

Grandmothers Circle of News

Weaver's note: Grandmother Shirley Tassencourt presented these words of wisdom to the Arizona Gathering at the beginning of the Full Moon Ceremony. She was introduced by Lorraine Norrgard with these words: "We are honored tonight by the presence of one of the founding grandmothers. She has a gift for us and we are grateful. Listen to her jeweled words as we prepare to give our gifts to the land, to the water, and to Nokomis, grandmother moon."

The Blessing of Wisdom in a Transformational Time by Shirley Tassencourt (10/22/08)

I'd like to review some prophecies that speak to us because of the crumbling nature of our paper economy.

I was a teacher at Waldorf Schools and became familiar with Rudolph Steiner's predictions into the 21st century...although Dr Steiner died in 1925. He cautions us that when a real change occurs in world affairs, know that they are given by the Gods. He adds that human beings are already associating with the Gods, only our heads don't know it.

"Ideas don't move us much. The real changes occur when the Gods flow a profound realization through the whole human being." Top to toe. When the stocks started falling something flowed through us from top to toe!

Well, the changes are here, right now. We are in a Shiva Transition, destruction to prepare for the new life, and it is

worldwide. "Order will not arrive from the chaos of the times until we wake up and change ourselves."

I believe we have been preparing for this since the 1970's. From college we went on to matriculation at workshops. We did retreats, lectures and books to find out who we might be. We woke the right brain up with art and music, poetry and dance. No one can say we didn't change!

Dr. Steiner says we have a little bit more to do. "Just as air and water are all around us all the time, we live in a pool of spirit but we know it not. Right now our most important task is to see with great clarity what goes on around us. What are we really choosing?"

This Seer who "sees beyond" started the Waldorf Schools, Biodynamic farming, Eurhythmy, therapeutic work, Homes for children in need of special care, new directions in painting sculpture, music, astronomy and economics—because he could SEE what we could not see.

Steiner, in considering the future, told us "when the world focuses on the environment then we will see Spirit take a leap forward for mankind."

"Look to the future with deep hope and confidence. From the turmoil something can or will develop for the future as an outcome of the mighty changes ahead."

We Grandmothers have a lot to contribute. We have the wisdom to steady the boat of family. Steiner himself gives us a lift when he confirms "the higher consciousness

that perceives Spirit will be attained."

For some of the "mighty changes" ahead I turn to the predictions of the Mayan Calendar. They have gotten it right for 2000 years or more—verified by history. They predicted the collapse of the economy before the 5th night is over by November 2008...right on target. The 5th night also pinpointed the great Depression of the 1930's and so it was the 5th night when Rome collapsed.

Shiva the Transformer destroys so that the NEW may enter. The year 2012 may be a period in which many people will find ways of adapting to the new frame of consciousness. When Venus crosses the Sun on June 6, 2012, there will be a radical mind change coming...from a dualistic mindset to a unitive thinking...Big Mind that is whole and balanced, devoid of inner and outer conflicts.

We are the person we have been waiting for...when the other is also ourselves.

There is an ancient Mayan greeting "In Lak'ech" meaning "I am another you"!

Only 3 more years to go. May it be so.



When the Grandmothers speak, the world will heal.



Editor's Transition

by Robbie Lapp

I rejoice that the Grandmothers Circle of News is creating a change and a continuation of the grandmothers' newsletter. Being its editor began for me in January 2008 and at the Arizona Council in October 2008, I stepped out and passed the torch to B Campbell.

Creating a team and a June 2008 issue of the newsletter I treasure as unique and unrepeatable. Many thanks to the seven grandmothers who stepped on to the team with me: Eleanor Gallagher as Editor-at-Large, Gracie Rogers as Co-Editor, Judith Billings as Subscriptions Manager, Sister Rebecca as Layout and Graphic Designer, Pam Smith as Circulation Manager, and Judie Garnet and B Campbell as Archivists.

We began 2008 with 49 paid subscribers. The June newsletter went of all 320 on the mailing list. Turned over to B now is the list of 77 paid subscribers. Thanks to all those subscribers, gifts from grandmothers, and the Arizona Council who have kept the newsletter "in being" financially—and to all the volunteers offering their written words, art and works to create each issue for fifteen years!

May the wisdom of Grandmother continue to be heard and shared for the healing of the earth.

Arizona's 15th Gathering of Grandmothers: Self As Song

by Bobbie Goodman

We met. Forty-seven women from 50-84 years of age, called from 14 states, gathered at the Pocket Sanctuary in Southern Arizona two days before the Full Moon of October 2008...and it was wonder-full!

