



GRANDMOTHERS CIRCLE OF NEWS



A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 19: Number 1 Fall

Mystery In The Mirror – Remembering Who We Are

The Full Moon of September will shine her light over the 19th Grandmothers Gathering in the Arizona desert at Kenyon Ranch. Once again we will meet to practice and pass the way of the "Peer Spirit Circle."
May we go deep inside and bring the truth of who we are into the light.

A Rumi Story

When Helen Luke's ninetieth birthday was celebrated on October 15, 1994, the primary tribute to Helen was a reading of Sophocle's "Oedipus at Colonos," a classic tragedy about the death of an aged king, written by the poet when he himself was in his nineties. Moved by the drama and by the occasion, Helen responded by telling a story that she herself had just read, one that spoke eloquently to her about the spiritual needs of our world today.

The story had originally been told to the Sufi poet Rumi by his master Shams-i-Tabriz. Rumi in turn had told the story as a part of his **Discourses**. As Helen in turn told the story:

A caravan of men and camels crossed a desert and reached a place where they expected to find water. Instead they found only a hole going deep into the earth. They lowered bucket after bucket into the hole, but the rope each time came back empty --no bucket and no water. Then they began to lower men into the hole, but the men too disappeared off the end of the rope. Finally a wise man among the party volunteered to go down into the hole in search of water.

When the wise man reached the bottom of the hole, he found himself face to face with a horrible monster. The wise man thought to himself, "I can't hope to escape from this place, but I can at least remain aware of everything I am experiencing."

The monster said to him, "I will let you go if you answer my question."

He answered, "Ask your question."

The monster said,

"Where is the best place to be?"

The wise man thought to himself, "I don't want to hurt his feelings. If I name some



beautiful city, he may think I'm disparaging his hometown. Or maybe this hole is the place he thinks is best." So to the monster he said: "The best place to be is wherever you feel at home -- even if it's a hole in the ground."

The monster said,

"You are so wise that I will not only let you go, but I will also free the foolish men who came down before you ... And I will release the water in this well."

Helen found considerable power in this story, returning to it again and again in conversation during the weeks between her birthday and her death on January 6th, 1995.

We no longer have access to Helen's special perceptiveness and thus will never know all that her extraordinary mind would have revealed about the meanings of Rumi's Story. We do know though, that it spoke to her as **the** story of our time ...

"The true story," she once wrote, "springs out of the archetypal patterns underlying all human life, the perennial battle between good and evil. Even in the simplest and most primitive of traditional fairy stories, it is **human choice** that decides the issue." And in such great tragic stories as those of Shakespeare, "we are swept into the overwhelming terror of archetypal forces as they seize upon human beings and transform them, dragging them either into Hell or, with individual choice, through Hell to Heaven." The key words here are "**individual choice**." In "Rumi's Story," the attraction for Helen seemed to lie first of all, in the individual choices made by the wise-man hero. He chose to go down into the darkness in search of the water of life; even more importantly, he chose to remain aware of what he was experiencing rather than closing his eyes to the terrors of darkness and monstrosity.

Such choices echo Helen's own intense awareness, first of the darkness at the heart of the mystery and of the immense darkness of our own time; and second, of the pressing need for the wise man and woman to seek for the water of life deep in the darkness and to remain open-eyed in the face of the monstrous."

Barbara Adams Mowat

✽Excerpts taken from: "The way of woman: Awakening the Perennial Feminine" By Helen M. Luke

GRANDMOTHER JOURNEYS

I want to honor B. Campbell, our last Weaver of the Newsletter, for the way she always encouraged the expression of the Grandmothers. After talking with many of them, she came to the realization that there are many medicine stories that need to be told and heard. So ... please Grandmothers, send us your submissions to: **Grandmothers Circle of News: Grandmother Journeys**

Our stories exude love, and they can be intoxicating substances for the world of today ... I know people who would just melt into their Grandmother's arms if they could only get in touch with her ... So please join us ... we welcome your artwork, songs, music, videos ... be transcendental, spiritual, serious, funny, mysterious, or just share with us a day in your life ... Please send us your threads of light that we may see your shining splendor in these times of darkness ... There are children and grown-ups waiting to hear the call ... People might believe that we are weak, but we are not! We will do whatever it takes ... This is the Way of the Grandmothers!

