How Not to Move!

by our Eldest Elder, Alice Yee

My husband Bob and I both knew the time had come for us to change from our semi nomadic life to a more permanent one. For over 30 years we had been living in a trailer during the winter months in San Diego, California, and spending the rest of the year in our lovely home in Ellensburg, Washington. A year ago, in April, we made the final decision to move to San Diego into a 1200-foot two-bedroom apartment in Casa de Mañana, a beautiful independent-living retirement facility overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Since many of you have already gone through a similar experience, you understand all the emotional and physical hurdles that we faced ... and we faced them all! But let me tell you about our process.

We were downsizing from a home of 43 years. No, we were not hoarders, but we had the usual amount of “stuff” that one accumulates without even trying! So starting in April 2014, deadlines had to be met: get the house ready to sell; decide what furniture would fit into our new place; empty the trailer, sell, give away, or throw away all of its contents; sort one room of the house at a time.

I divided our large garage into organized sections: one for packed and taped boxes ready for the professional movers on July 1; one for Goodwill; one for friends who came each day to help deplete the stack; one for the final estate sale in mid July; and since we were still “living” in our house, we kept out survival equipment for the duration. Throughout this organized chaotic process we also had other priorities! We met friends on the West fork of the Bitterroot River in Montana the last week in June for an annual fly-fishing adventure. Fishing was great; it was the end of the salmon fly hatch and large browns were still rising, even leaping out of the water to gulp our imitation barbless hook salmon flies. For those few days all the stress, exhaustion and concerns of moving faded into oblivion as I lost myself in the thrill and challenge of landing a 2 or 3-pound wild trout on a size 16 barbless hook!

When the professional movers came the first week of July, one third of the garage was emptied. Then off we went again to Priest Lake in north-ern Idaho to meet our sons and their spouses for three weeks of swimming, boating, kayaking, talking, eating and great conversations. In the meantime the house was being shown to potential buyers and completely devoid of our possessions.

Throughout this whole saga, I discovered I didn’t really care about material things; I treasured the cards, letters and mementos from friends and family that I had accumulated over the years. So now they are stored in our new apartment, carefully labeled, to be read and re-read when “I grow old!”

Before our final fishing trip to Rock Creek in Montana the last two weeks of August, we said “goodbye” to 45 wonderful years in Ellensburg. It was the end of an era.

On September 3, our official day to move into our San Diego apartment, we stood in the midst of over 100 unpacked boxes and literally inhaled the spectacular view from our living-room window of the vast Pacific Ocean and listened to the barking of the seals mixed with the roaring sound of the surf as it crashed on the rocks below.

A wonderful setting for the beginning of a new life! We felt ready for whatever challenges lay ahead.
How I Got My Name

by Kianna

Last year in Utah, Mnimaka told us the story of how she got her name. That prompted me to share my story.

Jackie Gentry, beloved past president of Crones Counsel, is the one responsible. After attending a few Crone gatherings, I thought it would be fun to have a Crone name so I started using Kianna from time to time. Then when I joined the Board, Jackie, then president, looked me squarely in the eye and told me to choose which name I was going to use. After a moment's hesitation, I decided Kianna would become my official Crone name.

I think it’s an interesting story how that name came about. My father, who loved to read mythology, named me after the Roman Goddess of the Hunt, Diana. I always used the name Diane except for one year when I was 11 and, like many girls, decided to change my name to Diana.

Fast forward to 1973–1986 when I lived in West Virginia. I was extremely active in Catholic Church activities: taught music in the parish school, directed adult and children’s choirs, played the organ, led singing as a cantor, worked on Cursillo retreat teams across the entire state and more.

I didn’t want to miss anything, so I decided to give the Charismatic Prayer Group a whirl too. I have to admit I was skeptical about that “singing in tongues,” but I gave it a try. When I was chanting, these words came to me over and over: Kianna, Laytana, Kianna. I had no idea what they meant but they were musical. I found myself singing them for many years afterward.

A few years later, when my son was in college at the University of Dayton in Ohio, he met a young man who had escaped from Vietnam. His name was Chou Nguyen. Chou soon married a Vietnamese woman named Diana who had been adopted by a couple in Hawaii. A couple of years more and one evening I met the couple and their baby at a pizza parlor in Dayton. Their adorable baby was attired in a yellow snowsuit and she bowed Namaste to me from her mother’s arms.

