



CRONES COUNSEL
Celebrating Wise Women

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CRONE *times*

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what's inside

Reflections on Crones Counsel	2
In Portland, We Were All One	3
Book Review	4
My Wonderful Card	5
Being Made Visible	5
Our Elders Demographics Report	6
A Memorial	8
A New Column	8
There Is No Beginning and No End	9
Crones Occupy Portland	10
By Breath	11
Menopausal Journey ...	11
Crones Counsel XX	12

CRONES COUNSEL:

a safe and enjoyable place to be

By Hilda Tonarely, Sacramento, CA

Attending my first **Crones Counsel** in Portland this past October was an exhilarating and full experience. I invited my long-time friend, Tannia, to join me, and she invited her other long-time friend, Yvonne, to also join us. It was the perfect chance and location (we were coming from California, Washington, and Portland respectively) for us to bond, to make new friendships and spiritual connections. All three of us fell in love with the Counsel theme song, "By Breath" [see Page 11 for lyrics]. Yvonne kindly purchased a CD for each of us.

I particularly cherished the Honoring the Elders Ceremony, witnessing how amazing and what role models are each of those women. It was gratifying to spend time with women in different age groups and to know that although our lives are all different, we travel similar paths. The Counsel provides a platform for many women to share their experiences, happy and sad, to be heard and acknowledged. Other highlights were all the singing — serious and funny songs, the talent show, the large-group and small-group sharing in our circles. I enjoyed the Joyful Voice workshop with Simone and a journaling workshop I attended. The **Crones Counsel** felt like a safe and enjoyable place to be.

Crones Questions & Answers

By Sandy Eno, Secretary, Crones Counsel Inc.

The idea for an informational feature in *CroneTimes* came up at the Fall Board meeting in Portland. From time to time when someone asks a question about **Crones Counsel**, it is about something other women would like to know as well. Often getting an answer is pretty easy, but sometimes not so much.

In this column we will attempt to answer queries with clear, helpful information. Given the abundance of "wise woman" minds in **Crones Counsel** we might even

generate some lively and productive discussions.

A recent e-mail question was:

Q. How do I get a copy of CroneTimes if I am not on a registration list?

A. Send your request to **Crones Counsel, Inc.**, P.O. Box 261, Ekalaka, MT 59324. Make sure to include your e-mail address, as the future newsletters will be electronic.

Another common inquiry is:

Q. What exactly do you do at a **Crones Counsel** gathering?

CRONES QUESTIONS & ANSWERS, cont'd from Pg 1

A. It is four or five days spent in the company of women, mostly 50 years of age and older. We renew old friendships and make new friends. Every **Crones Counsel** generates a lot of laughter, sometimes tears, walking, talking, sitting quietly (or not), eating and drinking good things, new ideas, problem-solving, and making things happen.

All women are honored and welcomed here in the sacred space the group establishes.

We learn so much from each other, especially our Honored Elders. They are the Crones, 80 and beyond, who freely share stories of their trials and triumphs. They are a source of inspiration, humor, and hope to younger Crones and a comfort to their peers. One special night during the gathering is our Honoring the Elders Ceremony, where we do just that.

Morning Storytelling is a time when any woman can briefly share a bit of her life, be it a sad or joyous event, a life passage, or a cry for help. Following this, small groups, called Crone Circles, are formed. They

meet every day and often include many confidential discussions.

Workshops are offered in the afternoons. Some of the topics have been: meditation, genealogy, health issues, communication, journaling, exercise, song, exploring spiritual/cultural paths, movement, dance, dealing with loss, aging, writing, living well with physical issues, and many others. Anyone is welcome to share her expertise in a workshop, so until women offer their talents, we never know what workshops will be offered each year.

There is a marketplace with all kinds of great Crone-made items including books, jewelry, music, drums, rattles, and many other things.

Evening entertainment can include a social night, a talent show, and always drumming.

C'mon, Sisters, help us out.

Please send your thoughts and questions to Sandy: secretary@cronesounsel.org.