JUMP UP AND LIVE!

by Shirley Tassencourt



Grandmother Shirley (3rd from left) and friends at the Equinox Celebration 2011 at the Cochise Stronghold.

In 1976, after the separation; after 27 years of care-taking of the husband, the kids, the animals (all of whom I loved), the guests, the

relatives; washing the clothes and the dishes; matching socks, cooking the food; mending illnesses, hurt feelings and frustrations; going to meetings, and the incessant driving until someone became sixteen years of age ... circle after circle, starting at home in the morning, returning home by day, by night; circles repeating, repeating: Now the way of the householder was over.

The kids were over 20 and into their own lives when I read the "Goodbye, it's been swell" note on the table. The house was empty of love, so why stay? As I walked out the wide open door, I began humming as little sparks of joy came rushing in. I felt like the Greek slave who could leave the gloom of Rome and return to his windswept divine temples. I was no longer beholden to anyone but the One upstairs. I began to giggle. This had possibilities. To myself, "Well Dad, what a way to say goodbye after 27 years; but thanks anyway old pal, old rat." I exuded indignation and gratitude and great excitement.

"Fly Baby, Fly!"

That year I taught art at a private school. They objected to my wearing blue jeans to teach art and pottery. I submitted an article as to how the President of the United States was wearing Levis for anything less than state occasions. Didn't work. I left. "Baby" was flying further. When we divided the bed linens and all, I received the island property with the fourteen-foot cabin and monies from half of the modest suburban house. By becoming a contractor and worker, I turned those monies and the small cabin into a full house. Happily, I had grown up on a street with ten boys, so I knew what not to do with subcontractors. Being an artist, I had a wide latitude in using interesting recycled materials. New tools, new

media ... but, what the heck, another art project!

Two years later, there it stood: 1500 square feet of solar passive houseness ... three stories shingled by yours truly, all tucked into the hillside. What satisfaction, what amazement, what a cosmic joke.

WOMEN OF THE WORLD ... WE CAN DO IT !!!

A dozen years later I had a destiny vision of sitting on the desert floor covered with dirt, dirt as far as I could see. Around the same time I got a message from my Peralandra garden that it was going west -- and that I should come, too. I did. The island land purchased twenty years before had appreciated in value. There was the pension, insurance and all the goodies I'd never acquired just because I'd risked the impossible: building my own house. I had the means to go west.

Here was the wherewithal to go west and become, what? A desert dirt-ball? Wherewithal eventually bought beautiful land in Texas Canyon in Arizona where the great boulders are strewn as if by giants. Women's affinity for the spiritual is perhaps our major gift to society. The fact that we don't incarnate as deeply as men allows us to 'lift off' a bit and be awash in Spirit more easily. The spiritual underpinnings that took me in my western adventure started at a dinner the night before flying to Arizona to give a workshop on "Clay and Spirit." A friend inquired about my attraction to the Southwest.

The words that came were as astonishing to me as to her: "I'm going to inhabit it," I opened my mouth in amazement again. Then I said, "That's all."

The following year 1992, I spent six weeks at a ranch near Benson, Arizona making a fifteen-foot rammed earth sculpture. Chipping away on forty-three tons of earth, I soon became the archetypal dirt ball I'd envisioned.

I fell in love with the part of Arizona called Texas Canyon that sports a big boulder field some hundreds of feet high. In the afternoons I wandered among the giant rocks totally entranced. The boulders make hundreds of first rate natural sculptures. That I would soon live within hugging distance of such fabulous stone monuments was beyond my dreaming.

One morning drumming the Sun up at a Stonehenge type configuration,
I heard chanting.
No one was around.
Wow!

An hour later I met a woman realtor who was looking for sacred land to put it in a "forever trust." "I think you have found it," I said. "I think you are in it. Maybe I heard the chanting so I could tell you." A year later, the real estate woman called me to tell me of land for sale in the Texas Canyon area with rocks and a "presence."