When I asked the baby’s name, I was told it was Kianna. Amazed, I asked how they chose that name. Diana told me that it means Diana in Hawaiian! Imagine my surprise. Someday I’ll find out what that other word means.

Finding Home

By mARTa Quest

On July 1, I celebrated my seventieth (!) birthday and the third anniversary of moving to Ashland, Oregon. Both events seem momentous. I’ve said it before in other places and I’m saying it again in this location: I am home.

This “home” feels more to my liking than former abodes, as I am accepted here more than any other towns in which I’ve resided! Perhaps I’m accepting myself more now and the location matches my personal acceptance. Or, because most folk in Ashland couldn’t care less what gender or sexuality a person is; actions and personality are the keys to appreciation and acceptance. Up until now, I’ve never lived anywhere where I wasn’t afraid to be me. It is refreshing and encouraging to feel that freedom!

I’ve also found a spiritual home at Unity in Ashland, an omni-faith congregation that fits me to a T. The music is exceptional with a cadre of talented musicians who take turns singing and playing many instruments. There are also guest musicians and speakers (such as Jean Houston and Neale Donald Walsch) who “fill in” when needed. Norma Burton is our minister (I’ve never gone to a service with a woman preacher; I’m loving it!). She speaks eloquently and thoughtfully on many subjects dear to my heart. The people who come are so beautiful and loving … definitely what my soul’s been looking to have in my life for many years. It’s so nice to have life-long friends so soon.

I finally get to have a women’s drumming circle a couple of times a month. There are more than 78 “members” on my MeetUp site, but usually a circle of 6 to 12 women gather in Ashland or Talent to drum, sing, and share. We were even invited to drum up awareness that the city plans to cut down a 250-year-old beautiful, healthy, enormous cottonwood tree. 13 drummers, plus ukulele and flute players created a wonderful afternoon for about 50 concerned citizens. (The tree is still standing … so far.) More soul happiness!

My art creation business is growing and I’m being invited to paint commissions. I love that!

Life is good and this October I get to see you all again … in Mount Shasta. So excited! Namaste.
I am Jill, daughter of Marilu, granddaughter of Agnes Wilda (affectionately known as “Irish”). We come from a large Irish Catholic family. My mother was the oldest of twelve children: 7 girls, 5 boys. I am granddaughter number 3, seventh grandchild of 52 grandchildren. When my grandmother died, there were 78 great grandchildren, three of whom are my daughters Ashley, Aimee, and Kaitlyn. Because so many of those elder women have passed away, I felt the need to connect with the spirit and wisdom of wise women: I have this in Crones Counsel.

In 2012 my daughter, Aimee, was able to experience her first Crones Counsel. She was battling through a rough patch in her life. I realized that she could use the strength of women around her and I asked her if she would like to join me in Salt Lake City. She agreed and she was the youngest woman there. She jumped right in and blossomed with the support of those strangers who opened their hearts and welcomed her.

She had some sort of idea what Crones Counsel was about from our dear cousin, Meg Randle, and me, but didn’t know how deeply her life would be impacted by the experience. Aimee made friendships that she’ll have for the rest of her life. Sometimes all it takes to get through some of the most challenging times is to be surrounded by strong women from all different walks of life: those who have a lot of wisdom and love to share. She met some truly amazing and wonderful ladies who touched her heart in ways she couldn’t imagine. We heard incredibly wondrous life stories. We wept together, we laughed together and we loved it all. We all lifted each other up and felt worthy again.

I hope to be able to bring each daughter to Crones Counsel so that they may experience this wondrous journey to Cronehood as well. I am fortunate to be bringing my youngest daughter, Kaitlyn, with me this year to Mt. Shasta. She has heard so many fabulous things about you all and cannot wait to be a part of something so very special too!

As I sit here writing this, I look up and see several cardinals flying back and forth in front of my window. The cardinal cycle of twelve (hmm ... there’s that number 12 again!) is symbolic of cycles: life, death, and renewal. As the cardinal represents the opportunity for restoration, revitalization, and renewal in my life, so does Crones Counsel. I wish to continue this cycle by sharing Crones Counsel with my daughters and generations to come.

Thank you all for allowing us to share in and take part of this special world — this lovely, bright fantastic, strong, and spiritual world that is Crones Counsel.
Update on Honored Elder Ann Emerson

On May 31, 2015, Ann celebrated her 101st birthday with four ladies from her Regina writing class and her daughter, Lynn, at Wolseley Lakeside Care Home. Ann has resided at Wolseley Lakeside Home for the last year and a half where she is well loved and well taken care of. Best of all, she is happy there. Lynn lives in the town of Indian Head nearby.

