President’s Message

By annie lehto, president

What a gathering this 20th Anniversary has been. It was so inspiring — the gates, the Red Tent, the stories, just everything. I really think we can keep this enthusiasm going for another 20 years.

We will be gathering in beautiful Asilomar Conference Center in September 2013. Many of you have been to Asilomar and know how lovely it is. We will be dining together, which is always a wonderful thing. I can’t wait for walks on the beach and drumming around the bonfire.

I don’t know where we will be in 2014. We are looking for a host group. What will we do if we can’t find a group to host 2014? I have no idea.

Marta has produced a 2013 calendar full of pictures of our last gathering in Salt Lake City. I always anticipate receiving the calendar, as it gives me pictures to view all year long. I save my calendars from year to year as a beautiful record of each gathering.

Please email or call me with any questions you may have: annie lehto, cronenancy@q.com, 303/697-6016.

CRONES COUNSEL’S
20th ANNIVERSARY

By Carol Friedrich, CC Board Member

Although I had previously participated in seventeen Crones Counsels, I was again inspired and nurtured by our gathering in Salt Lake City. Seeing old friends with whom we have shared our stories of challenge and growth over the years is always special to me. Crones Circles are a highlight of each gathering, as I am able to meet and share with other women in a comfortable, small-group setting. That is very important to me. I see growth in others as well as in myself and I have been able to risk more there than in the larger setting.

I was also impressed by the “gates” and their meaning for our lives. The planning committee’s hard work was evident in the gates’ details, both in their design and in the messages of each. Material for ongoing thought.

The Red Tent event, as well, stretched our boundaries and perceptions of Crone. The SLC planning committee is to be commended for their creativity and insight.

20th ANNIVERSARY, continued on Page 2

New Year Resolve

by May Sarton, from Collected Poems 1930-1993.
© W.W. Norton & Co., 1993. Reprinted with permission

The time has come
To stop allowing the clutter
To clutter my mind
Like dirty snow,
Shove it off and find
Clear time, clear water.

For it is now or not
As old age silts the stream,
To shave away the clutter,
To untie every knot,
To take the time to dream,
To come back to still water.

Let silence in.
She will rarely speak or mew,
She will sleep on my bed
And all I have ever been
Either false or true
Will live again in my head.

Time for a change,
Let silence in like a cat
Who has sat at my door
Neither wild nor strange
Hoping for food from my store
And shivering on the mat.

20th ANNIVERSARY, continued on Page 2
20th Anniversary, continued from Page 1

A Tour de Force
By Enid Williams, Honored Elder

Our cherished co-founder, Shauna Adix, would have been enormously proud of us — the shining 20th session of Crones Counsel was one of the best, most meaningful ones, ever!

Salt Lake City’s Crones Counsel 2012 featured many of the events I have treasured during my 15 years’ attendance — and more! It was obvious that much loving attention was given to planning this momentous event. The Red Tent afternoon was a tour de force, a very important First. As ever, I loved the ceremony honoring our members who have leapt over Big Eight-O and have survived and thrived. Story Telling was a complete joy, especially with Mahtowin presiding. Her dignified, supportive presence gave a special background to our open-hearted words. All this, and so much more!

I especially salute our new members. Coming to know you has been a heart-stirring experience. Being a part of Crones Counsel will enhance your lives; it will help you to evolve into cronehood in a wonderfully enriching way — as it has helped Enid and so many other women over the past 20 years.

Our Shared Stories Counsel the Heart
By Grace Zach, Honored Elder

Crones Counsel in Salt Lake City was a great experience! The energy of so many women gathered together was dynamic. And the variety of our shared stories counsels the heart. I must admit — I delight in the role of “Honored Elder.”

I always enjoy the time with our small circles because we do form closer personal connections.

I loved the depth of thought and planning by eight different groups, which created and produced the eight “gateways and thresholds.”

It was fun to hear each group talk about that because each gate was indeed a special work of art. Many of us chose to walk through those gateways again and again.