In January of 1993, three elder women: Liz Campbell, Allegra Ahlquist and I were following a realtor around thirty acres of beautiful land, Texas Canyon land, in breathless suspense. We knew we couldn't divide the land and although almost strangers, we became tenants in common by the end of the walk.

As caretakers of the Medicine Circle, we never suspected how ceremony and attunement would open our hearts and our senses to the beautiful Mother Earth and the ever changing paintings of Father Sky.

We dedicated ourselves to work in concert with the beings, visible and invisible, of the land. Turning around, we saw a double rainbow. It stayed an hour ... a true affirmation of our offering. We are honored to be caretakers of this land that truly belongs to the Apache Nation, here at the foot of the Cochise Stronghold.

A month later, Allegra came to the land, having gotten a divination about it from a Mayan Jaguar Priest.

He called the land "Whirling Yellow Sprout" where new life will come. The divination awakened our sensitivities to the use and alignment of the land. One caution was not to hurt, not to fear the rattlesnakes ... but to feed them jade and turquoise and make a shrine in the rocks.

We did this Ceremony the day after the settlement. Coming back to our wilderness property and hidden shrine two days later, we found a tall blue Macaw feather sticking in a tuft of grass in the middle of the shrine. No one else knew of the shrine, which is really in the boonies. We called the Mayan Priest with our message of shock. He said, "The land is telling you that is pleased with what you do." Macaw parrots are not native to Arizona. The macaw parrot plume was the sacred feather of the Mayans.

Spirit has sent five teachers to heal this land here at the foot of the Dragoon Mountains, the battleground of the last century between Cochise's Apaches and the United States Cavalry. Many gifts were sought and brought to the land. A visiting Lumi Shaman burned cedar and offered prayers in my dome shelters. When he finished he said, "I'm happy to meet the old ones." I asked, "You mean the invisible ones?" "Yes, they are pleased with what you are doing ... greeting the sun, prayer, appreciation, Ceremony. They are

telling me they talk to you. But you don't talk back. It bothers them." He began to school me about this.



In the spring the Mayan Jaguar Priest conducted a three-day puberty rite in the ancient Mayan Way here at Whirling Yellow New Life. We all felt the power channeled into the individual from the tribe and the gift of the individual to the group ... the circle of mutual indebtedness. Again the land was blessed as eighty-five guests woke up to something terribly missing in our western culture.

We asked the Spirit of the Land to allow us to work in concert with it and throw away control patterns right and left. Poetess M.C. Richards says, "Everything is love and danger." Well, when we three women moved in risk and mutuality, a fifteen-acre natural Medicine Wheel became evident. Boulders straddled the Four Directions. Four large 'stone people' boulders standing eight to ten feet high scribbled a circle in the center, finishing off a sacred hoop. The Sacred Hoop is now a park, and our shelters are on the back of the fifteen acres. A crystal field of white quartz underlines the wheel as well as our residences.

A year after the land was purchased, I began the first bagged earth dome after attending a one-day workshop with Nadar Kalili. The passionate teaching of architect Kalili was ...

"Take earth from the ground,
Take work from your hands,
Make shelter for
your bodies."

Matriculating at the University of MUD, we learned the art of corbeling domes. Big upside down bowls to live in -- a proper late life shelter for a potter, I'd say. We laid circle upon circle of bags filled with moist dirt and slowly the beautiful curve of the dome happened.

The potter in me came out to help sculpt my new home. I hired a backhoe, three people, and commenced to build an eighteen-foot earth dome. My nineteen-year-old grandson came to help with the first dome, and then became foreman for the second and larger dome. A great joy for Grandmother. We stacked straw bales to make a stair scaffolding to hoist the fifty pound bags. At sixty-eight years of age, I filled bags of dirt but didn't lift them. I cemented, stuccoed and sculpted while the young'uns did the labor.

My destiny vision was correct. I became dirt for the next year. It all felt familiar to me, the potter -- these great upside down bowls to live in. The first dome took three months to finish. Five months later, we finished a larger dome twenty four feet in diameter. The beautiful curves of the dome happened. Corbeling and corbelling, these workers found the stance of the big upside down using the eye of a tennis player and the sensitivities of an accomplished potter. There was such joy in realizing the big forms that looked like the giant boulders rolling around the land.