Ann and Lynn relocated to Regina, Saskatchewan, after leaving Anacortes, Washington, in November 2010 for Canadian medical coverage for Ann (who is a dual citizen) and to rejoin Lynn’s husband who was working in Regina.

Ann had started her own Crone group in Anacortes for the purpose of “celebrating aging with pride, power, purpose, and passion!” After her group got to be too big for the thirty members to meet in members’ homes, six other groups were formed in different towns around Washington.

Above is a photo taken last year at a joyous celebration with Ann’s family from Ontario and friends from Anacortes, Washington, White Rock B.C., and Regina, all who traveled for Ann’s 100th birthday.

Should anyone wish to be in touch with Ann or Lynn, please email Lynn at emersonlynn1111@gmail.com or call 306-695-2001 or write to P. O. Box 1358, Indian Head, SK, S0G 2K0, Canada. We would love to hear from you.

In the back row are Ann’s two sons, Bruce and Neil Emerson, and daughter Lynn Emerson (third from right).
In the front row, Ann is flanked by granddaughters Cory and Sarah Emerson.
SOME THOUGHTS OF AN ELDERLY TRAVELER

by Christina Horst
Written after Christina’s recent trip to Alaska.

1. Ask for help
2. Accept help
3. Exercise extra before you go
4. Pack light for layering
5. On a ship, try to use the same route
6. Take a suction grab for the shower
7. Buy postcards (the best pictures)
8. Read about it before you go
9. Comfy shoes
10. Be an adventurous eater
11. Ask the natives lotsa questions
12. Allow some days to recover

Crone Poets Rising

Thanks to the success of our first Crone Poets Rising event last year, we are planning to include another such event this year. Put your muse to work and bring some of your poetry to share (4 to 5-minute time limit).

Last year, many women wanted copies of the wonderful poems but we were unable to process the requests. This time bring us a copy of your poem(s) and we will take them to Staples and put together a booklet.

Village to Village is a network for older people who want to stay in their homes but need services. vtvnetwork.org

Netflix has recently put out a wonderful comedy called “Grace and Frankie”. It stars Jane Fonda (77) and Lily Tomlin (75). Check it out.

Articles for CroneTimes

Have you ever thought about writing an article for CroneTimes? Have you wondered why we haven’t addressed certain topics? If so, we’d love to hear from you. We have tremendous diversity within our group, and we’d like to highlight more of this.

Please send your ideas and/or articles to Kianna:
Kianna4064@gmail.com
or to Julie:
ejsanfrancisco@hotmail.com

Beautiful Julie — 2014 Mistress of Ceremonies for the Crones Counsel Follies.
MEXICO’S ROUND PYRAMIDS:

Los Guachimontes
By Win Fiandaca

Our Mexican home is in Chapala, Jalisco, Mexico. Our town is named after Lake Chapala, the largest fresh water lake in Mexico. It is so lovely here that National Geographic is reported to have rated our Lakeside Communities second best climate in the world. You won’t be surprised to learn we have many expats here, Canadians and Americans mostly. Over 20,000 of us!

About a two-hour drive from us are the only round pyramids in the world, Los Guachimontes. The settlement began as early as 1000 BCE according to co-discoverer Dr. Phil C. Weigland. After nearly 2,000 years an “abrupt fall” occurred around 900 CE. Structures that were not made of adobe, rock and lime were burned to the ground and the people left. Why? There was plenty of fish and game and a vast agricultural system with engineering far advanced for the times. And a nearby volcano yielded thousands of pounds of obsidian for tools, crafts, and sculpture. Where did they go and why?

At last we were making our second visit to the mysterious, pre-Columbian pyramids located near the little town of Teochitlan. The residents of Teochitlan knew of the existence of these ancient peoples but the pyramids were not discovered until 1970 by Weigland and his wife Celia Garcia, an American archeologist. It was actually she who picked up an obsidian blade that perked their interest! They devoted the next twenty-nine years to the site. To date ten circular complexes, four rectangular plazas and two ball courts have been excavated in this relatively small area of the Teochitlan Nation, which numbered 40,000 inhabitants!