Saturday’s Red Tent event was almost the gift of a second conference! I marvel at the amount of planning and individual commitment. The shared responses from the hearts of maiden, mother, matriarch, and crone was a special gift.

So I send hugs of appreciation to all of you who worked to make the entire gathering possible.

Yanking My Chains
By Sheri Sheya

Having been born and raised in Salt Lake City and being lucky enough to attend Crones Counsel for the second time with my “Aged P” (Pat Sheya), Salt Lake Crones gifted me with returning friends, familiar faces, and rebooted my own personal hard drive. My first Crones Counsel was in Portland, where I drifted around the energy spirals of women. Workshops, faces, names, and stories set in the City of Roses. Like a sponge, soaking up all Portland Crones offered, and returning to Salt Lake squished full of memories, knowing Salt Lake was where it started 19 years before — and would be the Host City in 2012 gave me pause. Salt Lake City? Really? Someone in Portland was yanking my chains.

Yet the energy, enthusiasm, strength of women holding each other: whether in a small group or large contains a power incredibly difficult to describe. “Holding” not just meaning “to grasp,” but also emotionally, psychologically, “soulfully,” healthfully, and fully. Laughing heals, crying heals, silence heals, dancing heals. Listening heals. For me, Crones in Salt Lake City whispered insights, an epiphany of my own, a quiet realization. Stories teach me, listening guides me, stories sadden me, listening makes me laugh.

Our Elder Women are our gifts.
Sustaining Inspirations
By Maggie Dickson

Wonderful, wonderful Crones! Thank you! You are all sustaining inspirations for me. Always. Forever. I treasure the 2012 Counsel memories. I was fascinated by the stories, immersed in the deep and honest sharing in my circle. You, my Crones, nurtured me, enabled me to continue my RV journey throughout the beautiful lands of southern Utah. I’ve been on the road since Labor Day and will end in Yosemite. Then home to Aptos, California for the holidays. I carry your spirits with me as I wander, going through magical and sacred gateways and thresholds, entering and reentering the Red Tents of my life.

Exceeded My Expectations
By Kianna Bader, CroneTimes editor

What an awesome tribute to Shauna and to Crones Counsel celebrating its 20th Anniversary in Salt Lake City, where it all began. Nineteen years ago, when I attended the second Crones Counsel, I never would have guessed this gathering would become such an important part of my life. As it has become more meaningful to me each year, the rest of my life is planned around it.

In October, the Salt Lake gathering exceeded my expectations. It provided a deeper, more spiritual experience for me. The stories were richer, the Red Tent experience added more diversity to our gathering. I loved the Threshold Theme. The eight gates were so meaningfully decorated by various women. I loved the historical video of the past twenty years and hope it can be shown far and wide to attract more Wise Women to our gatherings.

It is always fantastic to be with so many unique like-minded women. What other place in our lives gives us this chance?

First-time Attendee — Youngest “Cronette”
By Aimee Bodnar, age 28

I wasn’t quite sure what to expect when I came to my first Crones Counsel, but my fears were immediately alleviated when I was greeted as the youngest Crone there at age 28, into warm and welcoming arms and hearts.

I learned what it is to be a Crone, and what exactly a Crone’s purpose is. To be young and able to soak up all of the wisdom and life’s directions was absolutely humbling and incredible. I was in awe of all of the strong, positive, and wise ladies.

This Counsel, the 20th to be exact, forever changed my outlook as a woman and emboldened me to take life and learn from it at every step. I learned it’s okay to worship myself and to trust my instincts. I will never again fear to make difficult decisions because I know that I will always have the love and support of a lot of new Sisters!

Thank you to all again for accepting me and loving me, no matter what. I cannot wait to see everyone again next year in Asilomar!

Basking in Your Embrace
By Marta Quest

I’ve been coming to Crones Counsel since the Scottsdale gathering in 1995, and I must say that this latest event has brought back the heart of Crone. I am so relieved! This gathering was so rich in deeply moving ceremony as well as just plain fun.