Dome I has a cupola on top in the loft room spilling out to a 360 degree view for viewing the electric storms, sunsets and the sky moods that transform this ancient land of Cochise and Geronimo. The loft is for writing, and the downstairs is the meditation room and ceremonial space ... and we called it Domosophia.

People ask me if I live alone, and I say "No," adding, "There's Joey the white Samoyed dog." But to myself I say, "There is the "saint" and the "old ones."

Dome II houses the facilities: combination dining room and kitchen with a small bath, and the loft functions as the bedroom and is called Domicile. The first nine feet of walls are doubled, making them forty inches thick. The windows of domes are necessarily arched, the entrances are great vaults.

I live in a great castle, feeling the twelfth century breathing on my neck. These thick walled domes maintain a mean temperature, so that needs for heating and cooling are minimal. A wood stove fire for an hour on cold nights does it. Domes don't collapse in earthquakes, dissolve in floods, burn in fires, blow over in winds, or harbor critters in walls. Cancel insurance!

Domicile II is topped by a seven-foot wide, five-foot high crystal skylight under which I lie watching Orion chase the Pleiades nightly.

What a gift to open up the love life between the night sky and myself after a life time of ceilings. You can see I'm hunkering down for the curious new times. Sunlight reflects off the big crystal pyramid and lamplight shines out at night. Allegra calls the dome shelter a light house.

I say,
"Yes, and I am
waiting for the shoreline to arrive."
My garden has gone west and blooms
profusely six months of the year.

I pinch myself. Is this really true?
Every day is Saturday.
The air is like champagne.
I sleep looking at the stars.

Folks come and
we meditate, we dance, we drum,
we sing, we pray.

I have found my sacred spot.
I inhabit it.
And that is all.
As a child once asked,

"God, how come you give me this?"
Listening to my vision led me here,
so risk wasn't an issue.

Fun in finding form
got those buildings up
plus the over-arching power that
brought those workers here.

"Go for your bliss,"
said Joseph Campbell
and I did.

"Feed yourself on joy,"
said the Buddha
and I do.

"Jump up and live,"
says the Mayan Jaguar Priest.

"What else ... You betcha !!!
I say."



VULTURES ABOVE ME

By Connie Spittler

Distraught over learning of cancer in my left breast, I needed to counter the silent destruction multiplying inside my body.

On that dreary morning, I walked the familiar roads of our neighborhood, in search of surviving remnants that might signal the earth's renewal. I looked for hope in things alive after the blast of a wicked winter: budding trees, chirping birds, scampering squirrels, grasses tinged with green. Nature's regeneration might erase my new, piercing thoughts of death.



Something on the pavement caught my eye, a mouse squashed flat. A dead mouse was not the sign of encouragement I wanted. Above me, the dark outline of a vulture marked my paces as I rambled on to find more echoes of decomposition: clump of bird feathers stuck in the mud, flattened squirrel, and a small, unidentifiable carcass.

Overhead, the buzzard followed, turning with arced grace. Years ago, I assumed these sweeping images were hawks. Soaring high with wings that rarely flapped, these lyrical birds played with thermals, spinning stories in the sky. It surprised me to learn they were the same homely wildfowl hopping on our street, pecking at fresh road kill with cruel, ivory bills tap, tapping on the earth.

The sight of turkey vultures with their
ugly,
bare red faces
made me shudder.

As the vulture circled to land,
ready to swallow
deceased mouse, dead squirrel and
unknown being,
I left for my appointment with
the doctor.

A few weeks later, I had a lumpectomy, my cancer picked out meticulously with sharp scalpel. Before each session of radiation, I walked the same path outside our home and gradually admired the vulture, noting how diligently the bird scoured the road free of decaying matter. Like a surgeon carving out malignant cells, the buzzards cleared the landscape, scooping up every speck of rotting debris.

Vultures appeared to me in other places. In Lincoln, Nebraska, my husband and I visited our daughter Valerie, and tagged along as her dogs took their nightly walk. We wound up on a cul de sac of large residences, surrounded by huge elm and sycamore trees.

Everywhere we looked, shadows of buzzards weighed down bare branches, roosting together in communal throng. Too many to count, the lumpy silhouettes hovered above us in the Gothic moonlight, sending out an eerie message of power over the land.