The first crisp coolness of Fall touched the high desert early this year. Many who had come prepared for the heat of the desert discovered the comfort and warmth of wrapping in blankets. Walking the land in many colored blankets, we looked all the more like the ancestral Grandmothers who lived long ago and who were blessing us from the "other side."

In the Opening Ceremony all donned embroidered white shawls as the container for our Gathering was solidified and the Circle was closed. In the safety of our reliance on Spirit, self and each other: we circled, sang, drummed, sweated, chanted, meditated, danced, wrote, prayed, created art pieces and Spirit Masks, circled, sang, listened to wisdom stories and teaching from our elders, honored the directions and the elements and conducted sacred Ceremonies, circled, mended the Sacred Hoop, ate, laughed, soaked, planted a tree and remembered our friends and loved ones who have passed over, and shared our songs and our wisdom.

Throughout our time together, whether we were giving-away or opening to receive or simply sharing, we were encouraged and graced to individually and collectively expand our unique manifestations. And in our differences we saw and celebrated the Oneness in us all. Again and

again we discovered in song and in stillness, in movement and sitting, in laughter and in tears that truly, "We are the Ones we have been waiting for!!"

And when this rich, deep and joyful Gathering was over, the Circle was opened. We each went out to carry the energy, insights, crystals of compassion, wisdom and love out into the world.

The list of gratitude and thanks would probably include all of us and so I won't say anybody by name. However, I want to express my love & gratitude to Rose Grotenstein in whose memory I served as Weaver. Rosie, my mother-in-law for 45 years, died 9/07, and this was her last teaching to me: in serving one receives much more than is given.



Choices

by Hannah Reese

Cherish these choices:

If and when one weds,
 If and when one starts a family,
 What kind of work to do,
 Where to live,
 How to dress,
 What to eat,
 Who to vote for,
 What to read and
 What to believe

and if when seeking to know the depths of oneself, one discovers new ways of thinking, cherish the choice to change one's mind!

When the Grandmothers speak, the world will heal.

The Fruit of B's Loom



Greetings Grandmothers!

It's a strange feeling, this role in which I find myself so deeply immersed in such a short time as I have only been in the Arizona Council of Grandmothers a couple of years (my gratitude to Judie Garnet for inviting me to the Gathering). However, I believe I had been in sync with the Grandmothers many a long year prior and the actual gathering became a transforming event which rather swept me away! Now I find myself privileged as editor of the Grandmothers Circle of News.

I have to confide in you that the word "editor" doesn't quite fit me. I have never been an "editor" per se and the word seems to denote, for me, a form of hierarchy - something I've avoided as much as possible over the years. Therefore, I am adopting myself as the Weaver of the Grandmothers Circle of News and those helping me are also weavers. Now, that doesn't mean we don't all have particular tasks or that we are just going around willy-nilly, but it is in a groovy concert; we have tasks, goals and so forth, yet to my psyche, the response is more empowering. Of course, there is also the possibility that I am just nuttier than a fruitcake.

Recently when the newsletter went through what I would describe as a "near-death event", I had a spiritual experience that just would not let it go. I recalled the words from Remembering Mary in

the foreword by Judy O'Leary; my mind would not release the words when it seems the newsletter was in danger of being no more. On Page v, JudyO reminded us of Mary Diamond's Arizona Intention: "*The intention of the Council of Grandmothers is to Create time and place for elder women to come together to recognize their wisdom and find their voice.*" That was followed by: "This intention is carried out in Arizona along with similar intentions from the sister Councils and through connections in *Circle of Grandmothers newsletter.*"

That pretty much sums it up for me as to my feelings regarding the importance, contribution and



continuation of this vessel of love - not so much emphasis on its appearance - rather content and purpose. Within this vessel, I see a place for Grandmothers to recognize their wisdom and find their voices. This publication belongs to each of you. Without your input, it does not exist. I am offering myself and those working with me in this labor of love as a gift to assist you in staying connected, sharing, exploring, informing, singing, writing, and hey, let's throw in a recipe now and again.

I have great wonderings about all the sister Councils and a longing to attend those gatherings, but who knows when that will be possible? Will you share those events with me? Will you tell me about the "Heart Circle" that has started meeting in your area? Maybe there is a grandmother nearby who

would like to attend. And what about all those books you are all reading - give me a quick review on what's hot and what's not. Will you tell me that story of your youth which was unexpectedly brought to your conscious attention by some small event? Will you share with me the idea you have for tomorrow? Will share your hopes and dreams?