Reflections on Crones Counsel

By Jean Stein, San Diego

San Diego is fortunate to have a monthly Crone Circle to sustain and nurture women who often attend annual **Crones Counsels**. Our members attending the Portland Counsel enjoyed the traditional elements plus the new mixer. We would like to support some suggestions generated by the Crone Circle led by San Diego crone Nere Lartitegui. (Committee members included Maureen Arrigo, Cathy Crawford, Marian Karpisek, Meera Messmer, Laura Piedmont, Paula Pugh, Janet Morrissey, and Susan Ann Stauffer.)

The following suggestions were also submitted to the **Crones Counsel** Board:

— Emphasis on inclusion with every voice honored and every

woman recognized.

— The first evening, talk about the mission and vision of **Crones Counsel** and what women can give to **CC** and what they can take away to enrich their lives.

— Revise “Storytelling”

◆ Ask storytellers to think of why they are sharing, what is the purpose, and how the group will benefit from their story

◆ Choose a “Gate Keeper” and adhere to a time limit

◆ Begin with a smudging or centering activity to get everyone into a quiet space

◆ Include some stretching or movement during this long session and consider shortening the time a little

◆ Balance storytelling with some traditional storytelling

— Utilize more women’s talents

◆ Have each woman fill out a card listing her talents and passions or ask “What gift are you willing to share?”

◆ Through e-mail, contact women individually to follow up

◆ Take the burden from the Board by meting out to local Crone groups or committees the following elements: Opening Ceremony, Closing Ceremony, Honoring the Elders, Crone Circles, Talent Show, Workshops, and the Mixer.

We in San Diego look forward to the twentieth **Crones Counsel** gathering next fall and are willing to help in making it a vibrant, enriching experience that leaves each woman wanting to return year after year.

*Marian Karpisek was in charge of receiving, compiling, and creating the document sent to the Board: her labor of love was time consuming and well done. Her talents with the written words and her commitment to **Crones Counsel** made it possible.*

in portland, we were all one

By Patricia Weller

Crones Counsel in Portland this year was, for me, the most powerful yet. I have been an eager attendee for twelve years, and as I look back on those gatherings, I can see an interesting chronology of my life over that period. My first Counsel came as a breath of fresh air amid running a farm, traveling with my business, raising children, and beginning to realize that my mother was fast declining. I would need to fit being her guardian and protector through the ever-growing chaos that was increasingly overwhelming her mind, into that hectic mix. My mother and I had never enjoyed an easy relationship, and back then I was still stuck in the belief that it was due to her judgment of me and my lifestyle, so different from the one she envisioned for me.

I vividly recall sitting in the Asilomar chapel with only a vague idea of what was to come. The first woman walked to the podium, introduced herself, and proudly claimed her female ancestry, honoring them by name. My blood went cold! My first thought was defensive; I was different, better, not them! Then came sorrow, to realize that I had never given them honor. I was raised in the home of my maternal grandmother where she and my mother fought constantly. My thoughts of them had been those of scorn and, yes, judgment. Ouch! This didn't at all fall into my righteous

The exceptional flavor of IMAGES can be best expressed by the Song By Breath that became the heart of the gathering. The first line, "By breath, by blood, by body, by spirit, WE ARE ALL ONE," is a vital truth that the majority of our world spends a great deal of time attempting to disprove.



certainty that they were wrong, not me. Something transpired that morning that allowed me to see my female ancestors with new eyes. What they were dealt and what they endured: the strength and courage they showed. I felt a greater understanding of the angers and fears that held them captive.

That was my first day shared with this wonderful community of woman. Over the years, so many major milestones in my life have been supported, shared, and transitioned with a great deal more grace and success because of the Crones. I shared of "accidentally" meeting my son

the delight in Las Vegas (en route to another counsel), as he was attempting to secretly elope, and the Crones celebrated with me. I shared with the Crones the most horrible guilty thoughts I had ever owned, those of wishing my mother would die and be out of her misery. They supported me with a strength that allowed me to accept our history of love and pain, and be able to hold my mother and honestly tell her how wonderful she was the night she died.

