



# GRANDMOTHERS CIRCLE OF NEWS



A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 19: Number 4, Summer & Fall 2013

## LOVES ALL THINGS

The Great Act is the Loving Heart in action.

Don't be distracted by hurry, worry, or anger ...

These are only outer manifestations of temporary imbalance.

There is LOVE inside each one, greet that!

There are no greater acts than these.

The expression of the Loving Heart is the Great Act.

Loving one another is the only act.

Everything else is only reaction.

LOVING ... LOVING ... LOVING

This is the great embrace of the Mother ...

**Loving in birth, Loving in life,**

**Loving in death.**

Great understandings come from this.

But first there must be ...

**THE WILL TO LOVE !**

A Call to Power: The Grandmothers Speak

By Sharon McErlane



### THE BEGINNING OF THE GRANDMOTHERS GATHERINGS

by Barbara Furniss

Mary Diamond's intense desire to promote healing of individuals, and ultimately of the whole planet, resulted in a powerful vision.

Long in the making, it took shape after she attended the Spiritual Unity of the Tribes Gathering in 1992.

Inspired by ancient traditions of Native American Indians, she envisioned Gatherings during which the Elders, or "Spiritual Grandmothers," would form a central core for the younger participants.

These large events were to take place during the week of the October Full Moon.



WHEN THE GRANDMOTHERS SPEAK THE WORLD WILL HEAL ...

AND THIS IS WHAT OUR GRANDMOTHERS ARE SAYING ...

Her vision drew on her own  
 Life experiences and a deep spirituality,  
 Which followed no set creed,  
 But was firmly grounded in her  
 Faith in God.

Other roots can be found in  
 Her courage and willingness to risk;  
 In her travels, especially to Findhorn;  
 In a belief in  
 The goodness and unity of all creation;  
 In her great love of the LAND."



"TODO POR LA PACHAMAMA ...  
 ... POR LA MADRE TIERRA!"

Mary, always a teacher, experimented with different techniques and practices in workshops at her center, "Cielo en Tierra" (Heaven on Earth).

The Grandmothers Gatherings benefited from these experiences, as she introduced rituals and ceremonies; communing with Nature; creating with clay, paint, found objects and words; altered states of consciousness achieved not with drugs but with meditation, chanting, dancing and drumming.



Participants at the Gatherings would learn the power of CIRCLES, a non-hierarchical way of listening and decision-making.

The first Grandmother Gathering did not have an easy birth. After its long period of gestation, Mary invited trusted friends to meet with her and explore possibilities together. Many moons waxed and waned as the meetings continued. The ideas poured out in such profusion that, lacking the backup of a continuous on-site office staff, the end result of the meetings was often frustration and confusion.

In August of 1994, with only six weeks remaining before the October opening, crucial decisions had to be made. Then, as

often happened in Mary's life, the right person took over. Nancy Masland pulled the plans together using her amazing organizational, decision-making abilities in her beautiful heartfelt way.

The first Grandmother Gathering took place at **Cielo en Tierra** right on schedule. A professional video shows interviews with some of the sixteen elder women who were central figures of the Gathering. They came from distant places ... England, Alaska, the East and West coast of the U.S., as well as Arizona. In the film they speak with eloquence and dignity about their lives and convictions; and their beauty is framed by the peaceful backgrounds of **Cielo en Tierra's** river, the yurt's interior, and the entrance to the straw-bale house.



**First Council of Grandmothers, Cielo en Tierra, 1994. Back row:** Janet Cutting (NYC), Mary (Tommie Thomas's helper), Nancy Masland (Tucson), June Sampson (Boulder), Ruth Gardner (Tucson), Sister Virginia Barta (Dragoon, AZ), Florence Douglas (Eugene, OR), Cora Miller (Tucson), Shirley Tassencourt (Dragoon). **Second row:** Mary Diamond (Fort Huachuca, AZ), Tommie Thomas (Tucson), Virginia Hall (Tubac, AZ), Beacon (Silver City, NM), Allegra Ahlquist (Dragoon), Fern Cleghorn (Florence, OR), Detta Lange (Totnes, England), and Kit Wilson (Phoenix).

The first Grandmother Gathering was considered a success, and it provided the basis for planning the second Gathering the following year. A larger meeting place had to be found, with sufficient housing and spacious outdoor areas. The Inn at the Biosphere in Oracle, Arizona, looked ideal. It had comfortable rooms, a professional kitchen, a big patio with tables, and a level front lawn with a spectacular view of a mountain-ringed untamed valley. The glass sheen of the huge, experimental Biosphere glistened in the sunlight just a short distance away. It was beautiful to see, when the tribe from Oregon arrived and they set up their fine, tall tepees near the looming futuristic structure.

The women once again arrived from places near and far, and the Inn's small lounge took on a carnival atmosphere as they settled in. Tables were set up, piled high with beautiful handcrafts. Women played, heard speakers, and received information about the scheduled events. At each meal time, Jackie Blue filled buffet tables with delicious dishes for vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike.

During the following year, Mary showed alarming symptoms; and tests revealed a tumor on her brain. Doctors were unable to do anything to ease the intermittent, excruciating pain on one side of her head.

Mary's daughter Jeanne was managing *Cielo en Tierra*, and she found Ava Brady who would come all the way from Bisbee and give Mary massages and a nerve remedy that brought miraculous relief from pain.

Planning was soon underway for the 1996 gathering. Vivian Mayer agreed to organize and supervise the proceedings, and Judy O'Leary was later brought on as her assistant.

For that Gathering, Mary and I were roommates. I helped Mary unpack and was startled by her fatigue and forgetfulness. She had suffered a severe seizure during the previous week, and for a while her attendance at the Gathering seemed unlikely. However, the next morning she was her usual energetic self. She insisted that I get out of my warm sleeping bag to look at the glorious, rosy sunrise. I still remember the magnificent sight: snow in Central Arizona in October! Impossible! The energy of the Gathering was amazing: Megan Garcia gave an inspirational talk about the creation of her large figures know as "Megan Dolls." Workshops proliferated in various parts of the campground ... Shirley Tassencourt led a group working with clay; Cora Miller, nearing 80, once again taught the grace and beauty of the dance movement. The poets huddled in the poetry corner, the dramatists worked on their plays. Cara Hay had come from England to share an account of the pilgrimage which Mary had helped to plan. Once again Jackie provided luscious meals. We formed circles for ceremonies, we listened and learned! The Tarahumara drum came to life under Tara Root's rhythmic hands. Elder Silvia Wallulatum sat in her wheel chair. It was a blessing to be in her

presence. On the last night, we sat together watching Maya Levy's moving drama in which each woman stepped forward and spoke about humorous or shattering events that had affected their life. I was satisfied to end this beautiful evening and went of to bed. Not Mary. Hildegard Reinhart from Germany had written a play, which was presented in the dining hall.

Mary woke me at midnight to tell me I had missed something wonderful! According to her Shirley, as a Jaguar, had



stolen the show!

Every Grandmother Gathering since then has had its own kind of energy. That was especially true for the **4th Gathering** in October, 1997, which took place a few weeks after Mary's memorial service.

Outwardly the **Gathering** was not much different. It was well organized and held in a comfortable private ranch in Dragoon, Arizona. Grandmothers Allegra, Shirley and Kit taught and led circle discussions and ceremonies. Energy and imagination produced a lively pageant. The full moon came up as promised, lighting up the black sky behind the massive rocks of Texas Canyon. It was fine, but for many of us, there was what Mary's daughter Jeanne described as "**the presence of an absence**" ...

That ... we could not change ...

Excerpts from  
*Remembering Mary, 2007*  
by Barbara Furniss (1921-2008)

Our love and gratitude to Barbara and her husband Todd for all the work they did to bring Mary's life close to us ...

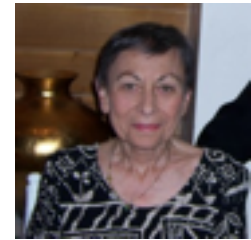
Thanksgiving greetings to their family for their support.

Immense gratitude to Mary's daughters Jeanne and Joanne for her love, dedication, and support of the good work.

**Margarita and Joanne**

**NEWS FROM THE GRANDMOTHERS**

**IN HONOR OF**



**CARLOTTA BOGART**

February 10, 1929 - August 21, 2012

Teacher, Educator, Poet and Writer

Carlotta lived in rural Tennessee, pursuing a writing career. She later returned to teaching high school in Nashville TN, where she met her best friend, Dot Willers. Together they taught at Nashville Schools until retirement. After Nashville, Carlotta and Dot moved to Santa Fe, and four years later they moved to Tucson to be closer to family.

