



CroneTimes

WWW.CRONESCOUNSEL.ORG

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ENCHANTED by the 2010 Crones Counsel

by Berta Parrish,
first published in *Elderwomen*

The state of New Mexico advertises itself as the “land of enchantment,” and it is breathtaking. However, when you add the beauty, humor, fellowship, and energy of 130 women embracing life at whatever age, a spell was definitely cast at the Eighteenth International **Crones Counsel** gathering in Albuquerque. From the opening ritual dramatizing the Native American myth of Grandmother Spider to the closing ceremony, the theme of Weaving interlaced everyone’s hearts and minds.



next three days. Everyone over eighty years was on the stage being acknowledged for the simple act of growing old. Each woman shared her hard-won wisdom in a short statement of advice or insight. Afterwards, they were given the best seats, were first in line for meals and the Give-Away Table, and were generally revered and cared for by friends and strangers alike.

The gatherings further the organization’s mission: to promote equality, encourage diversity, support personal empowerment, and honor older women’s wisdom and accomplishments.

These two traditions plus so many others, such as interesting afternoon workshops; supporting Crone Circles; the touching Empty



The first thread was the daily Storytelling. Women from New York to California got on the stage to share their stories — sad tales of abuse needing healing; compelling stories of loss and recovery; inspirational stories of fear conquered — all powerful and liberating stories of the suffering, courage, and joys of being a woman. If the speaker wanted a standing ovation, all she had to do was ask and the audience exploded with clapping and cheering. What a joyous noise we women make!



MARSHA SCARBROUGH passing the finished weaving.

Another thread is the “Honoring the Elders” ceremony that set the tone for the



BERTA PARRISH (standing in purple) with her Crone Circle during Crones Counsel XVIII Albuquerque.

Chair to honor deceased friends; the hilarious Crone Fol-lies; and lots of laughing, singing, and drumming, comprise the annual **Crones Counsel**

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ENCHANTED CRONES COUNSEL, *con't. from Page 1*

gatherings, which started in 1993. The yearly gatherings are planned by local groups [or the **Crones Counsel** board] and held at different locations ... in the western United States ... Portland, Oregon, has been selected for the October 12–16, 2011, gathering.

The term “Crone” was deliberately chosen ... to confront the stereotypes and challenges facing aging women. The name “**Crones Counsel**” was selected ... to reflect the intention of creating a place where older women can share their histories and counsel each other.



I left the gathering feeling quite energized at 64, eagerly anticipating the opportunities ahead, and appreciating the awesome wisdom of older women. By assuming the mantle of Crone, we are reclaiming the archetype of the Wise Woman in a youth-centric culture.

Grandmother Spider was indeed very active at **Crones Counsel** XVIII, weaving a strong web of love, support, fun, and optimism, so each participant could take home a strand to connect others to Crone Consciousness.

BERTA PARRISH is the author of “Wise Woman’s Way: A Guide for Growing Older with Purpose and Passion” (www.wisewomansquest.com).

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): Berta Parrish, Beverley Millison, Lee McRae, Hilda Hodges, Virginia Small, Pat Hanson, Bronwynn Forrest Torgerson, Phyllis Clifton, Annie Lehto, Patricia Layden, Kianna Bader, Kaya Kotzen, Suzanne Gruba, Julia Moore, Carol Friedrich, Hanna Bouchard, Marta Quest, Patricia Weller.

Thank you!

A DIVERSE GROUP OF WOMEN

by Beverley Millison, first-time attendee of Crones Counsel

I have to admit that my primary reason for attending the **Crones Counsel** in Albuquerque was that one of my sons lives in Arroyo Hondo, so it would be convenient to visit him on my way. Once having attended however, now I will return whenever I can.

The programmed activities provided were inviting and sometimes hard to choose among. Also I enjoyed having some free time each day to allow for spontaneous gatherings, meeting new friends, further exploration of new ideas, or just enjoying the setting.

I really appreciated the care and hard work that had obviously gone into planning the Counsel, providing a very smooth, well-organized, varied program, attracting a diverse group of women who were a delight to meet and spend time with. Our location, so close to the Old Town, was of course a bonus, which enriched our days and evenings. My first experience of **Crones Counsel** was a very positive one, and I would recommend giving it a try to anyone.