My soul gets filled by Crones Counsel and lasts until about April when I start yearning for it to hurry up and arrive so I can bask in my “tribe’s” soft, loving, and accepting embrace.

Each year has many gifts that I muse about, discuss, and share with anyone who will listen in my daily life. I’m very glad we did have the small sharing circles, as they are so allowing of the intimacy that larger circles can’t accommodate.

As has been mentioned by other Crones, the Red Tent afternoon was fabulous and was a dream of mine: acknowledging without shame and celebrating our uniqueness as women who shed blood as part of creation.

As has been mentioned by other Crones, the Red Tent afternoon was fabulous and was a dream of mine: acknowledging without shame and celebrating our uniqueness as women who shed blood as part of creation.

Thank you Crones Counsel board and the Salt Lake City planning committee for all your hard “work” and vision for the beginning of the next cycle of gatherings! I love you all.
LOOKING FOR LOCATIONS FOR FUTURE GATHERINGS

The Crones Counsel Board is always looking for groups that will put on a gathering, and we have a fully comprehensive Planning Guide for your use. Also, if you are part of a group or are just one or two, the Board will partner with you in planning the event. All proposals are considered. Apply now.

If groups do not step forward, the board must plan each function. We may ask for help identifying locations that can accommodate up to 150 women in a conference or Retreat Center format. We can go anywhere in the United States and have found that these types of lodging arrangements provide the best value and the most opportunity for Crone community interaction.

Kindly contact any board member (see Board roster on Page 5) with suggestions for a place in your area or any place you know about in the continental U.S. that has good access from a major airport. WE NEED A LOCATION FOR 2014. Please give us your suggestions.

A WORTHY USE OF FUNDS

In 2012, we celebrated our 20th Anniversary. The twenty years occurred due to the loving volunteer work of many individuals who keep Crones Counsel alive and thriving. Like many non-profit organizations, the Board keeps our operating funds as low as possible and charges the minimum amount of registration fees for our Gatherings. Our low budget is increasingly challenged each year with higher lodging deposits, commitments for guaranteed numbers, and the need to move more into the electronic age by maintaining our website and developing newer forms of publicity to attract new Crones.

Each year, Crones contribute generously to our Outreach Program and to our Scholarship Fund. Now, especially, we need generous contributions to Crones Counsel itself. Expenses are rising, and we need more funds to help us operate. Even if 100 women gave an extra $5, it would generate $500 each year. We give 15 to 20 percent tips to waiters in restaurants. Why not give an extra 15 to 30 percent of our registration fee to keep Crones Counsel alive and thriving?

We encourage those of you who have enjoyed Crones Counsel and believe in its worth to consider a bequest in your will. In the past, two women have been especially generous acknowledging Crones Counsel. We thank both Diane Bernard and Phyllis Clifton’s family for their gifting, as well as all of you who have donated extra funds to Crones Counsel. Please support our “Alumni University of Wisdom.” Thank you.

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Crones help each other. We know a gathering can be expensive for some based upon transportation, lodging and the Gathering Registration Fee. Each year, Crones contribute monies so sister crones may have some support in attending the next Crone gathering.

If you would like some assistance in order to attend our Crone Gathering in 2013, complete the Scholarship form on the website and follow the instructions for submission. Please submit your request before May 1, 2013. We will get back to you as soon as possible after determining our funding and how many partial or full scholarships we can afford. Please don’t let a few hundred dollars keep you from giving yourself the gift of a Crones Counsel Gathering. Our criteria for funding is: Elders first, then first time attendees, then others. Unless you are an Elder, we ask that you do not request funds more than two years in a row. Thanks and we hope to see you at the 2013 Gathering.

WHO CAN ATTEND CRONES COUNSEL?

Women of all ages who feel drawn to the Crone. We welcome inter-generational attendance and workshop leaders. We encourage the attendance of all daughters, granddaughters, nieces, aunts, mothers, grandmothers, sisters, cousins, partners and friends. Help us keep the Crone archetype alive by bringing others to the 2013 Gathering at Asilomar.