Carlotta's passion was her mountain cabin community where she went to write poetry.

She was a published author.

We will remember her  
as a free spirit.

Carlotta ...  
you will always be  
in the hearts of the Grandmothers ...



**FLYING FREE**

Just at dusk,  
In that time between the last pink  
and purple rays of the sun and  
Approaching dark  
In the space between  
One reality and another  
An eagle rises wild and free.  
Soaring over the mountains  
On gusts of wind from the canyons  
Carrying on his motionless wings  
The spirit of a woman  
Flying away wild and free.

*Carlotta Bogart*

## FROM THE EDITOR

## Dear Friends and Relatives:

We are celebrating the harvest here in the Cochise Stronghold area with a cornucopia of squash, cucumbers, onions, garlic, tomatoes, basil, and much much more. The days are still hot, but the nights are so much cooler; the rains have gently soaked the land; and the mountain, now full, has started to let her waters run. Our neighbors' chickens are happily laying; we are blessed with an abundance of food, friends, neighbors, and exciting projects!

We are reminded that this is the time of Lammas or Lughnasadh. The name comes from Lugh, the Celtic deity who presides over the arts and sciences. According to Celtic legend, Lugh decreed that a commemorative feast be held each year at the beginning of the harvest season to honor his foster mother, Tailtiu. Tailtiu was the royal Lady of the Fir Bolg. After the defeat of her people by the Tuatha De Danann, she was obliged by them to clear a vast forest for the purpose of planting grain. She died of exhaustion in the attempt. It is said that she was buried beneath a great mound named for her, at the spot where the first feast of Lughnasadh was held in Ireland: the hill of Tailte. At this Gathering were held games and contests of skill, as well as a great harvest feast.

With the coming of Christianity to the Celtic lands, the old festival of Lughnasadh took on Christian symbolism. Loaves of bread were baked from the first of the harvested grain and placed on the church altar on the first Sunday of August. The Christianized name for the feast of Lughnasadh is Lammas, which means "loaf mass." This was also the traditional time of year for craft festivals. The medieval guilds would create elaborate displays of their wares, decorating their shops and themselves in bright colors and ribbons, marching in parades, and performing strange ceremonial plays and dances for the entranced onlookers.

At this time I am being reminded of an article by Reverend Matthew Fox about the return of the Black Madonna, and how her appearance is a sign of our times and how she is shaking us up! The last time she played a major role was in the 12th century Renaissance. From this Renaissance, the university, the cathedral, and the city itself were born.

Today, due to ignorance and racism, we have forgotten the meaning and even deny the existence of these Black Madonnas that appeared all over the world. According to Reverend Fox, this archetype is bringing gifts and challenges:

The Black Madonna invites us into the Dark and therefore into our Depths. This is where Divinity lies. The black womb of light. She encourages us all to be at home there. To honor darkness is to honor the experience of people of color. No more racism. The Black Madonna invites us to get over racial stereotypes and racial fears and projections and go into the Dark.

The Black Madonna calls us to Cosmology. She is the Great Cosmic Mother. She yanks us out of our anthropocentrism and back into a state of Honoring All Our Relations. She ushers us into an era of a relationship with the Whole instead of just parts ... be it the



Basket Dancers by Tucson's sculptor and painter

KAYE GUERIN ... [kwechonhpe@aol.com](mailto:kwechonhpe@aol.com)

nation parts, ethnic parts, religious parts, or private parts ... Science is bringing a New Cosmology, a new "Universe Story." The Black Madonna brings a blessing, a sense of the sacred into the task of educating our species into a New Universe Story.

The Black Madonna calls us down to honor our lower chakras, including our relationship to the Whole. The first chakra is about picking up the vibrations from sounds from the whole cosmos; the second one connects us with our sexuality, and the third one with our anger and moral outrage.

The Black Madonna honors the Earth and represents ecology and environmental concerns. Mother Earth is dark and fecund and busy birthing. She nurtures her children and feeds the world. The Black Madonna is the queen of Nature, and she welcomes us home when we die. She recycles all things. She sees the Whole. No abuse, oppression, or exploitation of the many for the benefit of the few. She has always stood for Justice, for the oppressed and the lower classes. She urges us to stand up to those powers that would exploit the beauty of the Earth at the expense of the coming generations.

The Black Madonna calls us to our Depths, to live spiritually and radically on this planet ... and not superficially and oblivious to the Grace that happens. She calls us to enter the Depths of our awe, wonder, delight, and our joy. To enter the Depths of our pain, suffering, and shared grief ... not to run from it or cover it up with a myriad of addictions: shopping, drugs, alcohol, sports, superficial religion, computer and gadget submersion ... She calls us to the Depths of our creativity, our transformation; our sense of social, economic, gender, and eco justice. To the Depths of our solidarity.

The Black Madonna calls us to our Divinity which is our Creativity. She as a goddess resides in all beings. She calls us to co-create with Divinity, but also to the responsibility of giving birth. She expects nothing less than Creativity. She ignites our imaginations. Only our collective imaginations can take us beyond our energy dependence on fossil fuels into an era of self-sustainable energy, based on solar and renewable, clean fuels. We need to be creative

in order to reinvent learning, so the joy and wonder and enticement of learning displaces our failing and boring educational systems. We need moral imagination to move us beyond the growing divide between the ones that have and the ones that have not. We need moral and political imagination. This Madonna brings the energy that will re-awaken the human soul.

The Black Madonna calls us to Diversity. There is no Imagination without Diversity. Imagination is about inviting disparate elements into soul and culture so that new combinations can make love together and new beings can be birthed. When we honor the Black Madonna, we honor blackness and all people of color. She also calls us to honor the Feminine. God as Mother, not just Father; God as Birther, not just Begetter. The Great Mother is not homophobic. She welcomes the Diversity of sexual preferences that are also a part of creation. Creativity thrives on Diversity.

The Black Madonna calls us to Grieve. She embraces us like a tender Mother, for Compassion is her special gift to the world. Grieving is an emptying. It is making the womb open again for new birth to happen. A culture that would substitute addictions for grieving will birth nothing but more pain and abuse and misuse of resources. The Black Madonna brings, as Andrew Harvey puts it ...

"An immense force of protection,  
an immense alchemical power  
of transformation through both  
grief and joy, and  
an immense inspiration to compassionate  
service and action in the world."

The Black Madonna comes to Celebrate and to Dance! Celebration of life and its pleasures lie at the core of her reason for being. Celebration is part of Compassion, is the exercise of our common Joy. Praise, Joy, and Celebration are intrinsic to community. This Madonna is the Lover of Life par excellence.

The Black Madonna calls us to our Divinity, which is Compassion. All spiritual traditions honor Compassion, Balance, Harmony, Justice. Grieving, Celebrating, and Acting Justly are all parts of Compassion. This Patriarchal Period that

is coming to an end did not teach Compassion. It ignored the womb-like energies of our world and our species. If it mentions Compassion at all, it trivializes it and renders it sissy. Patriarchy neglects what Meister Eckhart knows and teaches: "Compassion means Justice."



Compassion has a hard side,  
it is not about sentiment but about  
relationships of justice and  
interdependence.

Compassion knows when  
enough is enough;

Compassion does not overindulge;  
Compassion does not hoard and does not  
run its life on addictions of insecurity and  
pyramid-building to overcome  
these addictions.

Compassion trusts life  
and the universe ultimately  
to provide what is necessary  
for our being.

An ancient hymn dedicated to Isis  
underscores her cosmic role as Nature:



"I am Nature,  
the Universal Mother,  
mistress of all the elements,  
primordial child of time, sovereign of  
all things spiritual, queen of the dead,  
queen also of the immortals,  
the single manifestation  
of all gods and goddesses that are.

My nod governs the  
shining heights of Heaven,  
the wholesome sea-breezes,  
the lamentable silences of  
the world below."

Mother Mary, Black Madonna,  
Isis, Nature ... They All are One.

The Black Madonna calls us to a Renaissance of culture, religion, and the city. Isis often wears a regal headdress that symbolizes her name as meaning "throne" or "queen." As mother and earth woman, the Great Mother is the 'throne' pure and simple; and, characteristically, the woman's motherliness resides not only in the womb, but also in the seated woman's broad expanse of thigh, her lap on which the newborn child sits enthroned. To be taken on the lap is, like being taken to the breast, a symbolic expression for adoption of the child, and also for the man, by the Feminine.

