CRONES COUNSEL:
20 Years Strong
by Susan Ann Stauffer, Crones Counsel Herstorian

When Ann Kreilkamp and Shauna Adix, the founding mothers of Crones Counsel, Inc., came together, they stirred the cauldron, cooked the stew, and shared it with all their friends. Encountering each other by a serendipitous twist of fate, they launched a women’s organization that has lived to tell this tale: Twenty years ago, two women from disparate backgrounds, enamored by the archetype of crone, acted on gut instinct. Risk-takers, innovators, both of them, they suspected that older women, like themselves, had questions needing answers. What about the empty nest? Retirement? Menopause? Relationships? Aging bodies, aging minds, and aging parents? What do we do with the rest of our lives? We’re not dead yet, so what is left for us to do? Spurred on by Ann’s readership, Shauna and her cadre of golden women pooled their money and planned a gathering in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, subsequently creating a lasting venue where women gather annually to talk, counsel with each other, and tell the truth about their lives.

Interestingly, Ann Kreilkamp and Shauna Adix had the requisite talent to conceive and birth a wholly new kind of women’s organization. Ann was the originator and editor of Crone Chronicles, A Journal of Conscious Aging. Shauna had just retired as the Director of the Women’s Resource Center at the University of Utah. Ann had the readership; Shauna had the know-how. The timing was right. And, fortunately, they had a long list of capable and competent friends who chose to help.

Surely, they all believed, you must follow where the heart leads. Leap and the net will appear. Boldness does have genius, magic, and power. Shauna Adix, Ann Kreilkamp, Ramona Adams, Lou Jean Flint, Kaye Chatterton, Jackie Nichols, and Colleen Taft found a hotel in Wyoming that was willing to work with a small group of women who seemed to know what they were doing. Nestled in the warmth of a mountain lodge, beneath the deep snows of the Grand Tetons, the first Crones Counsel was born. One hundred and six women came to do what the founding mothers envisioned— they talked with each other. They listened. They stomped their feet, clapped their hands, danced and sang, created drama, made new friends, and wished it would never end. The Puget Sound Crones volunteered to do the next Counsel in their neck of the woods, and this has been the way the Counsel has advanced year after year. Women have stepped forward to ensure the continuance...
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of Crones Counsel. When, for whatever reason or circumstance, no one came forward to plan the next gathering, the Crones Counsel leadership accepted the task, working diligently to permit the Counsel to thrive. Thus, Crones Counsel is twenty years strong and still growing.

Evidently, there is power in following the magic and doing “whatever it takes.” Crones Counsel has been to Washington, Idaho, California, Tennessee, Georgia, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon. Women have come to Crones Counsel from as far away as Australia, New Zealand, and England. Women have arrived on motorcycles and in motor homes, by train, by plane, by foot, and by car. Some have come to stay and some have left, finding our brand of fun just a bit too wacky. Other women have become our cultural centerpieces, the sine qua non, of the gathering. If Ilia Benavidez-Heaster does not dance, and Simone LaDrumma does not drum, if Betty Brown isn’t Granny Bee or demonstrating pole-dancing techniques, we’re not the same. When we lose treasures like Jackie Gentry, Ella Eagle, Julien Puzy, Katherine Barr’s sister Mary, Vita Laumé, and all the others who have become ill or passed away, it’s hard to keep on going, but we have. We have the fierce tenacity to persevere when times are tough.

THE PRESENT

We know we must begin, again and again, with clear intention. The planning committee in Salt Lake City for 2012, Gateways and Thresholds: Looking Back, Moving Forward, has decided to stir the cauldron once again and evolve a grander vision of Crones Counsel. The 2012 gathering in Salt Lake City will be new and unusual. The committee is proceeding with vivacity and vision, treading new pathways to the future. We have chosen to believe, as Goethe so eloquently articulated, that “Whatever we can dream we can do, we can do.”

Organizational, there are ideas and concepts still to be conceived and crafted if Crones Counsel is to remain viable. We need continued innovation and creativity. Each of us must capitalize on the energy of 2012. It is time to reach out across the generations. We need to enlist the digital natives—they are the future. We are an aging organization. We need younger women to find us, join us, and grow old with us. With the input and vision of younger women, Crones Counsel can pursue the tasks needed to hone and sharpen our mission.