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It's Been Such an Interesting Time!

by Honored Elder Lee McRae

The important strands of my 86-year-old history have been my love of music, and my heritage of resistance to all forms of violence. I am a Mennonite by birth; it is one of the historic peace churches. This stance has been a given that I have been guided by all these years.

My passion for music started with my parents. My father had a beautiful tenor voice, and Mother, a clear soprano to match. I accompanied them as they sang duets in church, we sang in the choir, I formed a children's chorus, my older siblings and I sang trios. My high-school music teacher introduced me to Elizabethan madrigals, which sparked my love of early music from then on.

How lucky I was to meet and marry a conscientious objector who had a beautiful tenor voice!

When we moved to Berkeley we sang madrigals with new friends. When the Berkeley public schools taught the children to hide under their desks from an imagined enemy nuclear attack, and had no dance, music, or art classes, we joined with like-minded friends and decided to start our own school where the arts would be primary. (Our four daughters all attended.) It became Walden Center and School, in agreement with Thoreau's essay on "Civil Disobedience." I became the music teacher and taught the older children how to read music through the recorder program. Meanwhile I was singing and playing recorder with small groups specializing in early music. By then I had accumulated instruments, which were used in Medieval and Renaissance times: all sizes of Renaissance recorders, hurdy-gurdy, vielle, citole, psaltery, and a medieval organ (*portatif*).

By then I was ready for a sabbatical to learn a new instrument, the viola da gamba. Just as I started lessons I was asked to become agent to the world's most famous recorder player, a Dutchman named Frans Bruggen, and his harpsichordist. I found that hard to turn down, as I had been a fan of Frans for years. So I started a new career at age 50. Fifteen years later I had a roster of European Baroque artists who taught the new way of interpreting Baroque music using original or replica eighteenth-century instruments. Young musicians who heard this sound flocked to Europe to study with them, then returned to perform and teach. Recently I realized that I had helped start this early music revolution in schools and universities nationwide. I also recalled that I had never had a signed contract with any musician on my roster.



LEE McRAE playing Renaissance instruments: the vielle, gamba on stand to her right (taken at a school demonstration).

Why do we trust our instincts? What is it that inspires trust in people? Why do we believe in synchronicity? Why are we willing to proceed without knowing all the answers? I think it must help to have faith in ourselves and our beliefs, as well as a positive attitude toward the unknown. Being willing to take responsibility for whatever happens and then gracefully accepting the outcome.

I love to start things. Besides Walden I have started (or co-founded): Early Music America (a national organization), Singers' Retreat, San Francisco Consort, San Francisco Early Music Society, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra (board of trustees), Viola da Gamba Society — Pacifica Chapter, His Majesty's Musicians (a program for schools), Renaissance Day Camp for Young People, and a local Cronos Circle.

I have also self-published four books for teachers: "Handbook of the Renaissance Europe: 1400–1600"; "Renaissance Activities for the Classroom: games, dances, songs, rounds, riddles, recipes"; "Bringing Medieval Music Alive in the Classroom: Alfonso el Sabio and the Cantigas de Santa Maria" — a curriculum unit for teachers; and "Music in History and Holidays: Medieval, Renaissance, Early America."

Courage conquers!



Ann and Lynn Emerson

Our beloved Honored Elder Ann Emerson, 96, and her daughter Lynn have moved to Canada to join Lynn's husband who works in Regina, Saskatchewan. Ann, a native American, and Lynn, a native Canadian, are both dual citizens, and although Ann was born in the United States and enrolled in Social Security at its inception, she was not allowed any Medicare, Medicaid, or Social Security benefits. All the services Ann requires are covered by the Province of Saskatchewan.

Ann and Lynn plan on being in Portland this year, and would love to hear from you in the meantime. Their address is 9 Carmichael Bay, Regina, Saskatchewan, S4R 0C7, Canada, and their phone number is 306/205-5970. Ann's email is aemerson@myaccess.ca and Lynn's is lynnemerson@me.com



Creating a “SOFT SPOT”

by Hilda Hodges, Santa Cruz, CA

What is it about **Crones Counsel** that has inspired me to return for four years? I find when I try to tell friends about my experience of these wonderful gatherings, it is difficult to give full and accurate expression of why. How can that be, as there are so many varied activities, small-group discussions, sharing of individual woman’s stories, and honoring of the elders? There is so much more that happens in between, during, and after scheduled items and events that lasts, which creates that “soft spot” in each woman, that feeling of being connected to and strengthened by other women. That is the “ah,” the reinforcement of who we are,



what we strive to be, and are becoming.