On our drive we talked about the Teochitlan tradition, a culture that virtually disappeared, not unlike the Anasazi of the Southwest. We do know, as evidenced by their architecture and artifacts that theirs was a complex society with religious beliefs and practices. They worshipped the creator god Ehecatl, a feathered god of the four directions and wind, a kind god. There was no evidence of human or animal sacrifice, but the people honored their god with Palo Volador, pole flying—to fly like a bird! But most astonishing to me was their incredible advanced knowledge of astronomy evidenced by the cosmological positioning of their structures. The first time we visited the site our guide was a Mexican woman who had worked with Dr. Weigland. This time we were on our own and only four other people that we could see on the grounds. It was a lovely day and we took our time often wandering apart. Unbeknownst to either of us we were each speaking to the spirits of the Teochitlan and expressing gratitude for their existence and honoring their accomplishments.

Chip had just come down from spending time on the high altar and decided to sit in the shade on a large rock. Behind him was thicket too overgrown to navigate on foot but after sitting there a few moments he heard footsteps behind him, twelve steps. “Quien es?” He called out. “Who is it?” The footsteps stopped. Chip looked behind him into the brush. Nothing was disturbed; however, there was a piece of obsidian plainly visible where he sat. We like to think the spirit of the Teochitlan Nation heard us in some way and acknowledged our presence with a gift.

WIN FIANDACA, 74, lives half the year in central Mexico and half the year in Northern Arizona. She is a regular contributor to, “Crone: Women Coming of Age,” a magazine published by BBI Media. She has been coming to Crone’s Counsel since 1999.
CRONES COUNSEL XXIII
ANNUAL RETREAT & GATHERING

“Crones Counsel Inc, is dedicated to claiming the archetype of Crone, through the creation of gatherings that honor and advance the aging woman’s value to society.”

THE ETERNAL SPIRAL

MOUNT SHASTA RESORT
MT. SHASTA CALIFORNIA
OCTOBER 7-11, 2015

For registration and more information visit www.cronescounsel.org
THANK YOU FOR YOUR LIFE!

Sally Reed
By Kianna

Another wonderful crone, a longtime attendee of Crones Counsel, has made her transition. Sally passed from this life on April 17, 2015. Her obituary was in the May Crones Counsel’s online newsletter so you can read more about her life there.

Myrn Calkins and I were friends with Sally more than twenty-five years ago, before Crones Counsel. We had a small Crone Circle, which met four times a year, on the Sabbats. Our meetings were at Sally’s home in Millbrae, California, or at another crone’s home in the Sunset district of San Francisco. We enjoyed each other’s company and always had fun together whether it was making masks, celebrating spring, decorating brooms with ribbons, having a May Pole Dance (inside around a dining-room table when it rained) and other such activities.

I started attending Crones Counsel at Puget Sound (number two), and Sally and Myrn joined me the following year. After a few years, I applied for the board and was accepted. A couple of years after that, I encouraged Sally to apply too. She was reluctant at first; she always said I “shamed” her into it because I told her that she had attended more gatherings that I had, so it was time. Sally worked hard on the board, even taking on the difficult task of working with Asilomar to set up rooms for one counsel. She was in charge of Crone Circles another year and the board had their spring meeting at Sally’s home when they needed to save money.

Dedicated to her Universalist Unitarian Church, Sally wore many hats there. As a retired Reservationist for United Airlines, she traveled the world with her husband Pat. A loving grandmother to her autistic grandson, she always loved him even when it was most difficult.

Myrn and I attended the Celebration of Life for our dear friend Sally. She had planned the service herself. It included Mary Oliver’s poem, Wild Geese, an Irish Funeral Prayer by Henry Scott Holland, the songs: “May the Circle Be Unbroken” and the “Parting Glass” (Irish). The service ended with “I’m Forever Blowing Bubbles,” sung by all while a few people blew bubbles. We dearly miss our friend but know that her memory will be with us forever.