2014 HOST GROUP NEEDED

By Annie Lehto, president

We need a host group for our 2014 Crones Counsel gathering. Interested? Give me a call or email. There is a planning guide I can send to you and of course the board will help with the finances and any other assistance needed.
Update on Honored Elder Ann Emerson

By Lynn Emerson

As many of you know, my mom, Ann Emerson had a couple of falls and then a stroke back in July 2012. I had her moved into a personal care home and it turned out to be a disaster. After they found out I was bringing her vitamins, they basically asked us to leave because they had to be prescribed by a doctor and come from a pharmacy bubble-wrapped. Just at that time, mother's hairdresser (who we dearly love) was moving her mother to live with her sister. The sisters painted the mother's condo and we moved in. It worked perfectly. Since October 18, 2012, Mother has been steadily improving — nothing like healthy food, the right nutrition, and loving care of friends, family, and Regina Qu'Appelle workers.

Her writing group from the U of Regina came over before Christmas to meet and brought her lots of books. She loves having them here and devours the books. My two brothers came out to visit and she loved seeing her sons.

At this time, mother isn't on the computer or email so I answer her emails. With physio resuming in the new year, she is planning to gain more strength in her left hand and her legs. The doctor at the time of her stroke told me he had never seen such a healthy brain for a 98-year old and she could recover fully from the stroke but it would take time. She's proving him to be right!

Our new phone no. is 306-205-0516 and our address is 111-4246 Albert St. S., Regina, SK, S4S 3R9, Canada. We would love to hear from you one way or other.

May 2013 bless you richly and be the best year ever for you and yours! Mother believes this is not the end of the world — we are just moving into a Golden Age!

Much love and many hugs to you all.

Here is a photo I took today of mother and as you can see, she is basically thriving. She wouldn't say so because she can't do everything she was doing when she was 65. She doesn't like her hairdo but the Gibson Girl is easy for me. I think she looks adorable!
GRANDMOTHERS SPEAK

Simply Put ... It Is Time

Message from the Great Council of Grandmothers

I went to the Great Council of the Grandmothers today and said, “As we move toward the end of 2012, tension is building about the changes that have been predicted for this time. Grandmothers,” I asked, “is there anything you’d like us to know and do to get ready for this change?”

Smiling patiently, twelve elegant women looked me over and said, “As this year comes to a close, so too do many of the old ways that have for so long held humanity in thrall. Something is finishing now and something new is beginning. No one is responsible for these old ways that are ending now,” they said.

“What?” I responded. What did they mean that no one was responsible for the all the terrible things that have taken place here on earth? I had a list I wanted to blame for all the problems in the world and I’d expected the Grandmothers to confirm it.

But as this thought crossed my mind, the Grandmothers threw back their heads, laughing uproariously.

I was shocked that they would laugh about something so serious, but they smiled indulgently, looked past me and continued. “Just as no one is responsible for the pain of the past, no one is responsible for the shift which is occurring now,” they said and I stared at them, dumbfounded. “It is time,” they said then, giving me a level look. “Simply put...it is time.”

“Whenever humanity grows tired of contraction, grows tired of a steady diet of fear and dread, and decides that it is ready to live with an open heart, no matter what,” they said, “human hearts open. And the opening of the human heart changes everything,” they said, shaking their heads in wonder.

“Hearts are opening now,” they said. “Even though all around you, you are hearing the death rattle of the old ways--the convulsions of King Greed for instance,” they said, “the shrieking and moaning of those who created systems that treated people as ‘things,’ things that existed solely for their own personal gain, these activities are finished. A fresh wind has begun to blow and this wind will blow away contraction, control, and mean-spiritedness of every kind. Believe it!” they said, and with their eyes blazing, they rocked back and forth on their heels. I’d never seen them more determined.