What about that experience with the grandchild? Will you share your wisdom regarding the events of our current situation in this world of change we are facing?

For now, Dear Ones, the plan is to pick up where the last team left off: Paid subscribers will receive the number of issues due and there is great each of you will renew your subscription at the appropriate time, and hey, if you feel the urge to offer a donation - such an act of kindness is just that. There are quite a few Grandmothers in nursing homes, Grandmothers in extremely difficult financial situations - need I go on - so, there will be a compassion list for those who need it. Another new development is that if you elect, you may have the Circle of News at a reduced rate via e-mail. Information on how to receive the newsletter via e-mail is on the subscription form included in this issue.

So, there you have it. My Intention, along with weavers Joyce Harvey, Irene Walden, Eleanor Gallagher, Robbie Lapp, Kit Wilson, Gracie Roger and most importantly YOU, is to carry on in the very best way that Spirit may lead!

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Deadline for submitting materials for the next issue is February 1, 2009. Mail to:

Barbara Campbell
735 W. Annandale Way
Oro Valley, AZ 85737

Or, better yet, if possible, E-mail to bluechablis@comcast.net

Lastly, I do not want to sign off with out paying tribute to Ruth Gardner, Kit Wilson and Robbie Lapp, without whom there would be no newsletter. All devoted time effort and love to this commitment and we owe them all many thanks.



Re: The Newsletter

From Joanne Reichlin

Increasingly in my life gratitude, thankfulness, genuinely and deeply felt is vital. I thank each and all of you who have agreed to and put your time and thought into making sure our Grandmothers' Newsletter is a reality.

How great it was to receive my copy via mail, then to sit and read about my world both past and present. What a circle you all offer, different worlds, thoughts, feelings, but all with an intention to allow us Grandmothers to stay connected. Please accept my thanks for your willingness and ability to work together, to make this Newsletter work for the benefit of all of us who subscribe.

About the Arizona Gathering

Dear Ones,

Now that I am finally unpacked--it only took 10 days--I want to stretch out a loving hand to all of you who made my first Arizona Grandmothers Gathering so special and memorable. I hope I can return again next year.

Our Heartland Council of Grandmothers met last Sunday at the home of Gracie Rogers. I was honored to be able to pass on some of the "blessings" I received at Pocket Sanctuary. There weren't enough words to convey the depth of my experience with all of you. Until our paths cross again, my blessings on each and every one of you!



Paz, Mary Ann Reed

More about the Arizona Gathering

This year's Gathering seems like the best one we ever had. Let me tell you what leads me to say such a bold thing.

My sister and I arrived late Saturday night after everyone was in their rooms. We found our way to the registration table and our folder. There we found a yellow --or was it marigold-- tag telling us our room number was 10. Enclosed was a map with a smiley face showing where we were and a big red dot showing where our room was located. How thoughtful and labor intensive to do that for all of

us! Upon reaching the room there was a sign showing our names on the outside. That way we could tell right away who our neighbors were. And later, we were able to find people easily.

The next morning when I walked into the Large Lodge, the alter was BEAUTIFUL!!! Thank you for the time and intention you put into designing it. Having the shawls on every chair made it truly extra special. From that time on the timing and pacing was wonderful! It allowed time for relaxation and getting to know each other and also enough fabulous workshops to provide growth as well as entertainment. If you could arrange to have Karleena and Betsy at every Gathering that would greatly enhance our musical ability. I think having the sweat lodge the first night also allowed space for all of us to go very deep very quickly.

You all just did an outstanding job! And I know it took all of you. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Hugs {{{ }}} Kathie Murtey



News from the Councils

From Weaver Bobbie Goodman: The next Arizona Council of Grandmothers Gathering is expected to be happening October 9 ~ 12, 2009... details coming soon.



Celebrations of Life



Barrie Ryan, Tucson, AZ remembers Barbara Furniss

When I spoke of my sorrow to Barbara Furniss on the phone about her diagnosis of leukemia, she said, “*Well, you know I had to get off the stage somehow.*” There it was—her light touch that I’d always loved and envied. She could even have it about her oncoming death. But soon she was asking about how I was. And there it was, too—her genuine concern for others, for the world, that I’d always love in her. Barbara Furniss had some heavy losses in her life, but she knew how to live in this world with that combination of compassion and a light touch, God bless her good soul. At the end of the phone conversation, as at the end of the last visit I had with her, she said, “*Take care of the honeybees, Barrie.*”
--Barrie Ryan

Note from Weaver – I asked Barrie what the last statement in her celebration of Barbara referred to, and she said it was about this poem she had written:

The Stillness of Bees



I’m lulled coming down the bank into dry creek this summer morning with the smell of sycamore musk deliciously permeating early heat. But not for long. Almost instantly I sense the bees are missing. I stop, squint, search for just one flight, one sight. But none. Emptiness. Ominous giant stillness. I never liked to look directly at the hive

hidden in that bank hole
behind canyon sage
any more than I could bear to meet the stare
for long of the horned owls
when I’d sight them hunkered
in an ash or sycamore, watching me closely.
It was their creek I wished to move through
respectfully, their presences expanding
joy in me, innards of a seed pod about to burst.