I am impressed by the variety of women who participate in these gatherings from lives as homemakers to professional women with urban or more rural backgrounds, interests galore: the writers, jewelry artists, teachers, managers and administrators, and those in the “helping professions,” and so on. I am especially grateful and inspired by those who plan the various workshops and activities for celebrating women. I like that the conferences are held in different parts of the country each year, giving women the opportunity to learn about the geography and culture of a given area and to meet new women who reside in and around the designated area of the conference.

I come and I return, as I realize the importance of learning from and being supported by other women who have different life experiences from my own, yet are similar due to our desired goals of community connections, healthy families, financially secure lives, and education/training that sustains our interests and aspirations. I am learning to value my advancing years, my Crone years: I will return ...

No Expectations, Just Curiosity



By Virginia Small

In September I went to my first **Crones Counsel** yearly gathering. Although I have been going to my local **CC** meetings for several years I have not had the opportunity to attend an international gathering.

I went without expectations, just a curiosity about what was going to take

place. I wondered what I was going to experience and what feelings I was going to bring back.

The experience turned out to be phenomenal. I met, talked with, and broke bread with elders, grandmothers, and wise women from virtually everywhere.

I truly can’t tell you what I liked more: the chance to talk at the lunches, the evening gatherings, or the small groups.

My group was the Ravens. We met each day and had lively and intimate dis-

cussions on whatever suited our fancy. We enjoyed each other’s company so much that I was sorry to see our group come to an end.

I wish I had time to meet and talk with everyone at the gathering. I also wished I could have attended all the sessions that interested me, but alas, I had to choose.

After I got home I sent photos for the calendar and to my fellow Ravens. I had an absolute blast and will remember this for a long time.

LINKS ...

by Pat Hanson

HEARING AIDS

Using the **Lions Club’s International Foundation** volunteer infrastructure of over 12,000 clubs in 48 districts, Lions are reaching hearing-impaired people of limited income in almost every community in the United States by providing high-quality, low-cost hearing aids through the **Lions Affordable Hearing Aid Project (AHAP)**. Lions AHAP is dedicated to helping provide aids to people who could not otherwise afford them. (*Individuals cannot apply directly to LCIF; she/he must work through her/his local Lions Club.) For inquiries: 630/203-3837 or www.thehearingfoundation.org (The California branch I applied to was: www.md4lions.org/projects/earofthelion.html)

FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

If you’re 55 and want to share your experience and compassion, you have what it takes to be a **Foster Grandparent**.

As a Foster Grandparent, you’re a role model, a mentor, and a friend. Serving at one of thousands of local organizations — including faith-based groups, Head Start centers, schools, and other youth facilities — you help children learn to read, provide one-on-one tutoring, and guide them at a critical time in their lives. Put simply, you give the kind of comfort and love that sets a child on the path toward a successful future.

Foster Grandparents serve up to 40 hours per week. Some volunteers may qualify to earn a tax-free, hourly stipend. With Foster Grandparents, you’ll receive pre-service orientation, training from the organization where you serve, and supplemental accident and liability insurance while on duty.

So get involved, and join Foster Grandparents today! www.seniorcorps.gov/about/programs/fg.asp.

PHYLLIS CLIFTON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

By Bronwynn Forrest Torgerson

Do you believe in Angels? Phyllis Clifton did, and she was most certainly an Angel of mine.

As a newcomer to Bellingham, Washington, several years ago, I met Phyllis at the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship (BUF) and was promptly invited to her home for a tasty vegetarian dinner. Phyllis was always enthused to meet a fellow Goddess woman and proudly told me all about the Cronos of Skagit Valley.



PHYLLIS CLIFTON

She looked forward to the annual **Cronos Counsel** eagerly, and despite her advancing Parkinson's disease, dove right in and had the time of her life! Phyllis would return from each **Cronos Counsel** brimming with tales of the gathering, her eyes shining.

One wintery day years ago, Phyllis did

a great kindness for me, a "mitzvah" she called it. The battery on my van had died and there was no way for me to get to

work. The wind was chill and sludge once snow still lay on the ground. Phyllis called me on the phone and asked me to hop the bus and meet her at "Freddies," the Fred Meyers near home. She bundled up and walked there. When I entered the store, Phyllis was waiting for me with a bank envelope in her hand. Inside was the

means to buy a battery, and for a tank of gas. A loan, we agreed.