Meanings change as consciousness changes. As members of Crones Counsel, our mission is to reclaim the archetype of “crone,” restore its essential meaning, and then imbue it with an importance pertinent to the time in which we now live. Thankfully we are not alone. Scholars Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Marion Woodman, and Jean Shinoda Bolen are taking a lead. “Crone” is a notion resplendent with meaning that can enlighten the experience of women throughout their lifespan. The word “crone” can become a welcome designation, one that will advance the power and influence of women.

COME TO SALT LAKE CITY

Encounter the energy of the Rocky Mountains and take in the beauty of the Salt Lake Valley for the celebration of our twentieth year. Once you have arrived and settled in this attractive city, you will be invited to enter Eight Gates of Initiation and cross each beautifully handcrafted threshold into the second half of “your one wild and precious life.” Saturday afternoon and evening has been set aside for an intergenerational exchange under the Red Tent. Invite your daughters, granddaughters, your younger friends and co-workers, to join you at Crones Counsel for this special day which will include the Gifting of the Elders, the Honoring of the Decades, and will culminate in a Croning Ceremony for everyone who wishes to participate. The gifts this day, under the Red Tent, will be plentiful and bounteous.

Now, magic is always about when the Crones gather. October 10 through 14, 2012, in Salt Lake City will be a grand twentieth-year celebration—every day, every hour, every minute. Our expectations are high for this upcoming gathering. All we need is you.

SUSAN ANN STAUFFER is presently serving a second term on the Crones Counsel Board. Susan Ann has attended each of the twenty gatherings and is the Crones Counsel heretorian. Susan Ann is serving as a co-chair of the 2012 gathering in Salt Lake City along with Judith Neihart and Stacia Ireland, both members of the Crones Counsel Board. Susan Ann conducted four years of research on Crones Counsel for her doctoral work in the College of Social Work at the University of Utah. She has written a definitive work (soon to be published and available on-line) on the value of Crones Counsel in the lives of aging women.

The 2012 Committee has adapted the work of two women authors to structure the upcoming gathering. Angeles Arrien’s book, The Second Half of Life, inspired the theme of the Gathering as well as the construction of the Eight Gates of Initiation. Anita Diamant’s book, The Red Tent, is the stimulus for the Saturday Red Tent Event. You might want to read each of these books before attending the gathering. Both books are wonderful.

To access CRONE: Women Coming of Age, go to www.cronemagazine.com.
Great Basin Queendom

By Vicky Burgess

Welcome to the Great Basin Queendom! The Great Basin historically included all of Utah and Wyoming. Utah was where Crones Counsel was founded; their first conference was held in Wyoming twenty years ago. Those of us who participated in this founding process and also presented at the first gathering have profound and individually unique memories of it all.

A few of us have been working on this forth-coming event before and immediately after the Portland Counsel. We are going to have some of the traditional activities such as drumming, storytelling, singing, workshops, and a Croning Ceremony.

We are also going to have new activities, such as a bus tour of some of the wonderful sites in and around Salt Lake. Nine literal provocative gateways will be included.

My Years on the Board

By Tricia Layden

At the 2007 Counsel the CC president announced that unless more women were interested in serving on the board and/or helping host a Counsel, there might not be any more. Well, I just couldn’t see that happening, so I filled out an application for the board (and started harassing other Washingtonians to hold a Counsel in Seattle). I explained that I had no specific skills to offer the Board (e.g. secretarial, technical, managerial), but that didn’t seem to be a problem, and I was accepted.

The next two years were spent working on the 2009 Seattle Crones Counsel, and was great fun. I got to know some amazing people: Connie Dawson, Nancy Hansen, and Gay Barker among others—and learned what it meant to be “on the Board.” It was decided that even though I was a member, it would be okay for me to be the “crow”—the Seattle planning committee’s connection with the Board. Usually it is someone who is not involved with the planning committee who can help with advice or with problems that come up.

After the Seattle Crones Counsel, I had one more year of a three-year commitment, with an option of another two years, which I totally chose. During those three years I got to remain part of the wonderful group of women planning gatherings and discussing the best way to carry the Counsel into the future. Some of the best times were sharing our lives—what we had been up to between planning sessions or gatherings—and brainstorming ideas to bring to the whole Counsel with lots of emails back and forth, as well as the meetings midway and just before the gatherings themselves. There is a lot of decision-making that goes into creating the vibrant gatherings we all know and love, a lot of planning and weighing of solutions and possibilities. It was an experience I treasure.


We welcome your input and participation.