Mesmerized, I watched them and then “Uh ... uh, Grandmothers,” I said at last, “what would you have us do at this time? How can we help bring about this shift you are speaking of?”

Turning to me with a knowing smile, they shook their heads and said, “You need do nothing. Nothing but love,” they amended. “Take every opportunity to love,” they said. “Be the walking prayer we’ve told you that you are. It is your nature to live in love,” they said, “so live your nature. Be who you are and enjoy being alive. Hold to the Net of Light,” they added, “and observe how the Net of Light holds you. You are precious to the Light, and the Net of Light supports you at every moment of your life. You are the Light within the Net!” they exclaimed.

“Claim this birthright now,” they urged. “It is time.”

REMEMBER CRONES COUNSEL 20

with a 2013 CALENDAR of this fabulous event.

There are only a few left, so hurry! Go to www.CronesCounsel.org and click on Crone Marketplace. Only $20 including shipping.
For 2013 we will be returning to Asilomar ...“Refuge by the Sea” with pine trees, sandy beach, and walking paths.

As Maiden, we tested our wings, reaching out one, then the other, searching for balance. Our wings flap tentatively, or boldly, exploring the joy of flight.

As Mother, we spread our wings, in protection for children, and the Earth from the ravages of wars and greed. We spread our wings for human and animal rights, for the right to be valued and treated with respect. As Mother, we explore a woman's right to FLY!

As Matriarch, we hold our wings closer, contemplating life's creations: fertile fields of words and music, children, success/failure, pain and joy. We look to those who have flown before us, the Grandmothers, Aunts and Mothers, for inspiration as we stand strong in our power.

As Crone, we soar! Acknowledging the past and the present, we look into the future, soaring peacefully and resolutely on the currents of the ever-expanding mystery.

Just 71 miles south of San Jose and 120 miles south of San Francisco. Conveniently served by the Monterey Peninsula, San Jose, San Francisco, and Oakland airports.

All meals are included and served semi-cafeteria style. The group will be seated together at designated tables.

In September you will enjoy warm days with a slight contrast in the crisp evenings.

Special physical and/or dietary needs can be accommodated. Be sure to notify the Asilomar Conference Center when making room reservations.

For more information or to register for CRONES COUNSEL XXI, please contact:
Registrar annie lehto, 4571 S White Way, Littleton, CO 80127, cronenancy@q.com, H 303-697-6016
To register online go to www.cronescounsel.org. EARLY BIRD RATES EXPIRE JANUARY 31, 2013.

AFTER registering for CCXXI you will receive a housing form for room registration at Asilomar.
Deadline for room reservations to receive the CC rate is: JUNE 30, 2013.
Happy New Year to Everybody!
By Sally Phillips

Jackie was in a terrible car accident March 3, 2009, as she was returning home after her voice lesson in the afternoon. I doubt that we will ever know what happened in that left front impact with a pickup truck, but EMT response, removal from car, and flight to medical treatment was relatively quick.

Jackie suffered severe, diffuse brain trauma and fractured bones in each of her extremities. She has been receiving excellent care.

So this story and its updates are primarily about her journey and her progress from this point onward. It has been a slow path, but strong women like Jackie will not be deterred with the help of her family and friends. She is taking the slow, small steps to become the best that she can be!

Jackie has continued to make very good communication progress since my last update. She still prefers whispers/moving lips for responses, but if I stand behind her (can’t see her lips) she often speaks aloud so that I can hear her across the room. I finally got her into speech therapy again (three times a week), and that seems to help somewhat. She now will often answer open-ended questions, i.e., show her an item and ask her to tell you something about the item. For example, one time she said, “That umbrella looks old but I think it will still protect you from the rain.” When I told her I was going to a retiree luncheon at the University, she later asked me where the luncheon was going to be and who would be there.

In November, I reported to you about the lack of short-term memory, but then I started asking her more about things from the previous day, and she generally was doing pretty good with that. She was telling people what she had to eat for Christmas (very small amounts of baby-food squash, turkey and rice, etc.). She asked for a big glass of ice water!