The greatest gift I have received from these wonderful wise woman, was a major shift in my "belief" about aging. I would have vehemently denied it at the time, but I came to Crones with the belief that aging was a loss of agility, acuity, and energy, a decline involving suffering and pain. My primary role models in aging had impressed these fears deep beneath my conscious mind where they continually crushed my hopes and dreams. This belief, strong as it was, vanished as musty smoke, when confronted by the vital, exciting, thriving Crones. Elder women, loving, living fully, and making important differences in our world. This set an entirely new paradigm for the life ahead of me, without which I wonder if I could have made many of the wondrous positive changes that have transformed my life.

With such history and "experience," what was it about the Portland gathering that so shifted my awareness? Many

IN PORTLAND, WE WERE ALL ONE, con't. on Page 4

BOOK REVIEW

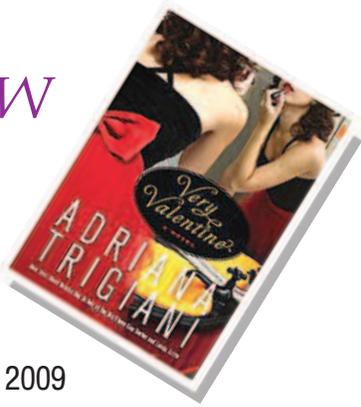
By Kianna Bader

Very Valentine

A novel

By Adriana Trigiani

Harper Collins Publishers, 2009



Very Valentine is the first of a trilogy about the Roncalli and Angelini families, contemporary Italian-American families living in New York. This is a family saga about the Angelini Shoe Company, makers of exquisite wedding shoes since 1903. It is one of the last family-owned businesses in Greenwich Village. The owner and master artisan is Teodora Angelini the eighty-year-old matriarch of the family. It is about her relationship with her granddaughter, Valentine, who is a talented and determined thirty-three-year-old apprentice. This book is full of humor and romance, as Valentine tries to bring the company into the twenty-first century and save it from ruin.

Great respect for Gram is shown by everyone in this large extended family. Valentine is not the only one to have a romance. Teodora has a few surprises of her own in this department.

As Valentine rides in a tour boat on the Isle of Capri after her boyfriend disappoints her, the tourists hear the sound of accordion music drift across the water.

All heads turned toward the playful tune. A sleek catamaran, with a black-and-white-striped canopy, sails into view from around the rocks. A man plays the accordion, as his companion reclines on a pile of pillows on the carpeted deck, a wide-brimmed sun hat shielding her face. It's a romantic sight, one that makes every person crammed on this dinghy sorry that they didn't splurge and hire the private boat.

"Isn't that wonderful?" the American woman says. "Senior love."

Valentine takes a closer look at the catamaran. Dear God. It's my grandmother under that hat, like a Botticelli courtesan in repose, except she's not eating grapes; she's being serenaded by Dominic. How do you like that? My eighty-year-old grandmother is being seduced on the Tyrrhenian Sea and I'm crammed on this boat like a tuna haul for the local fish market — as if I need another reason to weep on the Isle of Capri, I just got it.

This book is an intriguing exploration of the relationship between a strong nurturing grandmother and a granddaughter who is still seeking her way.

Adriana Trigiana is an award-winning playwright, television writer, and documentary filmmaker. She is the author of the best-selling *Big Stone Gap* series, and will be directing the screen version of her first novel, "*Big Stone Gap*." Once you start reading one of her books, it's hard to put it down.

WE WERE ALL ONE, *continued from Page 3*

elements and such enormous loving energy by our board combined to create an event with heart and meaning that not only welcomed and embraced us, and also lingers still as a warm buzz in my heart. For me, the exceptional flavor of IMAGES can be best expressed by the Song, so perfectly chosen, that for many of us became the heart of the gathering. *By Breath*, by Sarah Thomsen. The first line, *By breath, by blood, by body, by spirit, WE ARE ALL ONE*, is a vital truth that the majority of our world spends a great deal of time attempting to disprove. So much energy is expended to create separation: between religions, countries, skin color, age, economic situations, sexual preferences, any reason at all to deny that as human beings, WE ARE ALL ONE. Within minutes of singing and sharing these powerful words, I felt the gathering unite. Gone were all thoughts of separation and the busy minds we had dragged with us. As I looked into the eyes of those around me, I felt that connection with them, with everyone in the room and then that rare and perfect experience of being one with all that is.