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PATRICIA LAYDEN • 206/244-4264 • patricialayden@gmail.com
**President’s Message**  
by Nancy (Annie) Lehto

What a blessing it has been to be a part of Crones Counsel these past many years. Being on the board has been an extra reward in addition to being part of the gatherings. It is time to turn over the reins of the Crones Counsel board. I will pass this honor to Stacia Ireland at the end of the upcoming gathering. I have learned so much from all of the wonderful women who have donated their time and energy to being on the board. It’s an experience I will never forget.

I am looking forward to the gathering in Salt Lake City so much. A twentieth anniversary is so special…to be thinking of the women who first gathered. The impetus came from women in Salt Lake City, drawing women from all over to attend the first gathering in Jackson, Wyoming. Every gathering since then has been different, the same, special, and wonderful. We each have stories to tell about the different gatherings we have attended. I remember my first gathering in Scottsdale, Arizona. It was amazing and somewhat daunting, as I didn’t know a soul. I came away with jumbled thoughts and so many questions. Who were these women and what were they doing? I didn’t understand much of what was going on but I had to come back the next year to find out more. The energy was something I had never experienced. Through the years I have met gracious and fearsome women — role models all. And the journey continues….

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**BOOK REVIEW:**

**On The Wings of Self-Esteem—**

A Companion for Personal Transformation

by Louise Hart, Ed. D., 1910 Uplift Press, Oakland, CA

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**Review by Diane Cornell**

In our Crone groups, we have many outstanding women who have made important contributions to society and continue to do so. One special author is Dr. Louise Hart who has presented self-esteem workshops at our conferences and at our local crones’ groups. As one woman stated after enjoying Dr. Hart’s presentation here in Santa Cruz, “That workshop really helped me realize I can be proud of myself and who I am; I feel so good.” If you haven’t had an opportunity to attend one of these excellent workshops, you now have a chance to read this practical, uplifting, and transforming book and perhaps share it with friends and family.

Today many of us who were raised in families who weren’t able to show us how to appreciate ourselves can learn how to regain self-esteem and keep it by following the plan in Louise’s book. The opening chapters tell of troubled families and the reactions of the children. Louise describes her own experience with parenting and divorce. If we can identify the problems we faced as children, we can learn something new and gain personal power. To explain this change, Louise Hart uses the butterfly metaphor as the symbol of transformation and the book itself is bound with butterfly wings front and back with the butterfly’s body on the spine. The caterpillar is the dysfunctional social system before the cocoon fosters possibilities and opportunities for your part in the larger process of human evolution.

The second part of the book has sections with exercises to do to change your self talk, accept your feelings, feed your spirit, and examine your truths. The exercises are fun activities that ask you to review your habits and patterns of life. For example, “The next time something goes wrong, write out the story. Then write it again with a different and better ending.” Two words that are often used in the exercises are “miracles” and “play.” To relieve stress, Louise suggests: “Spend time alone each day. Just several five-minute pauses can make a difference. You might reminisce or imagine being on a cruise or on a lovely tropical island.”

On every page Louise uses quotes about life from the ancient seers to modern poets and psychologists. Jack Canfield, author of Chicken Soup for the Soul, wrote “This is a wonderful book! It contains timeless insights and deep psychological truths presented in a simple yet profound way. If everyone read this book and did the exercises, half the pain and suffering we currently experience would disappear.” I know you would enjoy reading this book and stretching your wings to see new possibilities and opportunities for your part in the larger process of human evolution.

Decades—Enid Williams

“The Old Gray Mare, She Ain’t What She Used to Be…”
She’s BETTER! A still-evolving Elder Woman. Looking back, I see Enid, fast-forwarding over the decades.

2ND DECADE:
Newly minted as a Registered Nurse, I left St. Louis for New York City at age 21. Lots to learn: how to manage my life, how to survive in the work world, how to navigate the heterosexual scene. I loved the sights and sounds of the “teeming ‘tropolis”; and I worked on new ways of thinking, of Being. Gradually, I learned to be less naive, less trusting, somewhat more adult.

3RD DECADE:
Self-exploration continued as I began to understand better what I truly needed, what was most important to me. At 35, I “followed my bliss,” my truer interests, and embarked on a demanding program in Clinical Psychology. My lively love life increased awareness and appreciation of who I am, what my strengths and weaknesses are. I mostly do what I want to do, when I want to do it. Lovely feeling of freedom there.