It was enough to glimpse bee flight
lifting away or homing down between
bank and sycamore,
a flickering, a moment’s movement
dappled in light and shade.
Depending on the time of day or
season,
a few solos or symphonic crescendo.
All was well. I could walk on down
creek.
The world’s blossoms would be
found.

Where hive was hidden
no sign of determined eradication
even with all the fear of migrating
killer bees.
They were far enough from houses
that I’d like to think few knew
their modest livelihood here—
just glad their backyard peach tree
turned fruit.
If the bees failed in winter
it would make more sense. Disease?
But they were here just last week
and all the weeks of the years
of my creek walking.

Cottonwoods are motionless so much
of winter
Creek a dry bed seasons without rain.
Coyote voice absent months at a time.

But these are the cycles of cessation,
the necessary dropping down and
dormancy,
life contracting, gathering itself
until the arias of motion
can no longer be contained
and burst

forth, reborn, in gurgle, rustle,
tremolo.
A dead hive is different.
Some moving intelligence with loft
and range
has permanently vanished.
Those tiny flying alchemists not
present,
not busy,
what will balance now the gravity
of stolid rocks, rooted seep willow?

~Barrie Ryan

*Barrie’s poem was published in How
the World Is Given To Us*

Joanne Reichlin, Tucson, AZ remembers Barbara Furniss

I am and will always be grateful that I had many chances to get to know, to spend time with Barbara Furniss. Words from Judy Atwell as well as from Judy O’Leary indicated that Barbara quietly in her own way left this sphere of Life. There was never a time in the many times that I was in Barbara’s presence that there was not an experience of a first class human being, a woman of quality who lived her life, who spoke her mind and heart in learned wisdom. I never heard comments against anyone or anything.

Her story about Mary Diamond some years ago and why she felt such gratitude to and for Mary dwelt on how she felt Mary gave her the motivation to walk, to move, to live no matter what her physical state. I did and will always know in my life that Barbara taught me things that will
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be with me and allow me to make choices to live, to say Yes to Life no matter what circumstances exist. Thank you to the Grandmothers who made the Grandmothers group possible and made it possible for me to have Barbara as part of my world.



Judy O'Leary, Idaho remembers Barbara Furniss

The Minx, the tongue in cheek, the innocence, the loyalty, the properness, the generosity, the truthfulness, the strength, the support, the quietness, the laughter, the kindness, the twinkle, the crooked thumb, a true guardian of the Grandmothers, Remembering Mary, and oh so much love she shared. May I find another with such qualities for I was blessed to know her? I trust it will be!

Marjory Tyndall, Green Valley, AZ remembers Barbara

Barbara Furniss was an elegant, cultured, lovely woman who I met in 1994 when she and her husband Todd were moving into Garden Home 902 at La Posada in Green Valley, AZ. My husband Bill and I were moving into Garden Home 905 in the same cluster of homes. Their beautiful calico cat, which now lives with us, was also going in and out of their new home. Barbara had such a complete understanding and consideration of others—such kindness! Physically she was hampered by rheumatoid

arthritis. Spiritually and mentally nothing was in her way. If you did not get to meet her, I'm sorry for your loss of love and inspiration. I cherish her terrific gift of friendship to me. Mary Diamond was her close friend for many years. Barbara took me to my first Circle of Grandmothers where I shared a room with Barbara and Mary Diamond and we sat on my bed to watch the sun rise. She was perfect and I miss her so very much.



Nancy Masland, Tucson, AZ remembers Barbara

The white-haired lady of grace, elegance, serenity, generosity and intelligence, I met 16 years ago planning the First Grandmother's Gathering. A loyal, devoted friend of Mary Diamond's, Barbara quietly and courageously supported each of us. Her crippling illness was never an issue for discussion, and her persistent pursuit of the truth never questioned. Her book Remembering Mary was, with Todd, her loving husband, an 'opus maximus' and will be relished by each Grandmother for years to come.