Throughout the entire gathering, when pain or sorrow were shared, the refrain would softly rise, and person after person would feel the strength and energy that comes with knowing we are NOT alone; when we open our hearts we are never alone. As I walked down a strange hallway, I heard this song, softly under the breath of an individual who moments before was feeling anger and exhaustion. Once I heard it rising from many voices in an elevator passing by. The Crones, wise women as they are, were able to touch into this space and it brought about miracles of healing, sharing, and oneness. My heart was indeed open, and never before have I felt surrounded by so many others that I knew were experiencing that same wonder. Four months later, I look at the pictures in the Calendar and I see smile after smile that radiates from far beneath the surface, and I know that yet again I and so many others have been moved and enhanced by the Miracle of that gathering. I am so grateful!

My Wonderful Card

By Honored Elder Ann Emerson



Yesterday the huge loving card came from Cronos. I was overwhelmed. Because of my recent physical limitations I had come to feel my life could no longer contribute much of anything to world peace or progress, particularly to women's new role in the world. I am sidelined by having to depend on [daughter] Lynn for transportation and everything else, except e-mail. This gave me a whole new sense of being able to do something for humankind still.

I appreciate so much the Counsel's granting us scholarships to go to Oregon. I was sorry that my "condition" wouldn't let us come at the last minute. I surely hope we can work something out for next year. We are now so very far away. We had paid for our hotel and our registration fee when we had to make the decision not to come. It was nip and tuck right up until

being made visible

by Louie Galloway

The Workshops at **Crones Counsel** were fun and stimulating mixed bags. Some were internal (exploring our spiritual path), some external (self-esteem and assertive communication). But, lest you think we are a beige-beige, non-diverse group within our crone culture, one of the largest group gatherings was for lesbian crones and our allies. The group was so large we formed an extended oval circle in our large room, all holding hands, and until we went around and identified ourselves, all unknown to each other. I, as a lesbian and first-time gathering attendee, had sometimes wondered, "Is she ...? Could she be ...?" And here we were lesbians, and thankfully, our allies. We went around the circle and identified ourselves and said something about this part of our life. We would look up and see sympathetic smiles from our kin. I very much appreciated the presence of our "allies" — of which I have had many during my coming-out life, and here I was glad to see them honored as well. Thank you, **Crones Counsel**, for making us visible!

time to go because of my physical problems.

I think maybe Kianna was behind the move for my wonderful card. I will contact her. I hope she still does *CroneTimes* even though she is no longer on the board. Anyway, I hope my profound gratitude gets through to **Crones Counsel**.

I just looked again at that big card I got from the Counsel in Oregon. I am surprised I am so well known. I guess my naughty Little Old Lady jokes made me sort of famous. I gave them in Anacortes, and people really responded. A minister came to Lynn and asked, "Do you think we can take your mother on the road?" He later had me tell the jokes to his Christian men's breakfast club. My son Bruce was visiting at the time and he videoed me telling the jokes and has put them on a website he set up for me, along with my book of poetry and as much of my life story as he had at the time. So the jokes are on the Net.

Much love, and a world of respect for who you are and what you do.

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our elders demographics report

By Linda K. Taylor.

Edited by Marian Karpisek

Have you ever bought an appliance and found a warranty card asking obnoxious questions about your household members, age, income, credit cards, whether you own a computer, like to travel or hunt? Did you drop it into the nearest waste basket?

When we decided to do a Demographics Questionnaire by e-mail for our Elders, so we could gather their history and habits as a group, we feared the worst. One of our Elders said, "I'm sorry, but much of this seems relatively unimportant anymore. I tend to live in the moment!"

But she did not hit "Delete" nor did any of our Elders in the Ceremony tonight. They either trust their sister Cronos explicitly or they are game to try anything once! One Elder reported, "It was like writing a comical obituary for myself!"

Eleven of our Elders are repeat honorees! One who was honored last year said, "Nothing has changed in my life!" Another said, "I have no feeling of being different or special. Maybe that sounds weird and will change when I am REALLY OLD!" Another added, "To honor me, one must honor a rule breaker!"

Let's see what we can learn about our Elders. We'll begin with their ancestors, who came from the British Isles, Germany, France, Lebanon, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Russia.