I feel more deeply connected with all of life, and I have a renewed sensitivity to the beauty, the wonder, of Nature. Thus, it is a profound blessing to be able to savor the buds of Spring along with Ginger, the Wonder Cat, who is a complete joy and a talkative, loving companion.

Simplifying my life has been important for me. That includes not taking events as seriously as I did in earlier decades. I’m more mellow: I treasure each moment of my existence. Yes, definitely, I am slowing down! Even when I am eating my smaller meals, I enjoy each mouthful, really noticing, appreciating the experience. Along with feeling more serene, more comfortable with myself, I am working on loosening Attachments. Now, that is a Biggie: for example, it was very difficult to give up my hard-won R.N. status and my later identity as a psychologist. These “should” are at last fading away.

You notice that I live a fairly solitary existence. That’s OK with me. I delight in the times when I can be alone in my small “burrow.” It is a delight, too, that I have many friends. They are a source of joy and support, and I, in turn, love doing things for them. It is lovely, too, that strangers, especially younger women, spontaneously smile at me—or is it because of the “Grandmothers for Peace” button I wear?

4TH DECADE:
A pivotal year for me was 40; I completed study and internships and became a School Psychologist. That was challenging enough, but I also—disastrously—married a creative, brilliant, financially unstable man who was very much like my father. I was fairly unprepared for my roles as a business executive’s wife and as a suburbanite, but I survived, and in some ways, thrived.

5TH DECADE:
After ten rather tempestuous years, my husband and I separated. I was granted an N.I.M.H. scholarship to Boston University, and I embarked on doctoral studies. I was contented to lead a life more suited to the Essential Enid. At age 59, I emerged successfully from an Ed.D. program, and my husband died after a long illness.

6TH DECADE:
Now, I was really on my own! More challenges: Post-Doctoral work at a Youth Guidance Clinic and at Harvard Medical School, doing neuropsychological research. At 65, I slowed down a bit, working part-time as a psychologist and a psychiatric nurse, and I traveled widely.

7TH DECADE:
More shifting of life’s gears! I sold my two-family cottage on Martha’s Vineyard Island and, at the age of 75, picked up and left for the Southwest, knowing almost no one. I worked for a while as an Admissions Officer in a small mental hospital and then retired. I wondered mightily what I would DO with all that spare time! But I soon found myself volunteering—e.g. as a Treatment Guardian at the V.A. Hospital and as a presenter of a Spoken Word PBS Radio program. I also became quite active politically in the Gray Panthers. Becoming an Octogenarian... well I didn’t think about it very much!

THE BIG EIGHT-O:
I’m heading for the Last Roundup, but I’m having Fun getting there!

After wry moments of regret, I find it’s wise, though difficult, to just ignore those dried prune-like wrinkles and get on with Living. Sometimes, thinking back on my wildly varied life, I have to “re-calibrate,” to remind myself that I am now one of the “vulnerable old.” Now, a lot of time, energy, and scarce dinero must needs go into “maintenance and servicing” of my physical self. Ever looming is the threat of increased discomfort and disabilities. It takes a strong sense of Self to weather these onslaughts; basic optimism helps, too.

I feel an acute awareness that “this is (almost) all there is.” I could feel disheartened, if I let it get to me. Peace of Mind demands that I forget What Might Have Been, etc., and live in the present. This includes stripping away old layers of “necessity,” of former mandatory role-playing. What is left is: I have increased awareness and appreciation of who I am, what my strengths and weaknesses are. I mostly do what I want to do, when I want to do it. Lovely feeling of freedom there.

I feel more deeply connected with all of life, and I have a renewed sensitivity to the beauty, the wonder, of Nature. Thus, it is a profound blessing to be able to savor the buds of Spring along with Ginger, the Wonder Cat, who is a complete joy and a talkative, loving companion.

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It is a privilege to live long enough to evolve as a Crone, a Wise Woman. Despite all the challenges, the changes, I feel that it is a blessing to be alive, and 89.
A New Chapter

By Marta Quest

As of today (June 11, 2012) I am in my final two weeks of living in Ekalaka, Montana! I’ve been really busy recreating Carter County’s history books; printing photographs; creating brochures and logos for clients and my new businesses (AQ2A: A Quest to Assist, and Rainbow Rhythms & Art); designing print-on-demand books and eBooks; doing the CroneTimes newsletter for Crones Counsel; and sorting/packing/tossing mountains of STUFF, as well as participating in a town-wide yard sale! My precious toy poodle Mon Ami and I require walking three times a day to keep our sanity; she is such a gift to my life.