Judy Atwell, Tucson, AZ remembers Barbara

Barbara Furniss was the perfect role model – I remember her quick wit, impish sense of humor and impeccable standards. Elegantly dressed, her white hair perfectly coiffed, Barbara was always ready

for the next adventure. No matter what difficulties she faced, she stayed positive and kept her sense of humor. Above all, Barbara was generous - with her attention, her kindness and her appreciation for others.

While her husband Todd was alive, Bob and I would visit every few months. We laughed a lot, but it was clear that off-color jokes were NOT acceptable. Shortly after Todd's death in 2006, I spent a day with Barbara while she delivered Todd's death certificate to the bank, visited her doctor and ran several other errands. Todd had been her lifelong companion and loving support, and I know Barbara must have missed him terribly. However her only comment was "What a wonderful way to go – he just lay down for a nap and didn't wake up."

Even when her health was failing, Barbara always remembered to ask about our travels, our children and grandchildren. I miss her a lot. She was a treasured friend and a joy to know.

Georgia Brauer, Green Valley, AZ remembers Barbara

Barbara was my delightful friend beginning in 1997 when I settled into La Posada. She introduced me to Marj Tyndall and the three of us became fast friends. They took me along to my first Grandmothers meeting at Triangle T where we

were squashed into a tiny room and hilarity reigned. We had the same sort of accommodation at the next meeting at the COD ranch, *(continued page 7)*

except that a very pleasant young woman was added to the tiny room to watch over us elderly types. It seems now that the four of us never stopped laughing. Barbara's bright intelligence, wit, and courage in the face of physical pain made my experiences with her a constant joy. I miss her greatly.



Kit Wilson, Phoenix, AZ remembers Barbara

Our Barbara was, for all the time of her being with the Grandmothers, particularly in the early years, a constant presence. As Mary Diamond's "best friend," she advised, supported, and tempered Mary's YES with measured words of good sense. Their friendship was wonderful to observe, and her gift of Remembering Mary is a tribute to a friendship that spanned the country. Barbara brought dignity, realistic thinking, and a marvelous sense of humor to the Arizona Grandmothers. She was a neat, neat lady. I miss her.



Mereith

Gracie Rogers, Wheaton, IL remembers Mereith Nygaard

Mereith. I see you still—white hair, walking cane, stitching the beautiful star quilt you gifted to the Grandmothers. But, I hear you more. I hear your voice loud and almost singing, telling us about the

land and how long your family had been there outside Tucson. "The land is sacred," you would say and I knew you spoke great truth because you were the land and it was you. You've gone home and I miss you in the world; am humbled and grateful I knew you. Godspeed Mereith. We will meet again. Love, Gracie

Lorraine Norrgard, Cloquet, MN remembers Mereith

My memories of Mereith are precious jewels that always make me smile. I remember how she could not hear well, but listened attentively, and when it was her turn to speak, she would loudly proclaim profound statements like, "This land is sacred!" and "Love is what matters!" She had a way of piercing the moment with a straight arrow of truth and beauty that would go directly into my heart.

At one giveaway I was lucky enough to receive Mereith's offering, a tiny red-handled seam-ripper. She said it was her most valuable tool when she sewed quilts... "You just can't have enough of 'em!" I use it often, thinking of the practical pioneer farming life she lived in North Dakota. I remember her giggle and the sparkle in her eyes when she was honored with a turquoise necklace as the eldest grandmother. Her delight was contagious.

The 13th Gathering at Rex Ranch especially holds many dear memories for me since it was the year I facilitated the ceremony with the 13 grandmother sculptures made by artist Barry Coffin. At

this gathering, Mereith allowed us to hang her gorgeous star quilt in the great hall facing the sculptures. She told me afterward that her quilt had absorbed all these amazing images, love, prayers, and held all of that. She wanted the quilt to continue to share with others this powerful experience, and I offered to take it to Grandmother Gatherings on her behalf. She was happy to know that something she had made that was filled with so much love and vision would continue to be a part of the Gatherings. She finished sewing the edges and shipped it to me in time for the next Gathering in Gulf Shores. Mereith has been with us at every Grandmother Gathering in the Tucson area and Gulf Shores ever since in the embodiment of this gorgeous star quilt. I think of her now as that bright star who shined love toward the land, her family, and everyone she met. I am deeply grateful to have known her and honored to be forever sharing her beautiful quilted star of love with others. Miigwech!