Guide to a Happy Life

Fast write by Kaya Kotzen

Have no regrets
Be always in the present moment
Forgive always and forget or at least put it behind you if you can
Be real, always come from love
Be honest and trustworthy
Trust your heart

Be kind to others and treat them as you wish to be treated
Have no expectations, but have lots of dreams
Always speak up and give yourself a voice
Love loudly and openly
and never hesitate to say I love you
Write letters and send cards, not just texts or email attachments

Get a pet or always love your dog
They will take all your grief and heartache and turn it around
Love them unconditionally without restraints

Learn to love your friends and family like that too
Find a partner, lover or spouse to cuddle with
You are never too old to do that

Allow more laughter in your life and remember to laugh at yourself
Listen to spirit and watch for its telltale signs
Begin each day like it’s a first one
Treasure it, and show gratitude
Honor your emotions and gut instincts
They will never lead you astray

Gift yourself the things and adventures you need in your life
You can only enjoy making others happy after you have taken care of yourself
Go out in your yard at nite
Howl at the moon and find the stars
Pay attention to sunsets too
There is beauty all around us watch it explode

GUIDE TO A HAPPY LIFE, continued on Page 9
On Becoming Crone

By Kaye Chatterton, June 18, 2015

For the past few months I have let my hair grow out. A halo of silver white frames my face; I can see the visual influence of having “a halo,” something quite new to me.

I have colored, bleached, dyed, tinted my hair for more than 56 years plus. But who’s counting? Actually, I am counting as I try to compute an estimate of all the $$$ I have spent in beauty salons. Oh dear!

The decision to grow my hair out has to do with multiple aspects of aging. First, I admit I have been curious to see what my “natural” color looks like at this juncture. It is a wonder that I still have hair after all I have put it through. Second, I have been wrestling with my ego, wanting to stay looking younger, and struggling with my life-time traits of vanity. Because appearance matters so much in our culture, I quickly perceived one way to externally equalize this issue is to look darn good!

My daughter doesn’t like my grey hair. She is experiencing menopause of late and colors her hair. Somehow it feels like my acceptance of the grey is threatening to her. She declared she wasn’t growing her hair out. Okay then.

There are some other pressures from my peer group that have been gaining on me. I have felt a niggling pressure to “go commando” in the hair department as some sort of acknowledgement of being “comfortable” with aging and being “authentic” in my claiming Crone. It seems that there are subtle energies that lurk in the exteriors and interiors of my aging experience.

I look in the mirror and have to pause to really recognize myself. Yes, it is me, but a very different iteration of me in terms of my physical self. I can recall having a waist, but it thickened when I wasn’t looking. Not only do my breasts sag, I am in need of some new kind of equipment to hoist them up to chest level where the darts are located in my clothes.

My face has jowls, and the skin on my forearms is all crinkly, wrinkly just like that of an old woman. My hands are the dead giveaway, now featuring blue protruding veins, thinning skin covered with brown spots. As I gaze at the semi-stranger in the mirror I note that when I smile, all the saggy contours and creases somehow cooperate into a grinning palate that is really quite pleasant. I note as I smile wider, that the way my face lines now align, it is apparent that I have smiled more that frowned, during my 73 years on the planet. Muscle memory? I like the way the road map of my visage now is grooved and worn in a way that shows my positive affect. Hey, there is a bit of positive news here to report!

While I look so different in the mirror, I strangely feel much the same inside. I have heard other women say this. My child still resides inside. I heard her giggling the other day. The maiden with Cinderella dreams is here too and sometimes pouts that I don’t validate her much anymore. I most often hear her voice from the lips of my yearning granddaughter. The young maiden is here, struggling to please others and the achiever who seeks recognition and attention to prove her worth is still here. My mothering self and my professional fixer greet me as well. There is a cacophony of tangled memories and experiences, pain and joy all swirling through some timeless expression.

I have grown and changed. I know that I am the same, but altered. I reflect on the better version of me that has been impacted by all the relationships and connections made.

I take a pen and paper and ask myself: “What is the essence of me? How has my interior landscape changed while my body has been morphing? Who am I today that is different from the historical evolving me?” I begin to write words to describe the me I now know:

I am more fully Present.
I am Grounded.

GUIDE TO A HAPPY LIFE,

continued from Page 8

The more you support it to just be, the more beauty will come back to haunt you
Allow yourself to shine
Put a flower in your hair and a tablecloth upon your table
Buy your favorite foods when you can and fix a romantic evening for one by candlelight
Fix yourself a bubble bath along with a scented candle and a good book to read and a big fluffy towel to wrap yourself in when you’re done