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My plans are to offer my services as copyeditor/proofreader and graphic designer to the area and beyond, as well as participate in arts and crafts shows up and down the coast selling my drums and art. I also intend to take classes for website design and get more into stained glass. Several things draw me to Ashland: 70 miles from the ocean; a more progressive, eclectic populace; it’s on the border of California; a lot of art/artists in the area; two colleges and an international airport 12 miles from Ashland; a hot springs nearby; and DRUMMING circles! I’m sure I’ll find much more to draw from after I arrive.

The Universe has been of incredible assistance in this transition once I said “Yes!” to leaving Montana. At Crones Counsel last fall in Portland, Oregon, I announced my intention to move to Ashland and asked for help from my sister crones. I got names and emails of several people in the area. A friend of Helen Kennedy turned out to be a God-send, as she has just moved into this mobile-home park and hooked me up with the owner. The suggestion from my friend Roxane to not take my old car was very helpful (I had worried about hauling it on the back of the truck). As I mentioned, I’ve had a lot of work, which has generated income for my move. And the rental house and restaurant have finally been sold. Our house has yet to sell, but with the oil boom going on in the area, I’m sure it will soon.

Mahtowin and I have dissolved our partnership of 17 years. It has been difficult for both of us, but we are aware that the toxicity of our relationship was not helpful to either of us. I bless her and so appreciate the time we spent together and wish her all the best.

My new address is:  
2020 Rogue Valley Hwy. 99 #5, Ashland, OR  97520. Please use MartaQ.AQ2A@hotmail.com if you wish to email me, and I don’t have an Oregon phone number ... yet! I would love to hear from each and every one of you. And if you’re ever in the area, stop by!"
CRONES COUNSEL:  
A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION  
Reclaiming the Archetype of Crone  

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Listening to Elderwomen, a Rich Experience

By Mary Bub

She sat quietly, listening intently to all of the other women. Slowly, she got up and took the talking shawl, took her time to look over all of the cups on the center-piece, and chose one that was cracked and chipped.

She sat down, put the shawl around her shoulders and began. “I am 72 years old, I have lived on a farm all of my life. My father was a farmer and I married a farmer. I have never experienced anything like this before. I am sitting here listening to your stories and wondering why I have never heard them before. I don’t know why I think I should share my story now but here goes. I chose this cup because it is cracked and chipped. In my life, I was physically abused by my father. When I married I thought that I would finally be safe. My husband also abused me, verbally and emotionally. So, I am cracked and chipped but my husband died this year, and so, even though I am damaged I am still whole and worth something.”

I was facilitating a Wisconsin Rural Women’s Initiative’s Gathering Circle of farm and rural women when I realized that several of them were in the second half of life. More and more I had noticed that older women were coming to the Gathering Circle weekend Get-Aways that are offered by Wisconsin Rural Women’s Initiative. As I listened to their stories that were similar to the one above, I was sure that the next program that needed to be developed was an Elderwoman Gathering. Four of them have been held in the last year in various rural areas. The response has been overwhelming; the women want more. More Gathering Circles, more dialogue about becoming elderwomen and changing the paradigm of what it means to be a crone.

It was decided that the Elderwoman Gathering should begin with a day program. Because of a generous grant received by Wisconsin Rural Women’s Initiative, the program could be offered at no cost to the women. Forty-five women attended the first Gathering. The next three were equally as well attended.

The day began with a lovely continental breakfast. Next, I offered some of my own thoughts about what I have come to call Eldering with Attitude for women in the second half of life. I share my version of the life stages of women. I call them the Winsome Woman, the Wonder Woman and the Wise Woman.

Winsome Woman—A time between childhood and adulthood. A time of enormous change, drama, and fluctuation, hormones raging, relationships changing, the work of the Winsome Woman is to begin to identify her own independence, self-esteem, self-worth, likes and dislikes, creativity, and what she wants to be when she grows up. It is not an easy transition; it can be the worst of times and the best of times or A TIME FOR YOU WIN SOME AND YOU LOSE SOME.

Wonder Woman—The time when a woman thinks she has to be all, do all, know all, and develop her own sense of herself all at once. During this time she is involved in many relationships, family, work, social environments. This is a time of lessons learned and at times an all too comfortable settling in. For too many women this is a time in which she loses herself in the many roles she plays, the hats she wears, the control or expectations of others, and the lack of time to continue her own personal development or growth.