Janet

Shirley Tassencourt, Dragoon, AZ remembers Janet Cutting Feldman

This, a letter to the daughters of Janet Cutting Feldman, who left us Nov. 6, 2008. I wanted the grandmothers to know about Janet's concerns and generosity for the world's indigenous people, as *(continued page 8)*

well as their thrust for autonomy in the United Nations over many years.

Dear Diana and Jane,
On the 6th of November, a ruby-crowned hummingbird flew into my open door and headed for the skylight. The skylight is 7 feet wide and 20 feet from the floor. It is made of 6 glass panels standing on a lean, to make a pointed tower.

All day long, the hummer explored the glass ceiling that promised a blue escape. Round and round and up and down, she tested each panel over and over. Her determined humming filled the whole dome.

The day Janet passed, my heart was attentive to this life that should have been extended to the sky and the winds. The pain of watching. Yet all I could see, what the bird so urgently wanted, was miles and miles of blue sky. There was no below for her or the open door that beckoned.

Dusk came. I climbed the loft to my bedroom. There on the pillow beside the bed was the ruby-crowned hummer. I picked her up ever so gently in my hand and as I did, the tiniest most precious tone came out of her bill.

This was Janet saying goodbye to Shirley. I was with you all day, Janet, hoping you would make it.

The next day, Diane called me to tell me of Janet's passing. I was just reeling from the news when Judith Billings and Hella Gutjahr arrived. With them, Allegra Ahlquist and I went to the center of the 15-acre medicine wheel. Allegra drummed and sang. In the instant after we had heard, 4

grandmothers had appeared for the 4 directions. It seemed quite amazing.

For this woman who prayed and gave to the indigenous people, we were doing ceremony in the right place.

Janet had insisted that her Yaqui tribal friend from Tucson come and do the Dear Dance in our Medicine Wheel. Last year they came. It was a beautiful and amazing blessing for the land we caretake.

That evening after the grandmothers left, I wrapped the ruby-crowned hummingbird in a beautiful box and placed it in the center of the Medicine Wheel.

Janet's last wish I'm told: If she could only stay for Obama's election as president. It was granted on the 4th of November. I think it was a wish that sent her sky high where the wind blows, where the terrible burden of RACE is a plus instead of a minus.

Weaver's note: *Information regarding the transition from this life of Janet Cutting Feldman came very close to time for printing. Anyone wishing to make a contribution regarding Janet is invited to do so for the next issue.*



More Council News...



Update from the Texoma Gathering

We are overjoyed to share with you that our council at Lake Texoma has thirteen grandmothers in her Weaver's Circle. All the twenty-two beds are filled. Anyone led to contact us to come will be placed on our waiting list. The date of our Gathering is June 6 -9, 2009 with the Full Moon on June 7. Our theme centers around "Activation." If you would like to be placed on the waiting list, contact Nonine Anderson at 520-888-1762.

Greetings from the Heartland

Hello Grandmothers! It's been a while since we checked in. We're happy to report that the Heartland Council is thriving and still sitting in circle monthly. We have 14 members now with 12 who are active. Hope lives in northern Wisconsin and keeps in touch via e-mail, and Sr. Virginia Mary, while confined at the Motherhouse, continues to have many visitors. When we tell her news of the Council of Grandmothers her face lights up and she speaks of miracles emanating from her memories of the first circle. Please hold Sr. Virginia Mary in your prayers as she holds all of us in hers.
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Two of our Grandmothers, Mary Ann Reed and Edna Groves, attended the Arizona Gathering in

October and have told us about their experiences. Edna led a legacy writing workshop during the gathering and spoke about participating in the Elder Council; how special it was for her to sit in the company of elder women and share wisdom. Mary Ann told us that being with women elders for an extended time in the beautiful Pocket Sanctuary gave her a much deeper understanding of what the Council of Grandmothers is truly about. Gracie Rogers will attend the 10th Annual Gulf Coast Council Gathering in February.

We will gather at Marti Beddoe's home on December 14th and Mary Ann will be our guide. If you are in the Chicago area on that day or on the second Sunday of any month, please join us in circle. As it has always been, you are warmly welcome.

Contact Gracie at 630-510-8940 or rogersmg@sbcglobal.net

The Gulf Coast Council

of Grandmothers are preparing for their 10th Anniversary Celebration to be held Feb. 7-10th, 2009 at Camp Beckwith in Fairhope, Alabama.

Our theme this year is "Living Our Legacy"...Non-Resistance..Non-Judgement..Non-Attachment. And we urge attendees to read "A New Earth" or "The Power of Now" by Eckhart Tolle before the gathering. We have many wonderful hours filled with interesting ideas in store for you.