When I had repaid the loan, Phyllis declared it her annual "mitzvah" and lent the same amount to another woman in need, then another.

In her name, this annual \$100.00 scholarship is offered to **Cronos Counsel**,

to assist another Elder with the cost of registration. Phyllis would've wanted it that way.

BRONWYNN FORREST TORGERSON is the author of *One Witch's Way, Llewellyn Worldwide*. She may be reached through her website: www.thebronwynn.com

Chant for Crone Events

By Phyllis Clifton, July 2001

***Come all Cronos,
Join our dance!
Dance with Cronos
The spiral dance!***

***We have rhythm, we have jazz,
We are filled with the old
pizzazz!
We have wisdom, we have grace,
Where we dance is sacred space.***

***Many a moon on us has shone
As we changed: maid, mother,
crone.***

***Moons and more moons yet
shall shine
On Cronos who dance the
Great Design!***

***Come all Cronos,
Join our dance!
Dance with Cronos
The spiral dance!***

Cronos ... Cronos ... Cronos.

GIVING TO CRONES COUNSEL

This year a scholarship was given to Cronos Counsel in the memory of Phyllis Clifton. The Board accepted it with gratitude, realizing that someone will be able to attend the gathering each year because of her on-going gift. This brought to our attention that others may wish to make a donation in honor or memory of someone special. Still others may even wish to plan their legacy with their will or trust. We are a 501c3 organization. If you are thinking about giving back to Cronos Counsel with a monetary contribution, please discuss with President Annie Lehto, cronenancy@wispertel.net, 303/697-6016 or Treasurer Joyce Perata, j.perata@comcast.net, 303/449-7128. Cronos Counsel means so much to all of us and what a great way to insure its continuance with your generosity.

President's Message



By Annie Lehto

part of the planning keeps the gathering at the forefront for me all year.

Hello everyone. The planning is well under way for our nineteenth **Cronos Counsel** gathering in **Portland, Oregon**. It's an exciting time for me and for the board. Personally, I love the planning process. It's a lot of work – finding a venue, organizing everything – but it gives me such a sense of joy. The **CC** gatherings are the highlight of my year, and I guess being

We do collect feedback each year. We collate the information and try to take in any and all suggestions. Knowing we can't please everyone, we try to keep the usual format, adding changes where appropriate. With such a wonderful board to work with, I know the next gathering will be as magical as always. See you in Portland.

"And so it went — something for everyone! ... for me, the whole experience was about women in different stages of conscious aging reaching out to one another to share the feelings, resources, knowledge, and wisdom. ..."

— ALTA HAPP WERTZ, CC II 1994 — Washington



CRONES COUNSEL XIX PORTLAND, OREGON October 12-16, 2011



Portland beckons all Crones this fall to a lovely hotel on the Willamette River near downtown Portland. The Marriott Downtown Waterfront Hotel is ideally located on the riverfront near Portland State University and many of the top attractions in the downtown area.



IMAGES



Come through the looking glass into your magic self, where the images you find are reflections of your past, power of your present, and the promise of the future.

ARRIVAL: Wednesday, October 12, 2011
Registration from 3:00-5:00 p.m.
Opening session 7:00 p.m.

DEPARTURE: Sunday, October 16, 2011
Closing session 9:00-11:00 a.m.
Checkout by 11:00 a.m.

LOCATION: Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront Hotel
1401 SW Naito Parkway, Portland, OR 97201
Room reservations can be made through a link from www.cronescounsel.org or by calling 800/266-9432.
The hotel is 10 miles from the Portland airport.

TRANSPORTATION: (to and from the airport)
The airport shuttle is Blue Star Transportation, info@bluestarbus.com, 800/247-2272 or 503/249-1837 (\$14 one way; \$24 round trip from airport)
Local taxi companies: Yellow Cab and Radio Cab.
MAX Red Line Light Rail connects just outside the terminal.
All national Car Rentals are available at the airport.
On-site Parking at Marriott — charge of \$22.50/day with in/out privilege; other nearby lots — cheaper but without in/out option.



More transportation information in the pre-gathering information sent a month before the gathering.

SPECIAL NEEDS: The Marriott Waterfront is fully accessible for those with physical challenges.

WEATHER: October brings fall temperatures (50-70 degrees). Always the possibility of rain in Oregon.