Many of their mothers were

Cronos Counsel 2011 Elders

AGES 80-85



BEV MILLISON



PENNY
MacELVEEN-
HOEHN



ESTA FEEDORA



GAY BARKER



MARILYN
THOMPSON



ELIZABETH
DAVIS



JOAN FOREST



JAN WAUDE



PAT SHEYA



GRACE ZACH



BETTY
ROCKWELL

AGES 86-89



CHRISTINA
HORST



SALLIANNE
DAVIS



JAN BANKS
SODERLING



LEE McRAE



ENID
WILLIAMS

AGES 90+



ALICE YEE



RAMONA ADAMS

housewives and homemakers. One Elder pointed out, "My mother was a very clever woman." One mother helped with the first "hot lunches" offered in schools, and two operated boarding houses — one for college boys. Another grew and preserved her own fruits and vegetables. One Elder's parents were both dancers in vaudeville. "From them," she says, "I got two left feet."

Two of our Elders' mothers were teachers — one an elementary school

teacher and the other a music teacher. Another ran a dress shop. Imagine having a mother who had been a Ziegfeld girl and an actor touring the country in plays! Another Elder's mother was an "officer's wife, organizing and designing large entertainments and parties. Dare I say, like their mothers, who were very clever women, so are our Elders?"

Their fathers worked in many different occupations — farmer, rancher, inventor, engineer, physicist,

OUR ELDERS DEMOGRAPHICS, continued from Page 6

lawyer, teacher, butcher, importer/exporter, construction superintendent, store owner, banker, and two military officers. Interestingly, one worked in a concrete lab for the Grand Coulee Dam, one was Amelia Earhart's navigation expert, and a third was a vice president and designer for chemical plants. Like their fathers, our Elders also had diverse jobs and careers.

Every one of our Elders attended college at a time when this was not the norm for women! Our Elders got degrees in math, physical education, zoology, history, the Science of Radio Speech, English, and Nursing. Some hold Master's degrees in Psychology and Counseling, Education, Social Science, Psychiatric Nursing, and the Sociology of Film.

Four Elders have PhD's. Two of these women had "two" careers. One was an RN for thirty years and then became a Clinical Psychologist. The other "studied" for two PhD's but only got one. After three plus years of working toward a PhD, she was *not* allowed to take the preliminary exams because she got pregnant! As she commented, "Times have changed!" Some twenty years later, she got a PhD in a totally different subject!

Another started college at 35, and within seven years had her PhD. The fourth raised her eight kids and then went back for her PhD at 42. What determination these women showed!

As young women, some taught swimming, were life guards or waitresses. One Elder told us, "When I lived in Jordan, I taught swimming lessons to children of the Americans and Europeans there. In order to get permission to use the pool at the Jordanian Army Officers' Club, I had to teach the children of the army officers, through an interpreter." One was a hat model for Macy's, another

a radiation-lab technician. One worked at a small radio station, KELO, an NBC affiliate. And yet another worked on a dairy cooperative where conscientious objectors could find a place to live and work.

Most of our Elders married and had children. One Elder who married young commented, "I was nineteen going on *twelve!*" One, who married late and had no children of her own, said, "I inherited three late teenagers, who blessedly did not live with us *all* the time." Thirteen lucky children had some of our Elders as their step-mother or foster mother.

Our Elders had careers as teachers, nurses, psychologists, and therapists. One was a university dean of women and later dean of students. Three had careers in academia. One taught nursing, one was the dean of a School of Social Work, and the third was a personnel dean and established one of the first Women's Centers in the West. None of those women retired until their mid-70s.

Others entered offices as secretaries, bookkeepers, office managers, and administrative assistants. Some found work writing or editing in the arts or in service industries. One was a site manager for a local Senior Center. Another was a film-festival organizer. Some started their own businesses: one a restaurant; another, a floral business arranging dried weeds; and one has a workshop in Indonesia today. Another still works part-time as a vocational-rehab counselor.

Our Elders have received honors professionally, and as athletes, volunteers, and artists. One had a local elementary school named after her and her husband, both lifelong educators. Another won first place in

a film festival for a video on the eldest living Native American in Seattle. The "honor" we loved best is as follows: "For my birthday, a friend said I was good enough and any improvement was 'extra credit.'"