Another time, I traveled to a funeral for conservationist Mary Diamond, a woman who'd started an annual gathering of like-minded Grandmothers. Several of us met near Tubac, AZ, to discuss her environmental accomplishments and honor her green philosophy.

During the
ash scattering ceremony,
we were startled to see
fourteen vultures fly in quietly
to rest in the mesquites.

I gazed upward,
wondering if the birds had arrived to
escort Mary's special soul to another
straw bale home
in the heavens.

Back home, studying vultures, I learned about their heightened sense of smell that calls them to ground for their carrion diet. In fact, the vulture is the most widely distributed and abundant of all the scavenger birds of prey in this part of the world. The buzzard works continuously at its assigned job, mopping up the earth's death contamination. Its scientific name, *Cathartes Aura*, translates as Purifier Bird. Perfect.

Somehow,
vultures made me realize
how closely earth and humans
are connected in a circle of
life and death, and
how precious our
long shared ecosystem.

After the death of my daughter's friend Jenny, Fae told me, "We do not stay in this world one second longer than is intended." This thought stopped me in my tracks. I heard the seconds ticking away and evaluated my opportunities to accomplish earthly jobs still needing to be done.



Now I walk softly on the earth, following in the footsteps of animals now extinct. I breath in and breath out. I listen to meadowlarks, watch a woodchuck peer from its hole, smile at wildflowers by the pond. Because of this closeness, I care for the sweet, growing things of my habitat, concentrating on the surviving animals and plants that contribute to each moment.

As I measure the invisible string that stitches us together, I understand that while we're here, we have a chance to caretake our earth and its sacred ground. More than a chance.

An obligation. We can be vultures cleaning and clearing the space around us, saving the earth for those who come after. We can band together in groups, one voice changed to many, working on important issues regarding the delicate equilibrium between globe and people. We can honor and support others who have the clout to envision and pass protective legislation.

From different directions,
we come to the realization of
our place in
conserving the land and its inhabitants.
I arrived via vulture.

With my cancer under control, I sense that the earth has healed my spirit. The natural beauty still in existence makes me understand that I have the chance to return the favor, working to sustain and heal the land with all its living things. An expansive sky filled with dark birds circling over a troubled earth taught me this: to embrace my chance.

We're given one earth. With all the negative forces that man has created in the name of progress, it's past time for dreaming about the speed of dwindling chances. Like cancer cells of destruction, a nurturing earth is gradually eaten up. Pollution. Radiation. Oil spills. Waste Production. Green gas emission. Endangered species. The list goes on and the balance sheet reads:

One Earth. One Chance.

I do not despair.

The wings of the vulture
still circle above me, as the ghost of
Emily Dickinson whispers in my ear.

"Hope is the thing with
feathers in its soul."



Drawing by: Walde-Mar de Andrade e Silva

DEAR READERS:

I have always been taken by the power of names. I love when Allegra takes out her book that talks about the significance of many names, and I am always delighted to see how names bring about what they describe.

We have young friends, children especially, who love to hear about the meaning of their names. Recently a five-year-old girl named Serena wanted to know what her name meant, so I said:

"Well ... I would say Serena means
Somebody who is peaceful,
untroubled, tranquil.

Hmm ... cool ... calm and collected!"
She looked at me with her fine clear
eyes and said ...

Actually, Margarita,
I sure DO like to collect things!"

Our next story is by Edna Groves,
founder of 'Words That Endure' a firm
that offers guidance in the writing of
personal life stories and ethical wills.

ENJOY!



EMBRACING MY NAME

By Edna C. Groves

The truth is I never liked my name. Not my first name, not my middle, and not my last. My birth name was Edna Bach Carch. I was given my first name in memory of my mother's deceased sister who died six years before my birth. Jewish tradition holds in naming babies after deceased relatives, never for the living. It was the first conscious legacy I was given.

My middle name was my mother's family name. Her family originated in Lithuania and came here in the early 1880's. She was born in Queens, New York.

My last name was given to my father at Ellis Island when, at sixteen, he came alone from Russia to this country in 1900; later research shows it had been "Karcz."