Jackie also is confused about a number of things and gets things wrong. She often thinks she lives in Pennsylvania, and there is confusion over last names. She also has goals to stand and walk, particularly to go to the bathroom. It provides motivation to exercise her legs, which can sometimes result in voluntarily controlled hip flexion.

Jackie also is confused about a number of things and gets things wrong. She often thinks she lives in Pennsylvania, and there is confusion over last names. She also has goals to stand and walk, particularly to go to the bathroom. It provides motivation to exercise her legs, which can sometimes result in voluntarily controlled hip flexion.

Jackie has been home a lot recently: Thanksgiving, Christmas, and several times to assist with holiday decorations at the house. She helped with selection and placement of the tree ornaments as well as items for the fireplace mantel and piano. She seemed to really enjoy this. Jackie also loved all the holiday cards and email messages that you have sent. Thank you so much! Believe me, she read every one, the majority of them aloud. We also talked about you!

She also had a great visit with [her daughter] Jenny in mid-December (I went to Pittsburgh to visit my family) and then a great Holiday gift exchange with Jeff and family at Apex on December 26.

Then out of the blue Jackie started having breathing difficulties on the afternoon of December 27 and ended up in the hospital for five days! They never did figure out what caused the breathing problems, low blood pressure, fever, etc. Fortunately it was not the flu nor pneumonia. However, after she got back to Apex on January 1, she is now not able to talk aloud. There seems to be some structural/physiological issue in the throat; she says her throat is sore. Jackie continues to cough and wheeze and needs oxygen support. Otherwise, Jackie is doing well, is alert (smiles, other facial animations) and whispers/mouths a lot of responses. Speech therapy is now put on hold, and we will continue to work through this setback. She did mouth the words to all of the songs at hymn singing this week, and I’m planning to take her out to the senior center next week for some musical performances.

So, Jackie had to miss the annual New Year’s Day party in Glendale, but she did send a message to those that attended. It was great to see so many of you that day and to share our holiday “play acting” message.

Thanks so much for your continuing support.
Cincinnati Community of Conscious Crones & Elders

By Jacoba Groenewegen and Kaya Kotzen

Cincinnati, Ohio, is incredibly diverse, eclectic, and spiritual. Early in 2012, a small group of like-minded people came together to share their thoughts and feelings about birthing an open group for anyone interested in gathering regularly to discuss, share, experience, enjoy, and learn all about what it means to be a Conscious Crone or Elder in these times.

From the start, it was agreed that this would be a group for both women and men interested in collaboratively co-creating a foundation of broad inclusiveness based on life-stage rather than gender. The blending and the balance of the sexes is encouraged and upheld as we all carry the Divine Feminine and the Divine Masculine within. We acknowledge, honor, and cherish that.

Twenty-three people came to the first meeting. The group quickly took on a life of its own. It was agreed that this was to be a group without fixed leaders. Our open format, structure, and consensus decision-making process was inspired by the indigenous Elder traditions, the women's movement, and the women's leadership style and process of collaboration. This felt like the best way to meet our intended goal of a highly open, dynamic, and co-creative group with fluid leadership.

The Vision for this group is (taken from the group's Mission Statement):

The Conscious Crone and Elder Community is a gathering of women and men exploring the myriad ways our experience and wisdom may coalesce to support, and empower our rightful and changing place in the dream of life as individuals and a collective.

We are strong, sensitive, and self-determined, leaders, lovers, and learners of life, carrying diverse histories, interests, values, gifts, and challenges as we achieve, approach, and question the relevance of the rite of passage and way of being known as Elder and Crone in our lives and contemporary culture.

Some of us seek to bring Crone and Elder wisdom to our communities and the world, while others wish to hold the container for that activity and focus on self-development. Sharing our strength and diversity is the foundation of our gatherings and activities, even as the views expressed are not necessarily shared by all members. Each of us takes responsibility for balancing his or her beliefs and interests on a foundation of appreciation and support for each individual's quest.