We are now totally filled but we are taking stand-by reservations as we usually have a few dropouts. So all is not lost. If you have any questions or want a registration form please call or write Carolyn Garbett, 251-945-1295 or e-mail: msharis98@gmail.com



TURTLE WOMEN RISING

I remember this roasting heat on the Capitol Mall from times here before. It's hot even today, in October. This sun is too glaring, bearing down on the long, exposed and open spaces between edifices to great men. The grass is dry, punctuated by patches of dirt. I have never felt comfortable here, I say to my husband, Gary. The wide corridor is lined with elms, but the shaded green grass beneath them is roped off...unavailable to the public, and to me, a hot grandmother with sore feet.

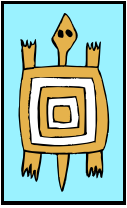
And just where *are* the other Grandmothers? I want to know. The Indigenous Grandmothers. We stepped off a bus and now wander in the heat, with my drum in my shoulder bag, looking for Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers, or at least some of them, that we know are supposed to be here...but where?

We head west, toward the Washington Monument, that tall white obelisk that symbolizes so much of what the culture values. Starkly male, marble, erect and Apollonian, it towers and dwarfs the tiny bunches of folks that wander here, noticing nothing down below itself, caring little for these mortal lives we live as humans on the ground.

The Founding Fathers got some things right, I guess, borrowing much from the Iroquois Confederacy as they did. But western civilization went south with the exclusion of the Feminine from its paradigms, its values and practices. Womanly wisdom has been ignored for a long, long time and without its balancing attributes, the nation has become greedy, arrogant, violent...arid and parched for moisture. Grandmother Lorraine Maffi-Williams, of the Australian Aboriginal people, once said to me: "War is followed by earthquakes, floods, fires, volcanoes, natural disasters. Too much aggressive energy. The world is out of balance." We have suffered long from all these upheavals, and they have reached a crescendo in the last few months. No one feels safe these days.

And yet, it is here, almost at the foot of that white manmade megalith, that we finally come upon teepees and tents in a small circle, offering delicious shade and comfort, and we know we have found the Grandmothers. The drumbeat and the circularity of the space give them away.

We are welcomed into the circle by a gentle, smiling woman who



smudges us, cleansing our energy fields with the smoke of burning sage. Ahhh...so familiar, so comforting is this fragrance from the memories of many ceremonies! We immediately feel at home on this land, at home, now, in our own capitol, at home in a fundamental way with original people. Jyoti is here, a spiritual teacher and grandmother of Cherokee descent and a bridge-builder between cultures. She greets us warmly in her customary white dress. It was Jyoti's vision that led her to organize the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers and her vision, also, to birth the Center for Sacred Studies. Here, too, I find the familiar faces of several dear friends from the same center...Audrey, Janet, and here is Roslyn, with her husband Duncan. Many other women, of a variety of races, circle here as well, in unique and brilliant cultural dress styles, some of them drumming, some shaking turtle rattles.

Eli Painted Crow is an exquisitely sculpted Native grandmother, from the Yaqui Nation and a veteran of the Iraq war. This is the fourth day she has presided over the circle on these grounds, greeting and speaking to those who have come. Eli is poised and gracious as she moves in a long coat, her black hat and fingers ornamented with silver. It is her visions that have gathered these peaceful warriors together, labeling us "Turtle Women Rising," for Turtle Island is a native name for Mother Earth, particularly the Americas. We are

women, a few supportive men, and some vets of both genders, who have had enough of war. Much has been lost, Eli says from her 22 years of experience in the masculine machine of combat, and her dark eyes show the pain of enduring far too much prejudice and violence. Her service is to lead people into a new and peaceful way of relating to each other and walking upon Mother Earth.

In the center of the whole array, under the comfort of canopies, sit the brightly colored, artfully wrinkled, kindly-eyed but powerful Indigenous Grandmothers from many continents, blessing the whole procedure. Together, their lives represent over a thousand years of garnered wisdom and service to humanity. Grandmother Margaret Behan, Red Spider Woman, of Arapaho-Cheyenne lineage, sits to my right, alert and authoritative, her head covered in the flowered red scarf that she often wears. Next to her are the two Lakota Grandmothers, Beatrice and Rita Long-Visitor Holy Dance in silk shirts, sisters who have said that they carry the prayers for their suffering people. Yupik Grandmother Rita Pitka Blumenstein from Alaska literally twinkles when she nods, while Grandmother Mouna Polacca from the Hopi, Havasupai and Tewa traditions sits in a pool of calm elegance. Grandmother Tsering originally from Tibet, is seated humbly in the center. Some of these Grandmothers remain in regal silence, nodding and smiling their assent to the words and songs and prayers of the younger people. Five of the Indigenous

Grandmothers, ones from Central and South America, Asia and Africa are not present, and I am a bit disappointed at this.