Names reveal ethnicity, and may reveal evidence of descent from immigrants. My middle and last names were clearly not American names. Of course all of us are descendants of immigrants if we go back far enough. Assimilation was important to most immigrants, especially if they'd emigrated because of persecution. I think my discomfort with those names mirrored my parents' desires to be seen as American. I, too, didn't want to be different.

No other girl on my block in Brooklyn had a name like "Edna." Arlene, Barbara, Helene, Geraldine, Dolores were common and current names at that time. I thought my name was old-fashioned and stodgy; that first "E" could be said with a slight nasal whine, and I hated it. People now frequently say, "Oh, that was my grandmother's name," or "My best friend's great-aunt was named Edna." I have a friend named Agnes. People occasionally call us by each other's names, as though at our age we are interchangeable, not seen for ourselves. I think they think, "Old women are all the same." I make myself unhappy with this thought that I create.

As a toddler I became "Eddie" in my family. I loved being "Eddie." Growing up I was a skinny tomboy; my greatest joys were riding my two-wheeler and playing street games with the neighborhood kids, boys and girls together, and it felt like a name that was free-wheeling, fast-moving and flowing. My parents and my sister sometimes called me "Ed." I liked that too; it felt confidential and intimate.

I married at twenty and, relieved, took my husband's last name. I have a greater appreciation for my heritage now, and regret my early shame over my family name. I

kept my nickname and remained "Eddie" to family and college friends.

I was twenty-one when we became parents. I was a very unformed, young mother. We were in a new city, far from home and supportive family, and far from old friends, too. I heard me introducing myself to new acquaintances as "Edna." I had no idea why. Years later, I understood: I had been trying to put childhood behind me and become responsible for the life of my daughter. Giving up "Eddie" was my attempt to grow myself up and grow into my new role. A change of identity invites a change of name I learned years later, but I had made the shift unconsciously.

Joan Borysenko writes, "Harvest the meaning of life and pass it down to the next generation through stories." I'm a personal historian now, writing life story with and for others, and continuing to write my own. Writing heals me.

A few years ago
I met an Israeli woman
who asked me if I knew what my name
meant in Hebrew,
and what it looked like in Hebrew.
I shook my head no.

Did I want to know?
Amazed and wordless at this possibility,
I nodded yes.

She told me that my name,
"Edna," meant
"light, bearer of light, delicate."
She asked if I knew myself this way.
In a small voice I said, "Yes, I do."
Then she wrote it out for me
in Hebrew.

Gazing through tears at those
mysterious letters in an alphabet that I
do not know but to which
I've forever been connected,
I felt myself looking down the centuries
to the origins of my aunt's name.
And to the legacy of
my own.

DEAR GRANDMOTHERS:

Hello Grandmother Sisters, my name is Margarita Acosta. My partner Joanne Weiner and I have volunteered to become the new Weavers of the Newsletter for the Grandmothers Councils. We would like to thank everyone and especially the committed group of Grandmothers which meets regularly during the year in Tucson to plan and make possible the Arizona Grandmothers Gathering. This planning committee very much encourages and welcomes new members.

We participated in the last couple of planning circles and became aware that Shelley Jurmain, who has been the Weaver for the Arizona Gathering for the last three years and attended to the many challenges which are inherent to these kind of events, is passing the torch to Judith Bobbit, who has volunteered to carry on this endeavor with dignity and solidity. Thank you both for all the work undertaken in our behalf, so that we can gather and share our gifts with each other.

This past summer the Arizona Grandmothers sponsored a "Peer Spirit Circle" training intensive with founders Christina Baldwin and Ann Linea.

THANK YOU GRANDMOTHERS!

Twenty three of us got together at Anna Marie Clock's house for three days and absorbed the most we could from this wonderful workshop that touched our hearts and gave us multiple new insights into this extraordinary model of communication that the Grandmothers have embraced for many years now and that is much needed in our society today. Deep listening and intentional speech. In our next issue we will have a report about this amazing workshop.

In August, Joanne and I went to Phoenix to attend the "Celebration of Life" Memorial of a longtime friend and elder, Gustavo Gutierrez. He was one of the founding Elders of "Peace and Dignity Journeys," an inter-continental Spiritual Run which is a fulfillment of the Prophecy of the Unification of the Eagle (peoples of the North) and the Condor (peoples of the South).