The Black Madonna is calling us ... she is shaking things up! She is an archetype for our times. She is giving birth to a learning that will awaken us to our place in the universe. She is bringing the balance of male/female, heart/head, body/spirit that truly needs to happen at all levels of education from childhood to professional degrees.

The new artist is letting go of the internalized oppression of the modern era and re-committing to serve the local community and the larger community of ecological sustainability.

[excerpted from "The Return of the  
Black Madonna: A Sign of Our Times or  
How the Black Madonna Is Shaking Us  
Up for the XXI Century"  
by Reverend Matthew Fox]

These are new times, and we are listening with attention. We are creating new relationships with our community, and have started a grassroots group called **Cochise Community Fusion Foundation**, (non-profit 501(c)3 Status) which is working in conjunction with the principles of the Fusion Foundation in Phoenix [www.thefusionfoundation.org](http://www.thefusionfoundation.org)

We will let you know how our Mural Project and the collection of stories from our Community come along!

Thank you, GRANDMOTHERS, for your blessings and words of wisdom ...

With much love, honor, respect and  
thankfulness for your support,  
Margarita

# ARIZONA COUNCIL OF GRANDMOTHERS GATHERING

20th Annual Gathering

October 17th - 20th, 2013

Kenyon Ranch, Tumacacori, Arizona.

Our Theme:

PRESENCE IN THE PRESENT IS THE PRESENT

WHEN THE GRANDMOTHERS SPEAK, THE WORLD WILL HEAL

**Contact:** Judith Bobbitt, Weaver, at (520) 575-0802 or e-mail [jmbobbitt@comcast.net](mailto:jmbobbitt@comcast.net)

Irene Walden, Registrar, at (520) 795-0400 or e-mail [iwalden@cox.net](mailto:iwalden@cox.net)

Please put **2013 GM** or **2013 GM Gathering** in the subject line of your e-mails.

**READY OR NOT, HERE COMES ...**

**THE ARIZONA**

**COUNCIL OF GRANDMOTHERS**

**20th ANNUAL GATHERING**

**OCTOBER 17-20, 2013**

**A message from Judith Bobbit, Weaver**

Mary Diamond had a vision of multiple circles of Women Elders spreading healing wisdom across the Earth.

On this 20th Anniversary, fifty women will gather to celebrate and honor the sixteen amazing women who birthed this vision!

We will honor the Elders who created this Council.

Some of those Elders have passed, other Elders will be present.

Our Elders have rich wisdom to share with us. We will honor and BE PRESENT to one another and to ourselves.

We will celebrate twenty years of the Council of Grandmothers Gatherings!



For 20 years the Grandmothers have been providing sacred space for women to meet in small and large circles, using tools from Christina Baldwin and Ann Linned's PeerSpirit Circle Practice.

In this sacred space women can begin the day with Mending the Hoop, meditating, or finding a quiet spot to write, talk, be still, or sleep in.

We can find our voices, explore deep issues, network, celebrate one another, drum, dance, sing, tell stories, take a workshop, create, participate in the Full Moon Ceremony.

**Our theme this year is Presence, in the Present, is the Present!**

When all of us in the Planning Circle came together in Circle, we listened and discussed the different ideas that were coming forth. Finally after going around the circle several times, we all agreed that this was the theme for this year.

Since then, I have struggled with the theme. As I was writing this welcome for the Newsletter, words stayed stuck in my head, notes I had written mysteriously disappeared. But this morning as I sat in front of my altar with my husband, I found the words of

**John O'Donohue** in his book *Anam Cara*.

A book of Celtic Wisdom spoke to me and opened my understanding of our theme.

Anam Cara is a Gaelic term which means soul friend. Many of us have found soul friends at these gatherings.

O'Donohue says ...

“In a positive sense, aging becomes a time for visiting the temple of your memory and integrating your life.

Integration is a vital part of coming home to yourself. What is not integrated remains fragmented; sometimes it can come to great conflict within you. The presence and process of integration brings you more fully home to yourself.” If that does not happen, it would be as T. S. Eliot said,

“ We had the experience but missed the meaning.”

It is very easy to miss the meaning of an experience when we are rushing and not being present to ourselves or others. I like how O'Donohue puts it:

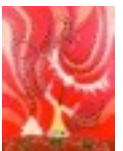
“Meaning is the sister of experience, and to discern the meaning of what has happened to you is one of the essential ways of finding your inner belonging and discovering the sheltering presence of your soul.”

**Welcome! I am eager to be Present with each of you, to honor the Presence among us ... for it will indeed be a Present!**

**May love, light, and safe travels be with us all.**



**Judith Bobbitt, Weaver, 2013**



Who are the Grandmothers???  
(Or What Did I Get Myself Into?)

We begin with a few Riddles:

We call ourselves  
THE GRANDMOTHERS,  
but some of us are Not  
biological Grandmothers.

We call ourselves a  
Council of Elder Women,  
but not all of us are old; and some  
of us are still working on being  
"Elders."

We don't have rules, but we do have  
some fiercely held traditions.

We are Not a legal entity of any  
sort: not an organization, non-profit  
or not-for-profit, although we are  
NOT for Profit.

There are no dues or  
membership cards.  
So there's nothing to JOIN.

You get to be a GRANDMOTHER  
by sitting in a Circle  
with some of us.

Or coming to a GATHERING  
with a lot of us.  
And you begin to feel you Belong.  
(We're good at making you feel you  
belong.)

Our annual Gathering fees are  
based solely on the cost of lodging,  
food, and incidentals.

Any extra contributions go toward  
scholarships.

We don't like to turn women away  
because of money.

In the beginning  
there were 16 of us.

We had a leader whose name was  
MARY DIAMOND.

Mary was a visionary, and she had a  
Very Big Dream.

She heard the

Native American saying:

When the Grandmothers Speak,  
the World Will Heal.

And she said:

"I bet I can help make that happen."



Mary sent out a call to all the Elder  
Women she could think of.

She said

"Let's form a Council."

Come to my place: Cielo En Tierra in  
the desert in southern Arizona.

Come in October

for the week of the Full Moon."

Sixteen of us showed up.

We sat in a circle. We danced.

We sang. We drummed.

We wove a tapestry and  
made poetry.



The Full Moon rose and  
we watched her come over the  
horizon and we created a  
Ceremony for her coming.

O Grandmother Moon!

We wrote a letter to the President  
of the United States.

We said

"We are a Council of Grandmothers.

We are working on Speaking Out  
So the World Will Heal."

That was 1994.

After that first year, synergy took  
charge. We care a lot about the  
Earth, so when we say our growing  
has been Grass Roots, we mean that  
quite literally. Even when we are in  
the cities, we are deeply rooted in  
Mother Earth.

Here in Arizona we have come  
together in Council every October  
since 1994. More and more women  
came to the Gatherings, and then  
more Gatherings were birthed.  
First along the Gulf Coast, and then

a Council in the Heartland; and a  
Gathering in England, and one in  
Texas. Small Circles started using  
Grandmother Circle principles.

**Our Newsletter is part of the  
glue that holds us together.**

We have modeled ourselves on the  
ancient ways of Elders all around  
the world.

Sitting in a Circle,

Speaking Our Truth when we hold  
the Talking Piece.

This is one of our Traditions.

Early on we decided to use Christina  
Baldwin's book Calling the Circle as  
the blueprint for our Circles.

For our workshops and ceremonies,  
Grandmothers who sign up for a  
Gathering may propose to lead an  
event. We never pay presenters.  
We want you to attend the full  
Gathering. Small Circle facilitators  
are Grandmothers who have  
experienced our Circles many times  
and trained themselves more deeply  
in Circle practices and principles.

We rely on Spirit to guide us.  
(You'll see how that works.)

Our leadership rotates and emerges  
organically. No elections.

No Robert's Rules of Orders.

Our Planning Circle volunteers come  
together for a year.

We let Spirit and Chaos Theory  
(e.g. confusion precedes integration)  
do the work.

If you don't understand something,  
just ask.

(We might not understand it either.)

If you were drawn to join us,  
we already love you.

