ATTRACTIONS: *Boulder:* Celestial Seasonings Tour; Chautauqua Park; Leanin' Tree Museum. *Denver* (35 miles away): Museum of Nature & Science; Zoo; Art Museum; Botanic Gardens; State Capitol. *Colorado Day Trips:* Rocky Mtn National Park; Estes Park; Casinos at Central City, Blackhawk; Garden of the Gods, Pikes Peak, Air Force Academy, etc.

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