Come to Portland this year!

CRONES COUNSEL XIX

WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12-16, 2011, PORTLAND, OREGON

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.
Please provide.*

*We communicate primarily by e-mail.
If you have one, please include.*

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

Which Croness Counsels have you attended? _____

List any special needs? _____

Do you like us to help you find a roommate to share a Double Room? Yes__ No__

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

CC FEE:	<u>2/15/11-9/1/11</u>	<u>After 9/1/11</u>	Amount
	\$195.00	\$215.00	Elder (80 & over) \$25 discount \$ _____

In addition to my registration, I wish to support my Crone Sisters with a 2011 donation to:

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

TOTAL: \$ _____

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

Croness Counsel Registrar, c/o Judy Neihart,
P.O. Box 9446, Salt Lake City, UT 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, 2011, will be given a total refund minus a \$25.00 processing fee. Cancellations between August 1 and October 1 will be given a total refund less a \$50.00 processing fee. *No refunds for registration can be given after October 1, 2011.*

On Page 8, please sign
Liability Waiver and Assumption of Risk Agreement

CRONES COUNSEL XIX

WEDNESDAY–SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12-16, 2011, PORTLAND, OREGON

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:* Annie Lehto, 7220 Andrea Lane, Morrison, CO 80465, cronenancy@wispertel.net, 303/697-6016

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

CIRCLE LEADERS: *Contact:* Pat Casner, P.O. Box 1227, Mi Wuk Village, CA 95346, plcasner@hughes.net, 916/685-7507

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

Desert Crones of Tucson

www.desertcronesoftucson.net

by Kianna

From time to time, we want to feature Crone groups around the country. If you can put us in touch with any, please let us know. This is our first introduction.

There are four branches of Crones in the Tucson area: the Desert Crones of Tucson, Crones of the Southwest, Green Valley Crones, and Avra Valley Crones. They generally meet once a week and sometimes share activities.

Each month the Desert Crones have a writing group and a drumming group. They also have discussions, guest speakers, and many other activities. They bring books to trade at meetings.

In November, they did Origami for Peace, making Peace Cranes. In December, they held an annual Holiday Luncheon with a gift exchange and a raffle and, this year, featured Norm the Magician.

Notes from some Desert Crones

My experience with the Desert Crones began seven years ago when I moved to Tucson from San Francisco. The low humidity is great for my arthritis. I started out right going to a Crone meeting. Been going nearly every week since then. I left my family and friends in the Bay area, and the Crones have been a great replacement. Every week is a different group of women. Some just show up for the Writing Workshop. The biggest groups have been for the local weather man (a heart throb) and then a retired Air Force officer talking about UFOs.

... A past leader, Shirley Fritchhoff, told me Ruth Gardner started the crone group about 17 years ago in her home with 4 or 5 friends. When Shirley took it over, they met in the senior center downtown and a library. Along the way it split up into Christians and pagans. Our group moved to the eastside about 13 years ago. Since then we have a rule that we don't talk about religion or politics; we do talk about sex. Our website is in the process of being updated, but it has five local crone groups cited.

At our Annual Holiday Luncheon two years ago, I stated if anyone had a suggestion, they should feel free to carry it out. It seemed to work. We have a great core group of crones, ... and many step in when needed.

... Dixie Gilbert suggested a trip to Silver City and the City of Rocks in New Mexico. She planned it and it was wonderful. Dixie presents our Writing Workshop and Drumming

circle. We are indebted to her for her spiritual, Native American, feminine, and good humor wealth she brings to our circle.

— Blessings, Cat Katherine Jones
The Desert Crones of Tucson

* * *

"After 11 years I still enjoy getting together with my fellow Desert Crones for our monthly writing sessions. It is wonderful to be bawdy, reminiscent, or comical in a room full of like-minded women, and to hear all the varieties of experiences from so many interesting personalities can't be topped."

—Mo

* * *

The Desert Crones of Tucson is an ever-changing group of women, but the constant is we are supportive of each other and are caring women. We have women who are "snowbirds" and only are here half of the year — they fly away when the sun starts to come too close for their comfort! But we keep in touch by e-mails and phone calls and with the newsletter that I write every week. It goes out to present members and ones who have moved away and still want it, and many others send it on to their friends. My mailing list is about 300 now and I have no idea how many are forwarded. If you want to receive it, send me a note at: crowboysmother@cox.net It always tells what events are

coming and includes jokes and sayings and little stories to uplift. The feedback tells me it is well-received and that brings me great personal joy!