**Welcome! Welcome! Welcome to the  
mystery and magic of a  
Grandmother Gathering.**

**Because you have chosen to join us  
this year, one more beautiful voice  
has been added to the  
healing of the world!**

... from Grandmother Irene Walden

**FROM OUR READERS**

*Dear Margarita,*

*A while back you so graciously sent me your first issue of the Grandmothers Circle of News. My friend recently gave me the second edition to read. I am sending my subscription. You are doing a beautiful job of putting together the newsletter.*

*I can tell this is a tremendous love gesture on your part and lots of work.*

*You have great talent in this area for sure. My deepest thanks goes to you for doing this.*

*Thank you again and blessings,*

*Judie Garnet*

We would like to say **"Thank You Judie"** for your support of the Newsletter and of our work. We have been thinking about you lately as we prepare this issue in honor of your Mother, Mary Diamond. We would like to acknowledge you and your family as well for continuing to walk the Beauty Way with grace and elegance.

We are blessed to have you in our midst. We haven't yet met you personally, but feel you close to our hearts. We are truly sad that we will not be able to attend the **20th Arizona Council of Grandmothers Gathering** since we will be out of the country at that time, but hope that we will soon have the opportunity to meet you. I hear that you might attend with your daughter and niece ... coming especially for this 20th anniversary Gathering? We'll miss all of you.

*... sigh ...*



Dear Margarita and Joanne:

I don't know if it would be appropriate for the Newsletter, but this modern grandmother is a drawing by David Fitzsimmons, political cartoonist for the Arizona Daily Star.

Some people loved it, others didn't.

Hugs,

Irene



Hi Margarita & Joanne!

*It is always wonderful to hear from both of you! What a fantastic time you two will have this fall, definitely the trip of a life time. I have so loved the snail-mail newsletters you two have written. I keep them by the bed, so I can read them often. I think Marion made the most wonderful brownies for the Gathering last fall. I wrote down the recipe as she recited it to me, but then someone said it would be in the Newsletter. Many of the Grandmothers asked for it, so if it was Marion's recipe, would you please include it in the Newsletter?*

*I am recovering from surgery. I cannot believe how much better I feel and how my energy level slowly continues to increase.*

*We are truly blessed.*

*Take care of one another, and enjoy every minute you both share.*

*Peace & Joy,*

*Love ... Donna Caffee*



Thank you, Donna. Hopefully in the future we will receive and print that delicious brownie recipe from Marion Sinclair. Meanwhile she has sent us another recipe which we have included in this Newsletter.



This is beautiful!

Thank you for carrying on the torch of wisdom shared.

Wishing great success for you & Joanne and special blessings, too, for ALL THOSE GRANDMOTHERS who help in having & holding this vision ... clear back to Sage, Ruth Gardner and then our dear beloved Kit !!

**Terry Bourne**



**Greetings and blessings to Judy O'Leary for sharing with us health updates an other news from some of our Beloved Grandmothers ...**

**Thank you so much for your sweet love and consideration**

**Margarita & Joanne**

This is what Judy-o told us:  
"I talked briefly with ERTHA KITT."

"Marion's voice was way gravely after her surgery ... she said that they did "take some and leave some" of her thyroid."

Allegra, Joanne and Margarita had a wonderful visit with Grandmother Marion Sinclair at her apartment in Bisbee after her surgery. She is doing much better now!

"Thoughts and prayers go out to Grandma Baba who was in the



same hospital at the same time with her gentleman friend ... who went into the Spirit World after suffering a massive heart attack."

Our Condolences to Grandmother Barb Nelson for her loss. Thinking about you and sending love and Big Hugs ...

"Thank you to Rebecca and Nancy Masland for visiting and carrying the prayers of the Grandmothers to Marion Sinclair and Barb Nelson."

"Sarah Tomasetti went into surgery on June 10th ... she is battling cancer for the 3rd time.

"B. Campbell is slowly recuperating from an intense back surgery that took place at the beginning of June. She has had a lot of support from her husband Stephen ..."



Thank you Stephen for taking good care of our beloved B ... We are sending our prayers and songs for her healing. May she continue to walk, walk and walk some more ... until she recovers her strength ...

We are full of gratitude for all those women, Grandmothers, who have worked hard and constantly in order to keep the Arizona Council of Grandmothers Gathering going for 20 years! For their perseverance, love and dedication as they evolved and taught us the beautiful WAY OF THE CIRCLE

WHEN THE GRANDMOTHERS SPEAK THE WORLD WILL HEAL ...

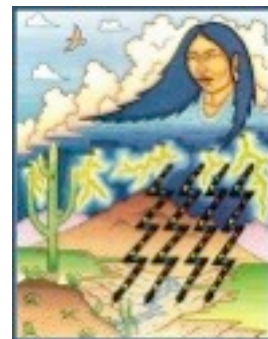
### ITALIAN COFFEE CAKE

Cream: 1 lb Butter, 2 1/4 C Sugar  
 Beat: 8-9 Eggs and add to Cream mixture  
 Fold in: 4 C Flour  
 Dash of salt  
 1 TBSP Vanilla  
 1 C Walnuts  
 12 oz. Chocolate Chips  
 Spread into large greased cookie pan.

Bake at 350 for: 35-45 Min.  
 While still hot, rub in a mixture of:  
 1 C powdered Sugar and 1/4 C Cinnamon  
 Slice: Approx. 1" apart.

Recipe from: Marion Sinclair

THIS YEAR'S GATHERING IS GOING TO BE WONDERFUL AS THE ARIZONA GRANDMOTHERS COUNCIL HONORS THOSE 16 BRAVE WOMEN WHO GAVE BIRTH TO MARY DIAMOND'S VISION



We need reporters for our next edition!



Grandmother Joanne Weiner, Sherry Manoukian, Grandmother Debbie Scott, Sue Schuster, Roy Dawson, Grandmother Liz Campbell, Mary Beth Dawson, Grandmothers Allegra and Shirley.

Grandmother Liz Campbell, invited a group of her friends to thank them for the support and to celebrate her healing after a 10 month course of chemo therapy, surgery, and radiation ... She has come a long way and is looking beautiful. We had a wonderful time visiting and enjoying Sherry's hospitality.

The Grandmothers are Gathering at Gitchigaaming ...

Wish we could be there! We are sending our love and support to Lorraine Norgard and the Grandmothers that for a few years now have organized and participated in this Grandmothers Gathering celebrated in August to collectively honor and send love to Lake Superior and all the waters of the world ... For the beauty of their ceremonies and songs ... For the water in us and Each other ... We Are Water!



August 15-18, Madeline Island, WI

[www.grandmothersgathering.org](http://www.grandmothersgathering.org)

AND THIS IS WHAT OUR GRANDMOTHERS ARE SAYING ...



# GRANDMOTHERS CIRCLE OF NEWS



## GRANDCHILDREN'S SECTION

### DEGANAWIDAH, THE PEACE MAKER

This is the story of the founding at Onondaga, (upstate New York) centuries ago, of the United Nations of the Iroquois, the famous Indian Confederacy that provided a model for the transformation of the 13 colonies into the United States of America.

It was not by force alone the Iroquois held a vast territory under their Peace. It was by statesmanship, by a profound understanding of the principles of peace itself. They knew that peace would endure only if men recognized the sovereignty of a Common Law. Real Peace must be based on Justice and a healthy reasonableness. Behind their statesmanship lay a **will to peace** among their people, without which, all the wisdom of the chiefs would have been futile.

This is the story of two men of Peace, Deganawidah and Hiawatha, his spokesman. Their deeds and words have been treasured for centuries in different traditional narratives of great beauty. We want to thank the people of the 6 Nations: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora for sharing their vision and their wisdom with us.

This is to be strong of mind, O Chiefs!  
Carry no anger and hold no grudges.  
Think not forever of yourselves, O Chiefs,  
not of your own generation.  
Think of continuing generations of our families,  
Think of our grandchildren and those yet unborn,  
whose faces are coming beneath the ground.  
Deganawidah

It is said that Deganawidah was born at a Huron settlement on the north shore of Lake Ontario. Before his birth, a messenger from the Great Spirit came to his Grandmother in dreams and said to her: "Your daughter shall bear a child. He will bring with him the **Good News of Peace and Power.**"

And so it was that  
Deganawidah was born.

When Deganawidah became a man, he left in a canoe. One by one, he visited the settlements of his people. Those were evil days! The Iroquois people were all at war with one another. Nevertheless, Deganawidah still came to the villages and still told the people that the **Great News of Peace and Power** was coming.

Deganawidah noticed that people would stop quarreling to hear this message. Men desired peace and would practice it, if they knew for certain that others would practice it, too.



Illustration by  
John Kahionhes Fadden

And so it was, that Deganawidah came to the house of a woman who lived by the warriors path which passed between the East and the West. This woman placed food before him and after he had eaten, she asked him for his message.