Wise Woman—A time when traditional norms, rules, and life as usual seems not as fulfilling as it once was, often family relationships, jobs, and even environments have changes. These years however, can be the most transformative—wisdom, experience, and new learnings inspire individual growth, call us to authenticity. The Wise Woman knows what she knows, what she has experienced, and the truths in her life. She begins to recognize an itch but is not quite sure where or how to scratch it. It is also a time to embrace new challenges and see greater meaning. She may be viewed as eccentric for finding her voice, but she finds peace, excitement, and happiness when these moments are shared.

It seems that the further along I move on this crone journey, the less I am flitting from one of the three stages to another. I find that I am much more inclined to embrace the Wise Woman and although I still enjoy a moment or two of winsomeness, I too often find myself back in the Wonder Woman stage wondering where the winsome went.

After sharing the Winsome, Wonder, and Wise Woman stages we move into dialogue circles and begin the conversation asking questions relevant to the Wise Woman years. This sharing brings into focus the issues that all women face but are hidden in the population of rural and farm women. I have heard heart-breaking stories of isolation and loneliness, of domestic violence and sexual assault that these women have suffered; some of them as children, who as adult women who when invited into a safe environment with no judgment are telling their stories. Stories like these are what have prompted a new program for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. And, so it seems, the work is far from over, but the journey is more than worth it.

MARY BUB is the founder and president of Wisconsin Rural Women’s Initiative, Inc., providing Gathering Circles and personal development programs for more than 15 years.
Continued from July 2011 issue

Compiled by Kianna

In the July 2011 issue of CroneTimes, we left Betty in Nepal where she taught in a Tibetan Refugee Buddhist School for three weeks. After that she flew to Africa via an unplanned trip to Dubai. Then on to Kenya, Ireland, France, and Spain before arriving safely home on December 2. I will report just a few of the highlights of these latest adventures.

In Kathmandu, every time I walk onto the street, it is an adventure. It's kinda like this big museum stuffed with moving items that are more than your eyes and senses can take in and is pretty exhausting after 30 minutes or so. This morning I saw all the various people in assorted dress, beggars of all sorts, rickshaws (some with people but others filled with many things including raw meat like the sides of a cow or pig or something, shop owners sitting on the step calling to customers, trucks emitting their ghastly smoke and smell, various push carts filled with foods recognizable and not, cats and monkeys on rooftops, dogs and cows in the street — do you get the picture?

The four Tibetan schools were to get together this week for a school debate. The subject was the Dali Lama and it was to be a drill on his life, history, etc. Before getting together, the schools had to make an application to the government and it was denied. China is putting so much pressure on Nepal that even though many Tibetan refugees have lived here for the past 60 years they are getting tougher all the time about preserving Tibetan’s culture. The 6th of July is the Dali Lama’s birthday and extremely important to the Tibetan adults and children of this area. He is the spiritual light that helps make their sad invasion by China and plight of their country somewhat bearable. Since the Beijing World Olympics, the Tibetans’ ability to do or celebrate anything having to do with the Dali Lama has become more and more difficult.

July 5th — The children have been preparing songs and dances for months to perform at a neighboring school. The event is supposed to be around 10:00 A.M. and the children have been released from school today to go home to their parents and travel with them in street clothing to the event. The principal told the children to bring their school uniforms in bags and change there if they can reach the school. It is expected that police will be stationed on all the roads to identify and turnaround all people attempting to get to the Middle School. The Principal told us that there would be Human Rights Activists trying to help with the right of passage. Two groups of police came to speak with the headmaster today to query him about this school having an event and allowing parents and community people into the school grounds. Later a plain clothes police also came with the same questions. The principal (monk in his robes) has asked me to ride with him as his guest and I will report upon return.

July 6th — 3:00 P.M. I have returned safely but just barely as I wanted to put myself in the jail/police truck to protest what I saw today. First, our car was stopped at the end of the driveway by police asking if we were going to a celebration at another school. After the principal showed his Nepali passport and Nepali I.D. card and said repeatedly — “I am Nepali, not Tibetan” they let us go. We took all back roads to the school and got a report on the way that 300 nuns had been turned around.