Joanne and I met at the closing Ceremonies of the first Peace and Dignity Run in 1992. Runners came from the South (Tierra del Fuego, Argentina) and from the North (Alaska) to join together at Teotihuacan, the sacred Ceremonial Center of the Aztecs near Mexico City. We (Joanne, a native of North America; and I, a native of South America) met right there at the Temple of Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent. The date was October 12th, 1992.

So it was, that in connection with this Run in 1996, we created a newsletter: "Making Tracks." Gustavo photocopied the first issue year after year because he liked the way his intentions for Peace and Dignity Journeys, were expressed in the newsletter.

Time has gone by and we now live in a sacred sanctuary in the desert of Arizona, called the Cochise Stronghold. We are blessed by having as a neighbor our precious elder, Allegra. Every morning I walk through the forest to her place, and then together we meditate for an hour. Afterwards we do Qi Gong exercises and prepare for the day to come ... we love to "greet the Sun with a great peace arising in our hearts!"

For the past twelve years Joanne and I have been putting out the "Cochise Stronghold Newsletter," which is our way of honoring this place we inhabit, its beauty and its history.

Today, we are very honored to be given the opportunity to bring you the "Grandmothers Circle of News." We like to share information and memories, so we hope you enjoy our approach. Many thanks to B. Campbell, the last Weaver of this newsletter, for her ideas and support as we embark on this journey.

Our main interest at this time is to practice and share the way of the Peer Spirit Circle with our friends, family, and community ... We also would like to inspire young people to feel a love of Nature that will empower them with infinite possibilities for a new world ... a world of peace and illumination. A world of creativity and compassion.

We recently acquired a new computer and still are learning to work with it, so please bear with us. We definitely wanted to have a newsletter ready and are eager to hear your comments. We encourage you to send us your ideas and submissions: art, poetry, stories, narratives, etc.

With Much Love and Honor, Margarita & Joanne

NEWS FROM OTHER GRANDMOTHERS COUNCIL GATHERINGS

Dream Weavers Council of Grandmothers Gathering, 2013

Tucson, AZ

Nonine Anderson

The Gathering will be held next year at Picture Rocks Retreat Center 7101 W. Picture Rocks Road, Tucson AZ Friday, May 24 through Monday, May 27

The Dream Weavers are inviting us once again into their Council to feel the powerful energy that is behind our roles as Grandmothers.

As Sharon McErlane says when referring to the message of the Spirit Grandmothers:

"We give away, we help, offer and hold.

We create a safe container for the family of life.

The family is safe and secure because we are here, because we hold and support all.

This particular quality of the one called Grandmother is something everyone understands ...

Grandmothers promote what is good in life ... we hold all fathers, mothers and children of the family of life. These are our daughters, our sons, our grandchildren!

We desire the highest good for all. This quality of selfless giving is what is now needed on Earth.

This is why the Great Council of Grandmothers has come ... We are an easy form of the Divine for people to access. We are comforting and welcoming; we are a nurturing presence."

May the Dream Weavers continue to restore the balance and bring back the wisdom of the Ancient Ones ... as they weave together the dreams that have remained, linking us with them.

May they continue to call our attention and prompt us to not become distracted.

May they continue to encourage us to see things for what they are as this outer dimension fades away ...

We can all feel the Mystery of the Divine Feminine returning to balance.

Thank you Dream Weavers for inspiring us with your wisdom and perseverance.

Please get your registration form by e-mailing either Elaine Harter at innkacola@yahoo.com or B Campbell at bluechablis@comcast.net and send it with your deposit by or before the deadline of March 15, 2013. Discounted early bird registration, as well as an option of paying in installments, are available.

Thanks to the monies received from the Silent Auction at their 2012 Gathering, the Dream Weavers have been able to keep their price affordable for Grandmothers who want to participate.

If you have questions, please call Nonine Anderson at 520-888-1762.

We will have more information about **The Aurora Borealis Grandmothers' Gathering** near Minneapolis, MN. on our next issue.