— Bobbie Guillory



Crone Marketplace 2011

Calling all artists. Do you create wonderful things, write, sing, give massages? Do you love to hang out with other creative people? We need your energy in the **Crones Counsel Marketplace**. Let's show the Portland Saturday Market what WE have to offer!

Contact Patricia Layden in one of the following ways: email patricialayden@gmail.com, write 17341 Military Rd. S., Seattle, WA 98188, or phone 206/244-4264 for an application.

Albuquerque Counsel Full of Surprises

By Kaya Kotzen, Cincinnati, Ohio

Crones Counsel 2010 in Albuquerque was full of surprises for me. This was the first year that I felt like I was giving back. I turned 60 earlier in the year, and when the email went out about more workshops needing to be offered, I decided to step up. I guess it has a lot to do with claiming my wisdom and life experience as a Crone. Goodness knows it has only taken me 14 or 15 counsels to get here!

From the moment I arrived, the excitement began. Enid, our dear Raging Granny, had left me a voice mail asking if I could fill in for the opening and closing ceremonies due to another crone having to cancel at the last minute. I was honored to be asked and I accepted. I was given a small part to read in each ceremony and when the opportunity came to be one of the drummers on the mother drum, my soul just felt so at home, grounded, and full of gratitude at being able to be part of the energy we were creating.



Honored Elder Enid Williams

All the workshops were wonderful. I was a part of the panel of women speaking about our sacred journeys, which was a wonderful sharing of our lives. I also facilitated a song circle, which seemed to run itself once it got going. I very graciously accepted others bringing up what they wanted to sing and felt the pressure I had put on myself fall away. This was a good lesson in learning how to let go and trust at these gatherings.

The highlight of the Counsel for myself and many others was the Storytelling. This year, it had a rhythm of its own. We were given ample time to share, some of us getting up more than once on different days. ... This is the real heart of **Crones Counsel** — teaching one another through our journeys, being supported by our sister crones, and being healed and held by the energy in the room.

Our annual Honoring of the Elders Ceremony was elegant, as always, and our Follies show, full of song, dance, and poetry. Drumming and dancing ended the evenings for those of us that were still energized.



In our free time, many of us wandered the streets of Old Town, shopping and enjoying the sights. I had the great pleasure of going

up the tram at the Sandia Mountains with three of our elder crones, one of whom was celebrating her 86th birthday! I hope I have the energy and stamina to do that at 86!

Throughout our weekend, a loom at the back of the room held a weaving that we made together, each woman going up as she desired to select yarn or ribbon to include in the piece. It was raffled at the end and was a magnificent woven wall hanging.

Our wisdom circles gave us the opportunity to bond with one another, to share our thoughts and feelings, and to support one another more intimately on our journeys.

Our five days of gathering ended much too soon. New friendships were made, old ones renewed. We set our intentions on the year ahead in Portland. We snaked around the room to the beat of the mother drum, gazing into one another's eyes, full of the spiritual nourishment and joy that this gathering always brings, and then our Counsel came to a close.

From the time I first came to Crones Counsel many years ago in San Diego, I knew this would always be a special gathering in my life that I would welcome each year like an old friend. Sometimes I hesitate to come, but each year when I arrive, I can't imagine being anywhere else on the planet! Counsel has been food for my soul, feeding me for months at a time in my younger years, when I was still struggling to become the woman that I am today. Now that I know who I am, the memories linger after each one, but I move forward on my path as I return to my world at home, richer for having had the chance to be with you all, to hear your stories, and for the opportunity to share from my heart.

Crones Counsel is on Facebook!

by Suzanne Gruba, **Crones Counsel** Web Mother

How do I find **Crones Counsel** on Facebook?

Just Google: **Crones Counsel on Facebook** and you will find us! Become a fan by going to our page and clicking on **Like This** or **Become a Fan**.

How do I get on Facebook?

- First of all go to: www.facebook.com
- Click on Create An Account: first and last name, email address, and birthdate (You will be able to choose settings later to make this private or not.)
- Create a user name and password (record it and keep it somewhere safe with all your other logins and passwords)
- Then answer other questions they may ask (if you wish)

I have been on Facebook for over two years and have not had any bad experiences. Try it, you might like it! Feel free to email me at suzgruba@gmail.com if you have any questions! I hope you have a great time connecting with your grandchildren, long lost cousins, and high-school buddies!