We arrived to find the school gate locked and probably 100 policemen and women with sticks and shields stating only the children and teachers of that school could get in — not even the parents to see their children perform. This was to be only a celebration of the D.L.’s birthday; no banners of Free Tibet or any kind of political statement,
and the people on the street were very upset to be denied entrance. The principal told me to go ahead as I am a foreigner, but they turned me away from the gate three times. The police kept pushing these gentle people back down the streets and telling them to go home. One woman tried to move forward and police were all over her and tried to get her in the police wagon but others pulled her free. They did arrest at least three men and forced them in the wagon. I was moved to tears at least three times with this restriction of freedom of young children, grand-fathers wanting to see their grandchildren, aged people with restricted mobility, and so on.

After two hours, a Human Rights person finally got my principal through and he arranged for me to get in and have a place of honor in the main seating area. The program was innocent and lovely, followed by a luncheon where I learned that some of the mothers and school officials/principals and children had climbed over the school wall (no small wall, 10-12 feet high with a kind of wiring on the top) to gain access until the police realized what was happening and surrounded the entire compound at one point. One important official showed me his scratched hand and said several people had been hurt.

My time here has been happy and fulfilling and good until today and it was overwhelming to realize how these peaceful people are treated in what is for most — their own country.

**JOURNEY HALF OVER**

Well, my journey is half over. Hard to believe I’ve been out of the country for six months. I finally succumbed to the desire to take the Mountain Flight to see Mt. Everest this past weekend. It was a neat flight. Although the bottom was covered with clouds (due to the rainy season) we had a great, clear view of the top portion. It’s amazing to think that most planes level off at an altitude of 30,000 feet and Everest is 29,000. That’s a lot of mountain, my friends.

Nature Starved — or — why I’m ready to leave Nepal. Nepal has been an interesting time/experience; one which I have enjoyed and have no regrets about the time spent. I could not, however, take the country in a larger dose or should I say the city/valley, villages; wherever humans exist much longer. Ironic that in this place known for its fabulous mountains and fertile valley fields, pain and suffering are so prevalent. Don’t get me wrong, I am absolutely glad I came here for three months and it has been, in many ways my best experience, so far. Doing the teaching at the school and being with the lovely Tibetan children, meeting and hanging out with a companion, Freema, and having all the adventures of trekking, viewing Mt. Everest, studying Buddhism, yogi, etc., have been absolutely wonderful. I am happy, feel truly free and welcome each day for what it might bring. I am just not as connected to nature as I prefer to be.

**FIRST LEG INTO CHINA**

I learned that the next flight had been canceled and had to go to Hong Kong to get flight to Dubai. Let me tell you folks, Dubai is a place I don’t think anyone would be able to make me understand. Talk about having just come from Nepal on the way to Africa and “lack of” to juxtaposition with Dubai was definitely tooooooooooo much.

There are so many skyscrapers in many sections and I can only think of them as a skyscraper/architectural park (like a sculpture park) because I saw no evidence of enough people to even fill them. The huge number of large shopping centers are depressing with their indoor snow ski slopes, etc. It takes 250 million gallons of water a day just to maintain all the greenery in the city. The numbers of luxury hotels and condominiums are unfathomable.

On Monday I took Air Madagascar to Saint Marie Island on the northeastern coast for five days for just very quiet ocean, sun, and sand. I traveled a few hours south of the village for my first national park to see lemurs, baobab trees, and malagasy birds.

Arrived in Dublin on Thursday the 9th after 23 hours in the air and airports on the last of the killer travel times between loca-
many who was barn-minding here in County Antrim — about an hour northeast from Belfast. While she was here we walked trails around the area and I went into Belfast with Liz and attended a Saturday music/storytelling session she holds every week in a studio that is part of the Barn. In addition to owning and running this Barn, Liz is a storyteller “par excellence.”

So back in Dublin for the last two days before heading off to Spain to teach with the conversational language program for one week, which friend Lesley High told me about over a year ago. Then touring with Lane Franz and friends until I get home one month from today on December 2. I’m spending these last two days with Lane’s sister’s sister-in-law who lives in a posh area “Delkey” — a southern suburb/village of Dublin — and just took a walk past Bono (U-2) and Jeremy Arms and Enya (singer) houses. Enya’s house is a modern castle.

I had a great week with wonderful Spaniards doing conversational English for a language training group and have just spent the weekend in Toledo. It’s a really good tourist city with lots of history, old buildings, walls, museums, etc., that I would put on the list for anyone coming to Spain. It’s also a 20-minute high-speed train ride from Madrid; so easy to get to; small enough to see at a leisurely pace and with food, drink, and exercise enough to round out a weekend or day.