But Grandmother Agnes Pilgrim Baker from the Takelma Siltz tribe of Oregon, the eldest, and thus, the leader of the group, stands to speak for them all, and the power of the thirteen is obviously with her. She prays to the Great Spirit and assures her listeners that the Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers' pledge is to keep going where they are called, praying and serving as portals of wisdom and healing until the last one of them is "in the ground." Then she addresses the men. "You guys, you didn't get it right. You gotta' move over and give the women a turn," she admonishes. But her words are not for the men here. She knows, as I know, that the men standing in this circle, like Gary and Duncan, are figuring it out. That they have entered this circle indicates they are peace warriors who are learning to balance their own masculine and feminine energies within themselves.

Now Grandmother Flordemayo, who comes from a small Mayan village on the border of Nicaragua and Honduras, offers a prayer for the transformation of the people...all the people...into a world that is safe and nurturing, and asks for us each to touch and bless the medicine bundle she carries.

As she walks among the gathering, Flordemayo tells us that the spirit Grandmother of the East
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told her these words to pass on to us, “*You have the Knowledge. You have the Power. You have the Protection.*” I take her message deeply into my heart at a time when a preemptive war is still raging in Iraq, the national/global economy is teetering on an abyss, and an election is dividing our country into two vastly different camps. I know these gifts of knowledge, power and protection from the Divine Grandmothers will carry us through the wildfires of these burning, turning times.

Gary and I weren’t here for the first three days of this event, nor had we come early enough for the morning ceremony today around



the fire, in which all the Grandmothers officiated. But, as always, we are here at just the right time for

us. We have been doing our own work for the world, and now find such gratification, pleasure and renewal in this circle of wisdom. The ceremonial fire continues to burn, with prayer bundles from all participants surrounding it. And the fragrance of burning sage persists in consecrating this company.

We pray and sway with the constant drumbeat, reminding us of the living heart of the Mother Earth, to whom we owe our earthly existence. A profoundly touching ceremony for the veterans here takes place, where they each step forward to be honored for the sacrifices they have made for the collective whole of our nation. Then we join in rhythmic songs

and chants for a new America.

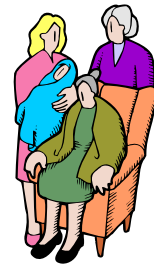
Gary and I, grandparents ourselves, hold the images of our precious little ones in our hearts as we sing for the next seven generations of children to come into this world.

The pulsations of the drums go deep, like thousands of lighted seeds, into Mother Earth, into the ground of this place, ground of this, our land, center of our nation. And the songs of love and hope soar from this circle, swirling on the smoke of the fire to join the overarching Presence of the unseen Grandmothers.

When the earthly Indigenous Grandmothers have been escorted away in taxis, we join the drummers in a few more songs, then Gary and I take our leave of the circle. I look back, smugly, at the Washington Monument, knowing that Feminine power has been reinstated here, power so subtle and unobtrusive, it’s easily overlooked by the big guys who drive by here regularly in escorted limousines. But its time has come, and there will be no stopping it. Balance is required.

Like the slow and steady power of the drumbeat that grows in rhythmic waves, the newly rising Feminine energies will bring down the exclusively masculine walls of Jericho. Hierarchies will be leveled as shaded centers with sparkling pools and communities with green gardens, rounded spaces with sacred fires and inclusive art and architecture replace ivory towers and obelisks. All of humanity...women, men and children...will join, like they did here and did of old, in loving,

respectful circles under the natural, visionary, wise and graceful leadership of Grandmothers.



Lotus Linton, PhD has been facilitating spiritual awakening seminars for over thirty years throughout the United States, in England, Bali, and Australia. She is a minister of sacred studies, a sound healer, a sacred dancer, and a spiritual counselor. Lotus utilizes the sacred arts, stories and symbols of many cultures to elicit and express the Soul’s wisdom and takes small groups on *Singing the Waters Journeys* to the holy springs and waters of several cultures. In her book, *Soul Springs: Seeking Self in the Waters of the World*, Lotus highlights her own pilgrimage to these sacred places and to the wells of her own Soul’s wisdom. She is currently writing a book entitled *The Age of the Grandmothers* where she describes the burgeoning influence of Grandmothers on world transformation.



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by Virginia Hall

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