Some of our Elders helped start organizations, such as an alternative elementary school. Another was a charter member of a Land Trust in Washington State, and yet another started an organization called "Hike the Desert in Mexico," which began with four women who climbed to the top of Mount Telos de Cabras and grew to fifty participants.

Our Elders have volunteered for the Girl Scouts, at their local libraries and schools, and have supported food banks, homeless shelters, crisis centers, and their churches. One was editor of her local Cronet newsletter for twenty years.

They have been members of NAACP, ACLU, Planned Parenthood, League of Women Voters, and the Gray Panthers. One Elder was a treatment guardian for the National Association for the Mentally Ill. Another is a spellbinder, a storyteller for a Center for Spiritual Living. A different Elder is a volunteer teacher for the Osher Life-Long Living Institute.

When we asked about their hobbies and activities, at the top of the list is reading and participating in book groups. Other hobbies are gardening, writing, playing bridge, painting, watching good movies, cooking, and sewing. One of our Elders learned to

A MEMORIAL

Betty Wigington

Correction: The article about Betty Wigington attributed to Sally Reed in the last issue of *CroneTimes* was not written by Sally. She provided us with the eulogy for Betty but due to space considerations, we could not print it. As a result, we just took a few excerpts from it.

Here is a short article by one of Betty's church friends.

by Lois Dilatush:

I am sort of at a loss as to which of so many things I would like to say in memory of Betty Wigington, but here goes.

My love for Betty grew from the first time we met a number of years ago at a retreat for the First UU Church in Denver. For the past years we always talked by phone at least once a month and saw each other often, until I moved away about a year ago. Our friendship was very



important for both of us, I know. We increased the calls to once a week when Betty finally went to the doctor about her back pain and found that she had severe back problems — several breaks and evidence of older breaks. As always, she tried to ignore her own problems and stayed

concerned about her many friends, but this time she was really physically unable to “keep going as usual”!

Betty was a very special person, as so many people realized and appreciated. I think that her very real concern and love for so many people was most unusual and made many people love her in return.

I came to Denver to see her last month and spent many hours with her during that short visit. And of course now I miss her terribly, as I know so many people do. I still remember how many children in the church would come up to her and hug her when they saw her — because she was important to them in so many ways. What a blessing she was to so many, and how much she is missed!

OUR ELDERS DEMOGRAPHICS, *continued from Page 7*

sew at ten, making doll clothes on her mom's treadle machine. At fifteen she tailored a suit, and recently made tailored vests for her grandson and great-grandson for a wedding.

Travelling has been an important part of our Elders' lives. They have lived in twelve countries, including Canada, England, Scotland, France, Germany, Switzerland, Ghana, India, Jordan, Indonesia, Morocco, and Panama. Others have travelled all over the world, including thirty-seven countries and six continents, all except Antarctica.

For many, physical activities are still an important part of their lives, helping to keep them young and healthy. One is a ballroom dancer; another still scuba dives a couple times a year. Our Elders play golf and tennis, practice Tai Chi, bike, hike, camp, fish, swim, and walk for exercise.

Perhaps most surprising about our Elders is that they are humble. They do not consider themselves “wise.” To us, however, they are very special, as they have had experiences we have not had. We recognize and honor the eldest among us, acknowledging the gifts of aging, which they give to all of us.

A NEW COLUMN

From the Crones Counsel Board

This is a new column focusing on what the board is doing for **Crones Counsel**. We will share decisions, let you know what's happening, answer questions, etc.

Let us know what you want to know about the board, and in subsequent issues of *CroneTimes* we will discuss those topics.

There are two things on our minds at this time: Saving money for both the organization and participants and finding host groups for future gatherings.

We have switched from a paper-based newsletter to an online e-newsletter. This will be a tremendous cost savings for **Crones Counsel**, as the cost of printing has risen higher and higher each year. It's also “green,” which is important to many of our members. The newsletter can now be larger with more pictures.

We are always looking for host groups to plan future gatherings. We have a planning guide and offer lots of assistance from the board.

Contact the board with your thoughts, suggestions, comments, and questions.