Look in the mirror and smile
You have earned your scars and age lines that all suit you.
Feel how pretty or handsome you are inside
Know that today is a treasure and tomorrow is a gift and that each and every day can always be a pleasure
It is your attitude that counts
May it always be uplifting.
I have Perspective, aware of the long view — aware of how long it takes for me and others to get rid of “oughts” and “shoulds.” I know now the process of evolving and becoming has required mistakes and detours as part of the deeper learning, learning and remembering just how resilient human beings are indeed. How to set boundaries, repeat after me: “SET BOUNDARIES.” I am kinder to myself and have a deeper knowing of what “love thyself” means. I feel deep compassion for all beings and know that we are all connected. Unity, oneness surrounds me. Social rules and expectations of others only apply to me if I choose to let them. My authentic self is brutally honest with myself. I have confronted my shadow side, which holds the aspects of me that I have hidden from myself and others. I acknowledge that I am vulnerable and needy. I acknowledge that my greedy, needy self has confused all that with true personal value. I am of worth. I can forgive myself, I continue to forgive myself and forgiveness flows to others. I am alert to the awesome power of speaking my truth. I try to be cautious because I feel the full force could level a mid-sized city. I practice “artful” diplomacy with truth telling although nothing is safe, but all is sacred. I am deeply attuned to the needs of the earth, and all the living entities and I recognize the dazzling life force that courses around me. I am older yes, and I am wiser. I am full of loving compassion; I am attuned to the wisdom of the ages. I am an unfinished human being, still open for growth and knowing. I face the dark night and the eventual passing from my body with acceptance and wonder. I vibrate to the energy of cosmic consciousness and know all is connected. I am come into CRONE.
THE ESSENCE OF CRONE, continued from Page 10

our right to speak our own truth in a safe and supportive environment. Everybody deserves a good listening to.”

Iyanla Vanzant says, “Tell your story because your story will heal you and it will heal someone else. Each life is a story filled with the drama, surprises, and mysteries that make living a wonderful and interesting journey. If you have a story then you have the potential to be a healer, a teacher, a more conscious, productive individual and a spiritual life coach.”

Christina Baldwin says, “Story is the heart of language. Story emotionally moves us to love and hate and can motivate us to change the whole course of our lives. Story can lift us beyond the borders of our individuality to imagine realities of other people, times and places. Storytelling, both oral tradition and written word, is the foundation of being human.”

Crones Empower One Another

Crones Empower One Another

Crone circles value the essence of each woman herself, her soul qualities and emotional maturity. Crones re-ignite curiosity and empower others by sharing their stories and creative expression of life-long experiences.

Bayla Bower tells it this way, “We honor each person’s wisdom, and take part in dismantling the ageist, ablest, racist, classist, sexist, heterosexist, and other hierarchical structures that separate us from ourselves, our Fore-Crones, one another, and our connection with all beings.

We teach, speak, and quietly inspire one another, all women, and all peoples who wish to embrace the totality of life. We respect the Crones who preceded us and pass on our wisdom to those who will follow. We tell our sacred stories one-to-one, in small and large gatherings, at meetings, events, and conferences.

We name our blessings and challenges, the truths and treasures of our lives, sharing the harvest of our life experience. Empowered from within and strengthened by our growing numbers, we claim our place as wise-woman elders in our families, communities, and groupings. We are women of age, power, and wisdom. We feel honored to be known as Crones.”

CRONES HAVE LEARNED THE POWER OF LOVE

Love becomes more and more necessary for life’s journey. Love is alchemical, the x-factor in healing, the igniter of transformation, creativity and passion. Love is the balm that heals the wounds. It is in our woundedness, in our vulnerabilities that we connect soul to soul.

As Crones master the power of love, they recognize how supporting, empowering and serving others comes back one thousand fold as admiration, the greatest currency we can give and receive from one another.

Crone. Keeper of the Crossroads

Marion Woodman discusses “the role of the conscious Crone in feminine growth as someone who has gone through crossroads after crossroads.” Symbolically, crossroads represent moments in our lives where the unconscious crosses our consciousness, where the eternal crosses the transitory; in other words, times and places where a higher will demands the surrender of our egos. The Crone has gone through many crossroads. She has reached a place of conscious surrender where her ego demands are no longer relevant.

She is a surrendered instrument and therefore detached. Detachment doesn’t mean indifference. It means she has been there, now totally present. She has suffered but she can draw back from the suffering.

She can be who she is and live with the straight, flat-out, naked truth. Therefore, the Crone acts as a tuning fork in her environment because she is so real herself. She rings a true tone. People are brought into harmony with that tuning, so it’s very releasing. People can respond to their own true tone. She is honest, not playing games. She rings people into that soul space where all outer conflicts dissolve and they can experience their own essence.