"I carry the Mind of the Giver of Life," he replied.  
"My message will bring an end to the wars between  
East and West."

"How will this be?" asked the woman.

"The word that I bring," he said, "is that all people shall love one another and live together in peace.

This message has three parts:

### **Righteousness, Health, and Power.**

Each part has two branches.

#### **Righteousness**

means Justice practiced between men and between nations; it also means a desire to see Justice prevail.

#### **Health**

means Soundness of Mind and Body.  
It also means Peace, for that is what comes when minds are sane and bodies are cared for.

#### **Power**

means Authority of Law and Custom, backed by such force as is necessary to make Justice prevail.

It means also Spiritual Life, for Justice enforced is the Will of the Holder of Heavens."

"The message is good," said the woman. "But a word is nothing until is given form and set to work in the world. What form shall this message take when it comes to dwell among men?"

Deganawidah said: "It will take the form of the Long House. There will be many fires, one for each family, yet all shall live as one household under one Chief Mother. We shall have one mind and live under one Law. Thinking with the heart will replace killing, and there shall be one commonwealth."

"This is indeed a good message," said the woman, "I take hold of it. I embrace it."



Illustration by John Kahionhes Fadden

"Now, it shall come to pass in that Longhouse, that the women shall possess a special place. **The Council of Clan Grandmothers will keep our people living in peace.** It shall be them who name and recall the Chiefs." Said Deganawidah

And so it was that while going East one day, he arrived to the house of a man who ate humans. When Deganawidah came to the house of this man, he climbed on the roof and lay flat on his chest beside the smoke hole. There he waited until the man who ate humans came home and put his kettle of water on the fire.

When the man who ate humans bent over the kettle, he saw



the most extraordinary thing. He was amazed! For what he saw was a face looking straight up at him.

It was really Deganawidah's face but ... he thought it was his own! There was in this face wisdom and strength as he had never dreamed he possessed!

"This is a wonderful thing!" He said. "I did not know I was like that. It was a great man who looked at me out of the kettle. I saw in my face wisdom and strength. It is not a face of a man who eats humans!" He took the kettle out and emptied it by the roots of an upturned tree.

"I have to change my habits," he said. "I no longer want to kill humans. But this is not enough! I can not forget the suffering I have caused. I am miserable, I have to find someone who can show me how to make amends." He went back to his house and found Deganawidah there. He told him the story.

"It is a wonderful story that you are telling me." Said Deganawidah. You have changed the very pattern of your life. Heal your memories by making Justice prevail. Bring Peace wherever you have done injury to man. You will work with me in advancing the **Good News of Peace and Power.**"

Now, not far from there lived a great evil wizard: Atotarho. He was cruel and had a twisted mind, and his hair was a mass of tangled snakes. The sound of his voice carried terror throughout the land. Deganawidah knew that the cause of Peace would never be completed without him.

"Hiawatha," he said, "You will visit this man, Atotarho. Tell him you are carrying a message of Justice and Health, and when men take hold of it they will stop killing one another and live in Peace. He will not listen to you; but you should still go back, and at the end you will prevail, for you will comb the snakes out of Atotarho's hair."

Before continuing his journey toward the sunrise, Deganawidah decided to visit Atotarho to prepare his mind for Hiawatha's message. "Prepare yourself for the **Great News of Peace and Power,**" Deganawidah said.

Atotarho's mind was crooked, and his workings were evil and indirect.

"WHEN??!!" he cried. His voice was a howl that carried far across the forest, striking fear into all who heard it. It was the mocking cry of the doubter who killed men by destroying their faith.

"It will happen," said Deganawidah "I shall come again with Hiawatha."

When Deganawidah arrived to the land of the Mohawks, their Chiefs heard his message, but they were cautious and they held back.

"Reason, Peace, and Law are good things. But east and west of our village there are powerful tribes that are always at war with us. When is this Peace coming?" asked the Chief Warrior.

"It will come with the Great Binding Law," said Deganawidah "Listen to what happened to me one night after fasting and praying for several days in the forest ... the most extraordinary dream came to me.

I saw an enormous pine tree. The trunk so high that it went through the sky into the realm of the Great Spirit of Life. If we get the roots together we'll have peace."



After holding Council, the Mohawks responded to Deganawidah:

"The Great Spirit sent that dream to you so that we could live in Peace. We accept the message. We take hold of the **Good News of Peace and Power.**" Thus the Mohawks were the first nation to take hold of the Great Peace. They were the founders of the League of Nations.

Meanwhile Hiawatha had met failure among the Onondagas. The people were with him; but their Chief, Atotarho, was not listening.

And so it was that Atotarho, being a powerful wizard, sent an illness that overtook Hiawatha's daughters. Later he also killed Hiawatha's wife. Hiawatha left the land of the Onondaga people with his heart heavy with pain and disappointment. He continued his journey until he came to a beautiful lake. There he picked up some shells, and he threaded them on three strings of jointed rushes as a mark of his grief. At night he held the three strings in his hand and said:

"This I would do if  
I found anyone burdened with  
grief like I am.

I would take these shell strings in my  
hand and console them.

The strings would become words and  
lift away the darkness  
with which they are covered.

Holding this in my hand,  
my words would be true."

Night after night Hiawatha repeated his words, but no one took up the strings of Wampum to condole with him. On the 23rd day of his departure from the Onondagas, Hiawatha came to a village by the Lower Falls and built his fire at the wood's edge. That very night, Deganawidah heard Hiawatha's constant prayer, he came forward ... and taking the strings together with others he had made, he spoke string by string the words of the Requickening

Address used for generations in the Iroquois Condolence Ceremony:

"I wipe away the tears from your face,  
using the white fawn skin of  
sorrow and compassion.  
I make it daylight for you.

I beautify the sky. From now on  
May you do your thinking in Peace when  
your eyes rest upon the sky,  
which the Master of All Things  
intended should be a source of  
happiness to all."

As Deganawidah and Hiawatha continued their journey together, one by one the tribes joined and entered the LongHouse. Finally Deganawidah, Hiawatha, and the Chiefs of all Nations returned to Onondaga Lake to see Atotarho.

Hiawatha approached the Lake with the strings of Wampum in his hands.

"These are the words of  
The Great Law.

On these words we shall build the  
House of Peace, the Longhouse,  
with five fires but  
only one household.

These are the words of  
**Righteousness, Health and Power.**"

"What is this foolishness?"  
said Atotarho.

Hiawatha replied:

"The words we bring constitute  
the new mind which is the  
Will of the Great Spirit.

At this very place, if you want to,  
we shall plant the  
Great Tree of Peace."

The people of the Five Nations all  
stood up together ...

"Behold! We are the Five Nations.  
Our strength is greater than  
your strength."

A woman started singing a song of Peace. One by one, the snakes on Atotarho's head fell off, and his mind was made clear when he saw the **Will for Peace** of the people.

Then they all uprooted the highest tree in the forest, and inside the hole all the warriors threw their weapons. On top they planted the tree again.

They said:

"This is the way  
in which we will  
establish our union and  
we will watch like an  
eagle so that nobody  
will break it."



After that, the people elected 50 representatives from the 5 tribes.

**The Clan Grandmothers  
selected the candidates and then  
everyone voted.**

The objective of the Confederacy was to assure the well-being of all people, defend them against their enemies, maintain Peace between individuals and tribes, and promote appropriate conduct and clear thought in order to maintain Justice and Human Rights.

The Confederacy also recognized the Divine Power of their spiritual selves, their Orendas. Each tribe sent a group of what they called "Keepers of the Faith". The "Keepers" conducted Spiritual Ceremonies and prayers in order to strengthen the decisions of the Council.

When the first Council ended, Deganawidah gave his farewell in words of both warning and hope:

"If men should ever  
become indifferent to the League,  
I may stand here again among  
your descendants.

For now, my work is finished.  
I shall cover my body with bark and  
bury myself in the ground.

There, I shall hear  
how the Longhouse is being tended."

With that, Deganawidah vanished from  
sight. His body returned to our  
Mother the Earth.

**Excerpts taken from  
The Iroquois Book of Life  
by Paul Wallace**

# MISERABLE & MAGICAL: A GRADUATION SPEECH FOR PARADOXICAL TIMES

-- by Nipun Mehta, May 27, 2013

When the student body of an elite private school in Silicon Valley was given the chance to vote on who would give their graduation address this year, they chose a man named **Nipun Mehta**. An unexpected choice for these teenagers, who belong to what Time magazine called the "Me, Me, Me Generation."