In Grandmother Storyteller's Lap

By Julia Moore

I want to describe the healing experience I had at **Crones Counsel** 2010. My experience attests to the great wisdom of **Crone Counsel** vision that makes Storytelling the central focus of the gatherings, year after year. All Crones know that Storytelling is a precious, even a sacred time of the Counsel. But I have tended to forget, from year to year, the incredible, magic possibilities of this activity, and have just looked forward to it as another fun part of our great annual gathering. That is, until **Crones Counsel** 2010.

This year was different. I was in deep emotional pain — pain so debilitating I even considered cancelling my reservation and avoiding Albuquerque because it's too close to my daughter's home in Santa Fe. When I reserved my spot for Albuquerque **C.C.** and bought my plane fare in January 2010, I had planned making a side trip to visit my daughter after **C.C.** But in March she announced that she was cutting off all communications with me. I didn't think I could stand to be so close to her geographically and not be able to go to her. But in a very rational moment I asked myself, "Where could I be safer and get more support — if I start to fall apart — than at a **Crones Counsel**?" Well, the answer was a no-brainer, so I flew to Albuquerque with a ton of Kleenex in my pocket, and a really heavy heart.

I am so glad I listened to my wise inner voice and pushed myself to go to **C.C.** ! Upon arrival I was immediately enveloped in the famous warmth and love of the Crones. Their generous acceptance motivated me to get up and speak on the first day of Storytelling, without knowing for sure what I was going to say. As I took the microphone, I felt that I had placed myself in the lap of "Grandmother Storyteller," and I could say what was really weighing on my heart — she would guide me and protect me. (It's that shiny cape! It really does have magical properties.)

I briefly spoke about my shame of hurting my daughter and my heartbreak of losing touch with her. And I asked for



acknowledgement of my fragile affirmation that "despite everything that has happened between us, I am a good mother." I asked for this affirmation to be in the form of a standing ovation. I moved to the very front edge of the stage and opened my arms wide to take in the ensuing applause and cheering that just rolled over me in waves, washing me with love and acceptance and understanding. That clapping and cheering seemed to go on for a very long time. After a few seconds of it, I was ready to put my arms down, but I heard Grandmother Storyteller say, "No, they are not done yet. Take in *all* the love in this room that is directed toward you right now.

Don't cut it off midstream. Don't diminish yourself! Don't think you have asked for too much ... or received more than you deserve. You get to have *enough* applause to match your pain. You get to heal by your storytelling, if you choose to."

My body began to tremble all over, as strong emotions flooded through me and the applause continued. I finally felt the energy directed at me was completed. I released the microphone and walked down the steps on the other side of the stage, directly into the arms of the first of several Crones who were waiting to embrace me. They whispered little encouragements into my ears and I can still hear their words today, in January of 2011. "It will get better." "You are not alone." "My daughter didn't speak to me for a long time too. But she came back." "She will come back." "Talk to me after the break!" Arm pats, moist-eyed meaningful looks, and intense energy of Crone love followed me back to my seat. I felt lighter and stronger and definitely more present and connected to everyone in the room.

In the ensuing Storytelling sessions several other women spoke to my theme of troubled mother/daughter relationships. I felt good to think that maybe I had opened the door for other women who wanted to talk about this difficult topic, but needed a motivator. I know many Crones at **C.C.** have already learned this lesson. Now I have too!

I saw the real power of Storytelling — that even if I feel bereft and think I have nothing inspiring to say, I best serve others by speaking what is in my heart and mind anyway.

My daughter is still silent. I believe she is working hard on her own healing, in her own way, and that we will come together again someday, as two changed women who can speak and listen to each other from our hearts. Meanwhile, "Grandmother Storyteller" holds me in her lap, with many other Crone Sisters who have climbed on with me, and we all snuggle together, taking in her comforting, sage words.

A Call for Workshop Leaders

Would you like to share your expertise with us in Portland? Our theme is "IMAGES," so perhaps you can imagine your workshop into our gathering.

The number of workshops will be limited, due to the free time we have allowed for visiting the Portland Saturday Market. Get your application in soon. Write Annie Lehto at cronenancy@wispertel.net for an application, or by snail mail: Annie Lehto, 7220 Andrea Lane, Morrison, CO 80465.

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