THE WORK OF CRONE

The work of Crone is to continue to find our own authenticity and then to surrender that to a higher purpose. It is at the place of wounding that we find ourselves connected to each other in love, and it is here that we open to loving other people, loving the planet, loving the cosmos. The future of our planet depends on each human being discovering their light, and becoming conscious of the universe as one soul.

THE DARK MOTHER ASPECT OF CRONE

In a celebration of grace and dignity, Crones achieve a state of knowing as keepers of life’s crossroads, a state of knowing discovered through those small, necessary deaths—career failure, divorce, loss of a loved one, illness, calamity—that prepare us for the final death and rebirth.

Standing at the gateway to death, the Dark Mother aspect of Crone is the ultimate teacher of the very deepest spiritual mysteries. The fear of death, a healthy deterrent to harming ourselves, taking risks and survival in youth, is transformed by the Dark Mother who guides us with her lantern of ultimate truth, light and wisdom. “Life and death flow into one, and there is neither evolution nor eternity, only Being.”

— Albert Einstein

THE ESSENCE OF CRONE, continued in next month’s online edition of the Crone monthly
"Me and My Cancer"

By Simone LaDrumma

Well, folks, it’s time for another chapter in the ongoing saga I’ve come to think of as “Me and My Cancer.” Turns out that the chemo I endured this past winter (last infusion: January 4), while saving my life (thank you, Cheeses!), didn’t cure me. A little over a month ago I noticed a lump in my neck. By the time I told the doctor about it, it was growing really fast.

Byron Katie is visiting a friend in the hospital. Her friend has a large tumor and hasn’t been given much time to live. As Katie leaves, her friend says, “I love you.” Katie responds, “No, you don’t. You can’t love me until you love your cancer. Eventually, every thought you have about your cancer you’ll put on me.”

You might think this kind of statement is fucking nuts. But when I first heard it (it’s from her amazing book, “A Thousand Names for Joy”), it gave me the shivers. On some level, I understood it to be true.

Which is why, when I lie down on the table in the radiation room to be zapped and I tell Jarod (or Tony or Scott, the dear men in Radiation Oncology who make sure everything is copacetic before pushing the button in the ‘control room’), I tell them to “Kill that bad boy!” I’m also thinking, “But I should love that bad boy.” Um, excuse me, but FAT CHANCE.

Anyway, I’m going through the usual radiation treatment at SCCA — 15 blasts from HAL, the linear accelerator, over a period of three weeks. I’m almost finished; HAL has destroyed the tumor and I am hoping I get a few months without any reoccurrence of The Big C. (Fifteen years after diagnosis and ten years after starting treatment, a few months of no-cancer is reasonably all I can hope for.)

What was different about this round of radiation is that it was partially in my head. For that reason, I was fitted for a mask, the purpose of which was to ensure that I would not move my head at all during treatment. So every day, at 9:45 a.m., I lie down on the table and a technician puts this mask over my face and buckles it to the table. This morning I asked Tony if he would take a photo of me before they took it off. It is attached. (That’s HAL, behind me, acting all innocent-like.)

I have had a few side effects this time (due to the head business) but most are supposed to go away/get better once I stop treatment. Some dear friends have been shuttling me to SCCA almost every day and I am so grateful to them.

Bottom line, I feel fine. Plenty of energy and most of the time enjoying the hell out of summer … and the heat! Still drummin’ up a storm, although never as often as I’d like. I’m in two performing groups now, plus my work as Drummer-in-Residence at Gaia’s Temple (www.gaiastemple.org). As has heretofore always been the case, my drumming chops are “held harmless” from my health issues. May the Spirit of the Drum continue to bless me so. Ashé, A’ho, Amen!

1 It did, however, almost kill me. I vowed to never have chemotherapy again, knowing full well what that meant. The first chance I had, I had the port removed. You know, that plastic thing they place in your chest through which they add stuff to your blood or from which they take samples of your blood. Cuts down on all the needle-sticking you normally go through. I had a great team of docs; same ones who inserted it also removed it. Or, as they said to me after the minor operation: “You’ve been deported!”

2 No, its name isn’t really HAL. It doesn’t have a name, as far as I know. Of course, if Radiation Oncology was staffed with more women, I’ll bet they would give a name to the machine that zaps me. Women name their cars and their drums. But men name fighter planes, hurricanes and bombs. Anyway, if you don’t realize that I got HAL’s name from the maverick computer in Stanley Kubrick’s classic film, 2001, then how’d you get on my list?