Nancy Lehto, President, cronenancy@q.com

“there is no beginning and no end”



By Honored Elder Alice Yee

When Kianna asked me to write “something” for *CroneTimes*, my first reaction was: What do I have to say that would be interesting to anyone else? Then I remembered a program from the “Story Telling Workshop” at the Portland **Crones Counsel**. And

I’m paraphrasing: story telling is the telling of our own personal narrative — or a piece of it — and that becomes the glue of our Crones community as we grow together, learn together, share the pains and joys of our lives as we continue to move forward in our separate directions. What follows is part of my own narrative.

92 years of living has taught me “there is no beginning and no end” of the impact that certain events and people have on our lives, so I begin my story at age 37 when my husband died. He had been seriously ill all of the previous two years and we knew we were living on borrowed time. Our children were 6, 9, and 12 years old.

He was a beloved music teacher and a year before his death had been named outstanding citizen of Wenatchee, Washington. Because of his long-standing illness, we had no life insurance nor health insurance. I had completed my Master’s degree and was teaching at the local community college. This was the sole source of our family’s income.

Losing one’s husband, lover, best friend, and father of our three small children when I was 37 was overwhelming. But wonderful things began to happen. Within a week after his death, I received a personal letter thanking me for the many contributions to the community our family had made during the past ten years and that the hospital was waiving all hospital costs, including all costs incurred during his last two months in the hospital. Our family doctor sent me a similar letter. Can you imagine this happening today?

Suddenly, an enormous financial debt vanished and within a few months I was offered and accepted a Dean’s position at the local college. One thing led to another and my professional goals took on a life of their own. Along this path, sometimes bumpy but always exciting and stimulating, I met wonderful women who became my mentors and in many instances, life-long friends.

Very early on I learned in this life’s journey women need each other. We can accomplish sometimes what seems like impossible tasks if we pool our resources, minimize our differences, and agree on common goals.

After my husband died, I chose not to re-marry until my three children graduated from high school and were well launched on their careers. So for 15 years I was a single mom, working in high pressure and demanding administrative jobs on college campuses. During those difficult years my priority was to use whatever my talents were, to find ways to improve the lives of other women. Using college deanships as springboards I became involved with community agencies, state-wide organizations, and even lobbying on issues at the state and national levels.

I worked with a variety of women: women whose lives were extremely difficult, victims of domestic violence, women who were struggling economically and needed a helping hand; women in need of guidance to pursue additional education, and of course, I was engaged in the constant struggle to eliminate discrimination and inequality in our society.

I loved what I was doing and as I look back over the years, I am forever grateful to the women I met along the way who were a constant reminder that women need each other for support, understanding, encouragement, and just plain fun!

And that is what **Crones Counsel** is all about. Three years ago I attended my first **Crones Counsel** gathering. How exciting for me to find myself in the midst of a group of women who projected an atmosphere of what my whole life has been about!

About CRONE TIMES

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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crones occupy portland

By Mosa Baczewska,
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The nineteenth Crones Counsel was held in Portland, Oregon, in 2011, just a few weeks into the Occupy movement and a

few blocks from the Occupy Portland camp, within walking distance. This was my first Crones Counsel but I had already experienced Occupy Seattle a few weeks before and had been ignited by the excitement and possibility generated in those few hours. I am a child of the '60s and it fired up my activism and I wanted to be part of it.

So when I took the bus to the hotel the first morning from my friend's house where I was staying, I got to talk with the folks on the bus about Occupy Portland, where it was, what was happening, the Occupy movement, what it meant, where it could go. The whole front part of the bus took part in the conversation. There were two young early twenties who talked about camping there. I got ignited all over again. I had put on my wrist the bracelet I had made, which says "freedom now," not knowing why but ended up giving it to the young woman who said, "I'll wear it the rest of my life."

When I got to Crones Counsel, I was very involved in being there, setting up my table in the market, finding my way around, getting the "lay of the land," meeting new women, feeling the power, and did not speak much of it. My friend picked me up at the end of the day, and she had to drop off some cans of food at the camp (she had fed hundreds of people there so far) and I got to see up close and personal what was going on. My excitement was reignited.