Nipun's journey is the antithesis of self-serving. More than a decade ago, he walked away from a lucrative career in high-tech, to explore the connection between inner change and external impact. ServiceSpace, the nonprofit he founded, has now drawn over 450,000 members across the globe.

In his electrifying address, he calls out the paradoxical crisis of disconnection in our hyper-connected world -- and offers up three powerful keys that hold the antidote.

"... So, graduation day is here and this once-in-a-lifetime milestone moment has arrived. In the words of Taylor Swift, I can tell how you're feeling: "happy, free, confused, and lonely ... miserable and magical at the same time." Who would've thought we'd be quoting words of wisdom from Taylor Swift at your commencement?

Today, I'm here with some good news and bad news. I'll give you the good news first.

You might be surprised to hear this, but you are about to step out into a world that's in good shape -- in fact the best shape that it's [ever been](#) in. The average person has never been better fed than today. Infant mortality has never been lower; on average we're leading longer, healthier lives. Child labor, illiteracy, and unsafe water have ceased to be global norms. So, things are progressing. But I'm afraid that's not the full story.

You'll want to brace yourselves, because this is the bad news part.

This week, Time Magazine's cover story labeled you guys as the "Me, Me, Me" Generation", the week before, NY Times reported that the suicide rate for Generation X, went up by 30% in the last decade, and 50% for the boomer generation. We've just learned that atmospheric carbon levels surpassed 400 PPM for the first time in human history. Our honeybee colonies are collapsing, thereby threatening the future of our food supply. And all this is just the tip of the iceberg.

What we're handing over to you is a world full of inspiring realities, coupled with incredibly daunting ones.

In other words:  
miserable and magical isn't just a pop-song lyric -- it's the paradox that you are inheriting from us.

So, what do you do with that?  
I'm going to be honest ...  
I don't really know :)  
I do know this, though:

AT THE CORE OF ALL OF TODAY'S MOST PRESSING CHALLENGES IS ONE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE: WE HAVE BECOME PROFOUNDLY DISCONNECTED.

Rather ironic, considering that we live in an era where Facebook [has](#) spawned 150 billion "connections," as we collectively shell out 2.7 billion 'likes' on status updates every single day. Yet, a growing body of science is showing what we already feel deep in our gut: we're more isolated than ever before.

The average American adult [reports](#) having just one real friend that they can count on. Just

one. And for the first time in 30 years, mental health disabilities such as ADHD [outrank](#) physical ones among American children.

Somehow we've allowed our relationship to gadgets and things to overtake our real-world ties. We've forgotten how to rescue each other.

Yet, deep inside we all still have that capacity. We know we have it because we saw it at Sandy Hook, in the brave teachers who gave up their lives to save their students. We saw it during the Boston Marathon, when runners completed the race and kept running to the nearest blood bank.

We saw it this week in Oklahoma when a waiter at a fast food chain donated all his tips to the tornado relief efforts and triggered a chain of generosity.

So we know that we can tap into our inner goodness when crisis strikes. But can we do it on a run-of-the-mill Monday?

**That's the question in front of you. Will you, Class of 2013, step up to rebuild a culture of trust, empathy and compassion?**

Our crisis of disconnection needs a renaissance of authentic friendship.



We need you to upgrade us from  
Me-Me-Me to We-We-We.

Reflecting on my own journey, there have been three keys that helped me return to a place of connection. I'd like to share those with you today, in the hope that perhaps it might support your journey.

**The First Key Is To Give**

In the movie "Wall Street" -- which originally came out well before you guys were born -- there's a character named Gordon Gekko whose credo in life reads: Greed is good. When I was about your age, Silicon Valley was in the seductive grip of the dot-com boom.

It was a time when it was easy to believe that Greed was Good. But a small group of us had a different hypothesis:

\*Maybe\* greed is good, but Generosity is better.

We tested that hypothesis. When I started [ServiceSpace](#), our first project was to build websites for nonprofits at no charge.

We ended up building and gifting away thousands of sites, but that wasn't our main goal.

**Our real purpose was to practice Generosity.**

In the early days, the media was pretty sure we had a hidden agenda. "We're doing this just to practice Giving with no strings attached," we said. And when we started [Karma Kitchen](#), people really thought "No way!" It was a restaurant where your check always read zero, with this note:

"Your meal is paid for by someone before you, and now it's your chance to pay it forward."

The thing is -- 25 thousand meals later, the chain continues in several cities around the globe. People consistently underestimate generosity, but human beings are simply wired to give.

In college, you will learn that all of economics is rooted in the assumption that people aim to maximize self-interest. I hope you don't just take that for granted. I hope you challenge it. Consider the likes of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mother Teresa who have rocked the history of our planet with the exact opposite assumption, with the belief in the goodness of our human nature.

Our capacity to Love is a currency that never runs out.

May each of you tap into that generous ocean and discover every day, what it means to give.



**The Second Key Is To Receive**

When we give, we think we are helping others. That's true, but we are also helping ourselves. With any act of unconditional service, no matter how small, our bio-chemistry changes, our mind quiets, and we feel a sense of gratefulness. This inner transformation fundamentally shifts the direction of our lives.

A couple summers ago, we had two 14-year-olds, Neil and Dillan, interning at ServiceSpace. One of their projects was a 30-day kindness challenge -- they had to come up with and do a different act of kindness every day for a month. In the beginning they had to plan "kindness activities," but slowly

they learned how to spontaneously turn their daily life into a canvas for giving. Doing the dishes for mom without her asking, stopping to help a stranger with a flat tire, standing up for a bullied kid, gifting your winnings at the arcade to a child.

Very quickly, kindness shifted from being an activity -- to a way of life.

It wasn't just about who they were helping, it was about who they themselves were becoming through the process.

Last weekend, I happened to see Neil after a while -- the day after Senior Prom -- and he had a story to share: "Last night I noticed that the dance floor was too small and a few of the special needs students just couldn't get on. So I grabbed a bunch of my friends, and we started dancing in a little circle around them. Everyone had a great time." Then, he paused for a reflective moment, and asked me, "But I felt so good about doing that. Do you think I was being selfish?"

What a profound question. What Neil experienced was the fact that when we give, we receive many times over.

Or as the Dalai Lama once put it, "Be Selfish, Be Generous."

It is in giving that we receive.

When we think of generosity, we typically think of it as a zero-sum game. If I give you a dollar, that's one less dollar for me. The inner world, though, operates with an entirely different set of rules. The boundaries aren't so easy to decipher. Your state of being inherently affects my state of

being. This isn't feel-good talk. It's actual science.

Research shows that, in close proximity, when people feel connected, their individual heartbeats actually start to synchronize -- even with zero physical contact.

In neuroscience, the discovery of mirror neurons has shown us that we literally do feel each other's pain -- and joy.

And joy is *\*definitely\** not a zero-sum game.

The law of abundance says that if I give you a smile, that's not one less smile for me. The more I smile, the more I *\*do\** smile. The more I love, the more love I have to give. So, when you give externally, you receive internally.

How do the two compare? That's a question only you can answer for yourself, and that answer will keep changing as your awareness deepens.

Yet this much is clear: if you only focus on the externals, you'll live your life in the deadening pursuit of power and products.

But if you stay in touch with your inner truth, you will come alive with joy, purpose, and gratitude. You will tap into the law of abundance.

**May you discover that to be truly selfish, you must be generous.**

**In giving,**

**May you fully experience  
What it means to receive.**



### The Third Key Is To Dance

Our biggest problem with giving and receiving is that we try and track it. And when we do that, we lose the beat.

The best dancers are never singularly focused on the mechanics of their movements. They know how to let go, tune into the rhythm and synchronize with their partners.

It's like that with giving, too. It's a futile exercise to track who is getting what. We just have to dance. Who is the giver, Who is the receiver? And more importantly, does it even matter?

Dancing tells us to stop keeping track. Sometimes you're giving and sometimes you're receiving, but it doesn't really matter because the real reward of that give and take doesn't lie in the value of what's being exchanged. The real reward lies in what flows between us: our connection.

### Conclusion

So, my dear friends, there you have it. The bad news is that we're in the middle of a crisis of disconnection, and the good news is that each and every one of you has the capacity to repair the web -- to give, to receive, and to dance.

Sometime last year, I spontaneously treated a homeless woman to something she really wanted -- ice cream. We walked into a nearby 7-11, she got her ice cream, and I paid for it. Along the way, though, we had a great 3-minute chat about generosity; and as we were leaving the store, she said something remarkable:

"I'd like to buy you something. Can I buy you something?" She empties her pockets and holds up a nickel.