In addition, one of our explorations is pondering whether to create a Rites of Passage Process/Ceremony around Elder-ing and Croning. Some of us already use ritual regularly in our lives. For others, it has been a desire not yet tried. Most of us are feeling the need to honor ourselves and the roles we are stepping into, as we move into this new time in our lives.

Each time we meet, the group organically flows into collectively chosen thought-provoking topics. Subgroups are already being discussed (separate gender meetings, initiation rites, and purely social gatherings, as examples). The community offers support and unconditional acceptance, while striving to be a safe and trusted container to be heard and to grow in. For some who live alone or are un-partnered without family nearby, it has the potential to function in the role of extended family.

There are more than 40 people now on our mailing list and 70 people who have "liked" our Facebook page and it continues to grow each week. Each gathering brings new faces.

Though we all live in different places, we have found a way to develop community and to create something unique and purposeful. We sense the need for this type of group in other places. We hope the idea will spread.

Consider creating this in your community.

For more information, contact Jacoba Groenewegen at JackyGroenewegen@aol.com or Kaya Kotzen at kkwisdomwoman@gmail.com or Bill Bulloch at bill.thegreenman@yahoo.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) via email. It is also on our website: www.cronescounsel.org

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THE SHARING PLACE representative and our gifts to them.

CRONE ARTISANS...

WE WANT YOU!
A large part of every Crones Counsel is the Crones Marketplace.
Share your magic with very receptive Crones who willingly and gladly support you.

For more information about being an Artisan at CRONES COUNSEL XXI — Asilomar, California
MARTA QUEST, gmommaq@gmail.com, 541/613-4619

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**HONORED ELDER ARTICLE**

**A Better Appreciation of Who I Am**

by Betty Rockwell

As I was approaching my 80th birthday, I noticed changes in the way I felt, the way I looked at life. Any age with a “0” at the end is a milestone. I was in California a few months before my birthday and took my family out for a special lunch and let them know we were celebrating this milestone age a little early because I didn’t expect them to visit me for my March birthday. The big surprise to me was that all my family came to see me in Anacortes the weekend of my birthday. Fortunately I knew ahead of time they were coming so I had not planned my own celebration with local friends.

Since that time I have had a better appreciation of who I am. My family has recognized me as a person important to them in their lives. I have something to offer them. I don’t give unasked for advice, but know my opinion is valued when asked. I know I’m loved and respected and can be myself. My many imperfections are accepted, as I accept my family in their imperfections.

In the last few months, as I have been dealing with back problems, and it has become evident to everyone that I am showing signs of aging, my family is recognizing that I won’t always be with them. One son is in the process of recording some happenings in my life. A grandson has asked that I teach him how to make good pie crust. All my sons are old enough to be experiencing their own signs of aging. I can listen and sympathize, even if I can’t “fix” their problems. What else can I say except “Aging isn’t for sissies!”

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**An Award to an Exemplary Crone Leader in Santa Cruz, California**

The following article came from a member of Diane Cornell’s crone circle in Santa Cruz. The group wants to honor Diane and our CC board decided this would be the best place to do it.

By Irvin Lindsey,
Diane’s occasional helper

I’m a retired school teacher who has noticed an exemplary older lady who creates, organizes, and pays for Crones meetings in the local area. She works very hard to help so many older ladies here in Santa Cruz, California. Every month Diane Cornell rents a meeting space, finds speakers, and prints, mails, and emails handouts. In addition, she cooks, brings food, gives rides to and from the meetings, and basically creates these meetings of learning and social opportunities for deserving ladies. Diane is on a fixed income and not wealthy but gives so much of her time and money with a pure and rare sense of altruism. She even brings her own utensils, table cloths, table decorations, and a heater when it’s cold. Since she is an older lady herself, she might not be able to keep doing this at some point.

I think this level of rare and exemplary leadership is deserving of a Crones Counsel award. Thank you.