The day of the Crones Counsel banquet I began talking to the women who were at my table about going down to Occupy Portland as a Presence. Jeanne had the same idea and suggested we make a sign. So I made a sign on newsprint that stated, "CRONES for a JUST & SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY," and Jeanne and I walked table to table with it talking about it and inviting Crones to go down there, saying where it was, where to meet,

and when. A bunch of us gathered at the meeting place and off we went.



When we got there, there was a rally in progress in front of the court-house, directly across from camp and housed the jail. The rally was in support of the folks who were being released after being arrested and held for 48 hours.

We gathered on the opposite side of the street with our sign. By that time there were more of us and another sign that read, "CRONES FOR JUSTICE." The folks at the rally called to us, "Come join us, come support them." So a bunch of us, a few at a time, crossed the street and became part of the rally. It could have been intimidating to see the line of police officers at the top of the steps looming over us but I was strengthened and empowered by the group spirit.



The rally ended after the release and we crossed the street to see more Crones had joined us. We decided to walk en mass into and through the camp, our presence being the statement. Several Crones mentioned how

empowering it was to be part of the rally.

We had many lively and wonderful conversations. It was particularly interesting to see how men reacted to us. One even got in this picture with us but I PhotoShopped him out.

We ended up doing our own things as Crones can and do and went different directions in different numbers: some went off to explore other parts of the city; some of us stayed and went all over the camp. I lingered around and went back to the KBOO tent to be interviewed but

they were having transmission problems that weren't resolved before it was time to return to Crones Counsel.

I think I am not far off to say that it was a very empowering experience for all of us there, including the people who saw lively, enthusiastic, fun loving, jolly, thoughtful, gorgeous Crones involved in a movement that

is timely, and addresses our present and our future.

My thanks and appreciation goes to all Crones at this Counsel for instant love and acceptance, and for showing me possibilities of my many years to come.



by breath By Sara Thomsen, © 2003

Ref: By breath, by blood, by body, by spirit, we are all one (2 times)

The air that is my breath is the air that you are breathing.
And the air that is your breath is the air that I am breathing.

The wind rising in my breast is the wind from the east,
from the west

From the north, from the south, breathing in, breathing out. (Ref)

The water that is my blood, my sweat, tears from crying
Is the water that is your blood, your sweat, tears from crying.

And the rising of the tide is in our veins and in the ocean wide.

We are in the rising steam, rushing river, running stream.
(Ref)

The earth is dust, the earth is clay, flow'rs blossoming
and fading.

We are dust and we are clay, we are blossoming and fading.
Every color, every sound, every place is holy ground.
Oh, every living thing, can you hear it laugh? Can you hear it sing? (Ref)

The fire in my heart, my soul flame burning
Is the fire in your heart, your soul flame burning.

We are Spirit burning bright, by the light of day, in the dark of night.

We are shining like the sun, and like the moon, like the Holy One.

By breath, by blood, by body, by spirit, we are all one ...

menopausal journey

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(Won't bleed anymore)
Gonna take a Menopausal Journey
Gonna give my eggs a rest
No more monthly PMS and bloating
This will be some other test
(Many friends)
Many friends have told me of their story
They have gone this way before
Each one had a different set of symptoms
Wonder how I'll go through that door

47, maybe I'll start when I'm 47 (it didn't happen)
It'll be nothing short of heaven
If I have the knack to sail on past
Without a flash ...
(Oh Mosa get real)

Think I'm gonna take up meditation
Eat more greens and sleep alone
When I take that Menopausal Journey
Menopausal Journey, Ommmmmmmmmm

Now I'm in the Menopausal Journey
I know all about a flash
Got some estrogen stored in my belly
Hope I have a big-enough stash

(Life is strange)
In the midst of major transformation
Lookin' toward the other side
Speedin' up my cell communication
While slowing down the inner tide

Feeling liquid
Flashing, flailing, sometimes floating
Too much ailing and emoting
As my hormones shift, I'm set adrift
Is this a gift?

(A gift of rebirth)
Now I've gotten into meditation
Especially when I feel marooned
It is really an amazing journey
And it's not over, so stay tuned ...

Reinvented and it feels so good
Reinvented like I knew I would
So many things have changed
I've even changed my name
I'm happy to be here 'cause I am
Reinvented, hey hey

Menopausal Journey Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

CRONES COUNSEL XX

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