The cashier looks on, as we all share a beautiful, awkward, empathy-filled moment of silence. Then, I heard my voice responding, "That's so kind of you. I would be delighted to receive your offering. What if we pay-it-forward by tipping this kind cashier who has just helped us?" Her face breaks into a huge smile. "Good idea," she says while dropping the nickel into the tip-jar.

No matter what you have, or don't have, we can all give. The good news is that generosity is not a luxury sport.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said it best, when he said, "Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve." He didn't say, "You have to be smart to serve." Or "You have to be famous to serve." Or "You have to be rich to serve." No, he said, "*\*Everybody\** can be great, because *\*everybody\** can serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You don't need to know the second law of thermodynamics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

Harker Class of 2013,

May you ALL

Find Greatness in Service to Life.  
May You All give, receive -- and never, *\*ever\** stop Dancing."



Excerpts from a commencement address Nipun Mehta delivered at The Harker School in May, 2013. He is the founder of [ServiceSpace.org](http://ServiceSpace.org), a nonprofit that works at the intersection of gift-economy, technology and volunteerism. [Nipun's speech last year](#) at University of Pennsylvania's commencement shares more about his personal journey.

**PEER SPIRIT CIRCLE**

**JUNE 2013**

**PeerSpirit Circle Tale**

**FIRST FIRE GATHERING:  
A CIRCLE TALE**  
by Melissa Bailey-Kirk

Since the publication of the first version of Calling the Circle, The First and Future Culture in 1995, Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea have practiced, refined, studied, and taught PeerSpirit Circle Process.

Now, these founders and pioneers are taking The Circle Way ([www.peerspirit.com](http://www.peerspirit.com)) and developing and expanding it into a global movement.

Working with Calling the Circle Foundation, Ann and Christina invited a group of circle practitioners to Whidbey Island in early May to join them in discerning ...

How best to Care for and Nurture The Circle Way Movement into its next phase of life?

The Gathering was named, in respect and hope:

**First Fire Gathering**  
of the Next Generation.

Participants were invited to design a network of co-learning and mutual support that will steward The Circle Way more deeply into the world, and to support Calling the Circle Foundation's "Circle Carriers Legacy Project" by welcoming video/audio documentation of the First Fire Gathering.

These intentions were carefully placed in the center as thirty-five circle practitioners from Australia, Canada, Germany, and the U.S. created the rim.



After check-in and a few rounds of conversation, all were invited to consider their personal intentions in light of the communal intention. The First Fire Gathering continued to shimmer and buzz as each person held the talking piece and spoke aloud the vision and hope that created the energetic spoke through which she/he tended the center, through which she/he received the tending of the center.



The Circle Way held, in safety and respect ...

**DIVERSITY**  
personified in the  
**First Fire Gathering!**



This should come as no surprise, for when care is taken to set the intention, the center, to name the agreements, and to attach rim energy to/through the center, participants are free to explore and to offer their best to the work of the circle.

The First Fire Gathering hosted three days and nights of energetic focus on the future of The Circle Way.

Grounded in Circle Principles that make space for all the wisdom in the room, we met in large and small councils, World Café, and Open Space.

The transition from visioning to strategic planning happened as the fruits of countless conversations

were harvested, and rich and bountiful topics fed the intention.

The group addressed:



- Opportunities for training circle practitioners;
- Developing networks of mutual mentoring;
- Researching the possible connections between circle practice and physical/emotional/behavioral functioning;
- Making a multi-dimensional map that locates and describes the growing field of Circle practitioners;
- Creating downloadable, digital tools to support circle practice;
- Expanding multi-generational and multi-cultural ways to engage and talk about The Circle Way; and
- Designing a 2-year transition plan for the kinds of contributions Ann and Christina want to continue to make in this growing, networked environment.



While all of this was happening, a film crew worked diligently and graciously to capture the heart of Circle Practices, and to interview individuals about their experiences with The Circle Way. The footage will document the PeerSpirit portion of "The Circle Carriers Legacy Project," and can be used to strengthen The Circle Way's teaching presence.

As the First Fire Gathering prepared for the check-out round, a ritual of investment and support invited those responsible for the various projects that had emerged to step away from the rim and create concentric circles in the center.





In this way,  
 people demonstrated their  
 commitment to guiding  
 The Circle Way into its future ...  
 as project managers,  
 as short-term worker bees,  
 as process developers  
 as circle practitioners,  
 as pray-ers, as writers,  
 as creators,  
 as hearth-tenders ...

Each in her/his own way, determined  
 how best to offer themselves to the  
 future of The Circle Way.

If you are reading this Circle  
 Tale, you have some level of interest  
 in The Circle Way. Consider how you  
 might strengthen The Circle Way as  
 it moves into the future. Perhaps it is  
 time to read The Circle Way: A  
 Leader in Every Chair again, or for  
 the first time. Who do you know that  
 needs to hear the story of how circle  
 work and life has benefited you? Is  
 there a circle that simply waits ... for  
 you to call it? Are you connected to a  
 larger system - academic or  
 organizational - where The Circle  
 Way could be taught and applied?  
 If you are interested in contributing  
 directly to this movement of  
 strengthening The Circle Way, please  
 contact the PeerSpirit office by  
 phone (360-331-3580) or e-mail  
 (cbaldwin@peerspirit.com), and watch  
 our newsletter for ongoing  
 developments.

Melissa

Thank you Melissa, for capturing  
 the essence of the **First Fire  
 Gathering**. We were truly blessed  
 by, and grateful to, everyone who  
 came and participated in the **First Fire  
 Gathering**. The enthusiasm, ideas and

activism that were generated  
 have inspired and re-energized  
 us.



We would also like to give  
 special thanks to all members of  
 the Calling the Circle  
 Foundation Board. Their support,  
 sponsorship, expertise, and help  
 in all aspects of the **First Fire  
 Gathering** made the event a  
 resounding success. If you  
 aren't aware of this wonderful  
 organization, please go to  
 their website and see what  
 they're all about!

[www.callingthecircle.org](http://www.callingthecircle.org)

As we head into the teaching  
 and travels of the summer  
 months, all of the inspiration we  
 received will be propelling us  
 forward.

We invite you to step into or  
 renew your commitment to The  
 Circle Way!

Christina Baldwin, Ann Linnea &  
 Debbie Dix



## Why do you think you Incarnated at this Time?

### Grandmothers

#### June Message

by Sharon McErlane

"You need a nudge to get you to dive  
 deeper within yourself ... We see you  
 and notice that the world is distracting  
 you. This distraction will lead you  
 nowhere," they said. "You will go round  
 in circles if you keep on paying  
 attention to the world. You will become  
 lost. We believe in you," the  
 Grandmothers said.

"We believe in you because we see  
 what and who you are. And so we have  
 come today to prod you to turn your  
 awareness not outward into the world,  
 but inward."

"Step into your heart,"  
 they said, "and call on us ...  
 We will never fail you."



"You are a great being," the  
 Grandmothers said, "and your taking  
 birth at this time was not an accident.  
 There is important work awaiting  
 you. You are needed to pass on our  
 Empowerment into the energy of  
 Yin .... to pass it to women and men,  
 to young and old, to pass it to every  
 race, faith and religion. Pass it on!"

"Work with the radiant Net of Light  
 each day and teach others how to  
 work with it, too. Working with the Net  
 is effortless," the Grandmothers  
 declared, "and it is the Net of Light  
 that is holding your planet steady,  
 holding it steady in spite of all the  
 upheavals and tragedies occurring  
 each day. Don't get sucked in by

these daily dramas," they said, "but instead hold, hold, hold the Net of Light and observe as it holds you.

Each time you connect to the Net you become stronger -- and as you do -- it, too, becomes stronger."

"This is selfless work we are calling you to," the Grandmothers said.

"You were born for it. Why do you think you incarnated at this particular time?

This is why," they said. "You were born to love -- to love and lift your planet. If you want to fulfill your destiny, call on us or on any form of the Divine you love, and then step forward into



this blessed work. Pass on our message of the return of the energy of Yin, the Feminine Principle of Creation; and then hold, hold, hold the Net of Light. We ask you to do this for yourself and for everything that lives. This work is not difficult, but it requires a willing heart," the Grandmothers said. "Call on us, move into your heart, and then think of the Net of Light. This will automatically connect you to the radiant Net that surrounds, lifts, and infuses your planet, that cradles every part of it in light. That cradles you in light. We bless and thank you for your willing heart," they said.