Gathering for Gitchigaaming (Lake Superior) Madeline Island, LaPointe, WI *Lorraine Norrgard*

Last year we had the blessing to be able to attend this Gathering of Grandmothers on the shores of Lake Superior. What a beautiful celebration of life in thankfulness ... As the days went on, we went deeper and deeper into our appreciation of Water and understood that Water is a living being with whom we can communicate. We sent feelings of love and thankfulness and received calmness, deep peacefulness, and a desire to listen in quietude ... we met amazing women, native and non-native who have dedicated their lives to the protection of the waters.

We were aware that a big part of ourselves is water ... our planet is mostly water ... water quenches our thirst and cleanses our bodies, we can't live very long without it ...

This year we couldn't attend the Gathering but received a note from Lorraine Norrgard, saying that the island Gathering had been "marvelous, pure love and beauty ... amazing". I can't wait to hear her report ... read it on our next issue!

The Gulf Coast Gathering of 2012 was as deep as their theme: "The Tree of Life: As Above ... So Below"

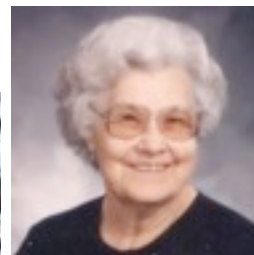
Thanks to Penny Baker for the pictures of the Tree of Life and the Grandmothers

The Gulf Coast Council of Grandmothers will hold their 14th annual Gathering February 14th thru 17th, 2013
(early arrival on the 13th)

They will be moving back to Camp Beckwith, Mobile, Alabama

For more information please contact: Carolyn Garbett, phone: 251-945-1295 or e-mail: msparis98@gmail.com

Also ... We would like to offer condolences to Penny Baker and her family for the loss of her mother Freida Spaeth, who died August 28th 2012. Penny had the privilege of being at her side when she transitioned. Freida was 91 on March 16th and had come to the Grandmothers Gatherings. Penny says: "May God go with us as we celebrate her life. She was a very spiritual woman. Mother was indeed a beautiful, wise, loving, talented woman leaving a long legacy and will be missed by all whose lives she touched. To know her was to love her and admire her strength and wisdom. I'm celebrating her life and accomplishments. She gave me the gift of life, and I will continue to try to be the woman she saw in me. I am grateful for all the lessons she taught/showed me with all the love that poured from her heart."



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The Mayan Calendar readings for the Arizona Grandmothers Gathering 2012 are very auspicious:

First day: Balance Intuition with Equality

Second day: Inspire Awareness with Attunement

3rd day: Model Instinct with Integrity

4th Day: Realize Opportunity with intention ... and ... We will be Guided by the Power of Spirit !

IN LAC'KECH : I AM ANOTHER YOURSELF

WHAT'S THE POINT?

"Is it to accumulate wealth? If you were to ask 10,000 people if their main goal is to accumulate wealth and material possessions, the overwhelming majority would say, **No**. But if the answer to this question were to be based not on their words, but on how they spend most of their waking hours, the answer would be a resounding, **Yes**.

What if the point of life has nothing to do with the creation of an ever expanding region of control? What if the point is not to keep at bay all those people, beings, objects, and emotions that we so needlessly fear? What if the point instead is to let go of that control? What if the point of life, the primary reason for existence, is to lie naked with your lover

in a shady grove of trees? What if the point is to taste each other's sweat and feel the delicate pressure of a finger on chest, thigh on thigh, lip on cheek? What if the point is to stop, then, in your slow movements together, and listen to birdsong, to watch dragonflies hover, to look at your lover's face, then up at the underside of leaves moving together in the breeze?

What if the point is to invite these others into your movement, to bring trees, wind, grass, dragonflies into your family and in so doing abandon any attempt to control them?

What if the point all along has been to get along, to relate and experience things on their own terms?

What if the point is to feel joy when joyous, love when loving, anger when angry, thoughtful when full of thought? What if the point from the beginning has been to simply ... **Be?**"

Excerpt from
A Language Older Than Words
By Derrick Jensen



Margarita Acosta
Joanne Weiner
P.O. Box 808
Pearce, AZ 85625
cochisestronghold@gmail.com