This has been one heck of a journey for this ole gal.

Spent yesterday on a five-hour hike in strong, Irish winds. I am drunk from nature.

It was so wonderful to again be so present with mother nature and all her elements; especially the wind.

Had a great time in Western Ireland last week staying with two Servas gals. Una Brown had a cute cottage near Portnoo and a show garden that is open for tours as one of the lovely gardens of Donegal and Cary Meehan who lives in Creeslough and has written a book on sacred sites in Ireland. I visited a Crones Counsel friend’s (Kianna) ancient castle in the area and was able to get to an area (Horn Head) for a great eight-mile seaside walk where I saw three separate rainbows followed by intense rain and sunshine.

On Friday I will go see the reason I came to Northern Ireland — the Giant’s Causeway — a natural volcano-formed basalt-rock column formation whose stones are in hexagon formation and stretches from Ireland, under the sea and ends in Scotland. I’m excited. I spent three to four hours at the Causeway and it was everything I had hoped it would be.

I thought nothing could top my time in County Clare and even had some reservations about coming to this more remote area of Northern Ireland as to isolation, etc. (eight miles in the countryside from any village). However, it has turned out to be “the best for last” of my personal adventures in Ireland. It has combined a small town/area closeness within a beautiful nature setting with a balance of activities and quieter times.

When I arrived I overlapped with a young woman, Liz, from Ger-

BETTY’S FEAKLE FAMILY (on the right) from County Clare, and Dee Barry/husband who helped through friend, Janet Galipo, to arrange my visit.

BETTY AT THE GIANT’S CAUSEWAY in Northern Ireland.

A Call for Workshop Leaders

Would you like to share your expertise with us in Salt Lake City? Our theme is “GATEWAYS AND THRESHOLDS,” 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 surrounding areas. Get your application in soon to: annie lehto at cronenancy@q.com for an application, or by snail mail: annie lehto, 7220 Andrea Lane, Morrison, CO 80465.
To the anguish of the dispossessed and dying
To the world as it is,
Not as we would like to picture it to be,
And it is we, the older women
Who can lead the way.
We who have lived and struggled through
The slow years of throwing off
The strangling grip of the patriarchy
That conditioned us with an iron hand
And taught us to conform--
To being so much less
Than all we were and could be;
We who have lived through the horror of wars
And their heart-
rending losses.
To the controlling, numbing
Use of fear to enslave us;
We who have gained wisdom
From years of learning life's lessons,
Teaching our children,
Watching them struggle to grow up,
Trying to fit them to live
In a challenging, changing world.
Surely we are the ones
Who now have the time,
The wisdom and the experience
Who can best lead the way.
Who else is so well prepared?
Who else has the experience
Of dealing with empathy and caring
With a mother's and grandmother's
Heart and love and healing?
Will we rise to the challenge?

By Ann Emerson, 98

Now when electronic wizardry
Lets us reach out instantly across the
oceans
To new-found friends
And to the cherished ones
From years gone by,
There has dawned a new reality
Of understanding and of sharing,
Of being in the larger world
Where tragedies are internationally felt
And the striving for peace
And empathy for humanity
Have taken on a worldwide scope.

We stand trembling on the verge
Of destroying our world
With our selfishness
And unthinking indulgence
Or of building bridges
Of peace and caring, sharing;
Of empathy and understanding
Of becoming a part of the world of
humanity
With like hopes, aims and yearnings.

We can no longer pursue our solitary
Individual absorption
Impervious to the larger woes
Of humankind.
Slowly we are becoming vulnerable and open
To the deep burden of the oppressed,
To the shattering horror of a catastrophe
Halfway across the world;

Here's an updated picture
of Mom after her Creative
Writing class at the
University of Regina
recently. She is editing her
life story and we're putting
it on her website. She
turned 98 May 31. Amazing,
isn't she? We hope to be in
Salt Lake City, Creator
willing and the U.S. doesn't
self-destruct in the
meantime!

— Lynn Emerson, daughter

We who have lived through the horror of wars
And their heart-rendering losses.
To the controlling, numbing
Use of fear to enslave us;
We who have gained wisdom
From years of learning life's lessons,
Teaching our children,
Watching them struggle to grow up,
Trying to fit them to live
In a challenging, changing world.