## POETIC CORNER

Beacon, one of the sixteen women in the first Circle of Grandmothers in 1994, writes from New Mexico: "At times I pick up information somatically. I didn't know what some of my recent feelings were about until I learned of Mary's process. I lit a candle. The following lines flowed from my pen:

Mary Diamond

'Cross miles I sing to you

Merrily dancing

Sing as I dance with you

Diamond dancing

Dance to the doorway

Diamond dancing

See old friends greet you

Lifetime of doorways



Through many doorways

Dance through the doorway

YES through many doorways

Mary Le Diamond

Dancing through doorways

Merrily dancing

Here is another

Diamond dancing.

Doorway to new life



YES to the new life

BEACON

Doorway to dance through

Silver City, New Mexico

### AS A GRANDMOTHER, I WRITE MY STORY

"... My story has been one of searching for my truth, my potential, while remembering myself. Even though it guided me through doors heading to darkness, It also guided me through doors of light ... hoping for understanding, more clarity and repose.

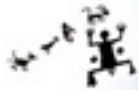
As a Grandmother, mother, wife, friend, aunt, artist, lover, worker, cook, and lover of beauty ... I wish that life will continue to have the mystery and potential for me until the last, deep, soft breath. May we all be free from suffering. May we all know peace."

Anonymous

Excerpts from : A Gathering of Grandmothers, edited by Lynne Namka, Ed.D. 2002

THE GRANDMOTHERS REMEMBER MARY ...

Q: My mind is restless, greedy of the pleasant and afraid of the unpleasant.



“WHEN SHE SERVED SCRUMPTIOUS, ELEGANT DINNERS FILLED WITH GARDEN FARE ... DRESSED IN FLOWING LAVENDERS, MAUVES AND SKY BLUES TO MATCH HER EYES ... THEN GAILY PUT MUSIC ON TO DANCE THROUGH THE NIGHT. OR WHEN SHE HAD TREES PLANTED THROUGHOUT CIELO EN TIERRA, IN MEMORY OF A DEAR ONE, AND CHOSE THE STURDY PEACH TREE IN THE GARDEN FOR MY FATHER, REFLECTING HER COMPASSION AND LOVE FOR HIM, ESPECIALLY DURING THE LAST YEARS OF HIS ILLNESS ...”

**NANCY MASLAND**

“I REMEMBER HER SPEECHES ENDING IN TEARS. SHE FREQUENTLY APOLOGIZED FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO FINISH WHAT SHE WANTED TO SAY, BUT HER SHARING HER TEARS WAS A GIFT TO ALL OF US.”

**RUTH GARDNER**



“I CAN JUST SEE MARY, AS THE STORY WAS TOLD TO ME, HOLDING ON TO THE GUY ROPES--DIGGING HER HEELS AND HER WILL INTO THE GROUND AS THE GREAT DESERT WIND PULLED AND TUGGED THE BIG YURT, EVENTUALLY COLLAPSING IT.

MARY BLAMED THAT CRAZY COURAGE ON HER DAD WHO USED TO SAY: “WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE TOUGH GET GOING.”

**SHIRLEY TASSENCOURT**

“WE’VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT LIVING AND DYING AND NOT HAVING ANY FEAR. MARY SAYS, “IF I WERE TO LEAVE ANY LEGACY AT ALL, IT WOULD BE TO TELL EVERYONE THERE’S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF.

ALL THEY NEED TO DO IS SAY YES!”

**KIT WILSON**

“I REMEMBER THAT WHENEVER I SUGGESTED SOMETHING TO MARY WHICH I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FUN TO DO, SHE’D SAY “LET’S DO IT.”

IF I SUGGESTED WE MIGHT GO SOMEPLACE, SHE’D SAY “LET’S GO!”

I REMEMBER HER COMING TO WHIRLING YELLOW WAY IN A BIG WINDSTORM. IT WAS HER BIRTHDAY, AND SHE MADE PRAYERS AND OFFERINGS IN THE FOUNDATION OF MY NEW HOUSE.



**ALLEGRA AHLQUIST**

I REMEMBER THAT PEOPLE HAD BEEN COMING FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY TO SEE HER. AT LAST IT WAS NECESSARY TO PUT UP A SIGN ON THE BRIDGE SAYING IN A VERY NICE WAY THAT MARY NEEDED TO BE ALONE TO DO HER INNER WORK BEFORE SHE PASSED ON. IT SAID THAT IF PEOPLE WANTED TO COME TO THE CENTER HOUSE, THEY WOULD BE MADE WELCOME THERE.

WHEN MARY WAS TOLD ABOUT THE SIGN, SHE WASN’T SATISFIED. SHE HAD TO SEE IT. SHE WAS CARRIED TO THE CAR AND DRIVEN DOWN TO THE BRIDGE SO THAT SHE COULD READ WHAT IT SAID AND BE SURE THAT NOBODY WOULD FEEL LEFT OUT. SHE READ IT AND SAID “YES, THAT IS ALL RIGHT.” THEN SHE WAS WILLING TO GO TO BED AND NOT RECEIVE VISITORS. HER CHILDREN ASKED HOW WOULD THEY BE ABLE TO CONTACT HER. SHE ANSWERED “WHENEVER YOU SAY YES, I WILL BE THERE.” SO, WHENEVER I SAY YES! YES! YES! TO MARY, I GET A FLASHING LIGHT AND HEAR THE SOUND OF HER LAUGHTER.

**SISTER VIRGINIA BARTA**



I REMEMBER MARY’S DAUGHTER JEANNE STAYED ON AT CIELO AS A CARETAKER FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AFTER CIELO’S SALE, LIVING IN THE HANDSOME HILL HOUSE WITH HER CHILDREN, THEIR DOG CLIO, AND MARY’S GRIEVING DOG HANNAH. IN LATE JULY, IT WAS TIME FOR JEANNE TO SAY FAREWELL WITH A FINAL RITUAL. JUDIE CAME OUT FROM TUCSON TO HELP HER SISTER WITH THE CEREMONY, AND JEANNE ASKED THAT MARY’S SPIRIT BE PRESENT. SHE SAYS SHE DISTINCTLY HEARD MARY SAY “LET’S DO IT TOGETHER.”

**BARBARA FURNISS**



Sri: What is wrong with it seeking the pleasant and shirking the unpleasant? Between the banks of pain and pleasure the river of life flows.

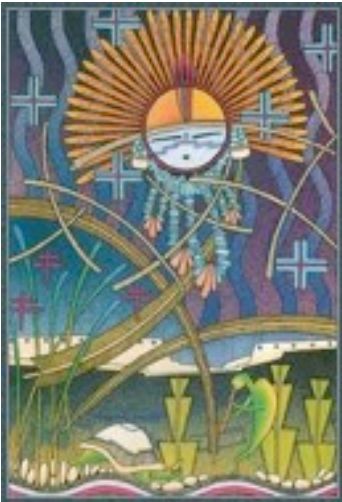
It is only when the mind refuses to flow with life and gets stuck at the banks that it becomes a problem.

By flowing with life I mean acceptance letting come what comes and go what goes.

Desire not, fear not, observe the actual, as, and when it happens, for you are not what happens, you are to whom it happens.

Ultimately even the observer you are not. You are the ultimate potentiality of which the All Embracing Consciousness is the manifestation and expression.

I AM THAT  
by Sri Nissargardatta



THE ARIZONA COUNCIL OF GRANDMOTHERS

Would like to thank you for your contributions to this Newsletter.

Please send your letters, stories, poems, photographs, artwork and news to:

GRANDMOTHERS CIRCLE OF NEWS

Margarita Acosta and Joanne Weiner

[cochisestronghold@gmail.com](mailto:cochisestronghold@gmail.com)

or to us at: P.O. Box 808, Pearce, AZ 85625



### 2013 Water Festival in Tucson

The 4th Annual Water Festival in Tucson this year was amazing! It continues to integrate art, science, and culture to raise awareness, promote stewardship, and foster creative expression about our water future.

This year we were honored and blessed by the voices and spirits of women from the Tucson Women's Chorus, directed by Grandmother Karleena Ravenwood, as they participated in the Ceremonial opening with the singing of the Sacred Anishnawbe Water Song "Nibi Wabo."

May we walk in synchronicity and solidarity with the Grandmothers at Gitchigaaming and the Great Grandmothers who started and continue to walk the Mississippi River, raising awareness about this very sacred Element of Life ...  
For the health of our children, grandchildren and the next seven generations.



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