



Newsletter, June 21, 2009

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Coming Womenspirit Events:

Fall 2009 - October 14-18, 2009

Spring 2010 - May 12-16, 2010

Fall 2010 - October 13-17, 2010

Mark your Calendars now...More information coming...Look for it on the U.U. Womenspirit web site

Alice Carnes

www.uuwomenspirit.org

Fall Planning Committee Members

Event Coordinator: Edie White
Worship Coordinator: Lisa Abel
Workshops & Scribe: Chelsea Loves
Sales, Activities, Tee shirts/totes: Rain Pope

From Edie White

Call for Track/Workshop Proposals

Sisters, have something you want to share? We are a receptive group. We want your track and workshop proposals. Go to uuwomenspirit.org and complete the proposal form and send to me via email or snail mail. You say you did a proposal once and never heard any more about it? Well, try again. We want to keep a file of proposals so that we have a bank of proposals available. If you made a previous submission, it may have gotten mislaid. We try to have varied tracks and workshops so please offer your gifts. Got a question? Contact me. Just click on Volunteer Coordinator at www.womenspirit.org or contact me at Jean@harmoniousbalance.com.

Thanks. Jean E. Hansgen, Volunteer Coordinator, CoCo

Womenspirit Membership Meeting – May 15, 2009

By Claire Crutchley, Coordinating Council Membership Chair and Registrar

<p>Coco = Coordinating Council: 6 women affirmed by the membership of WS EC = Event Coordinator: She coordinates and oversees the Planning Committee for an event PC = Planning Committee: women who create the event, determining the theme, worship, tracks, workshops and activities.</p>

Coco members, Alice Carnes, Beth Flanagan and Claire Crutchley presided over the event and presented the wonderful gifts donated by the vendors.

Coco Treasurer Beth Flanagan presented the Treasurers' report. She reported we have a balance of approximately \$15,000 in our operating fund and \$20,000 in a 5-month cd. Womenspirit needs a healthy balance so we can continue even if an event needs to be cancelled. Beth estimated the Spring event will approximately break even, as did the Fall 2008 Event. Even though numbers are low, the Mountain has switched us to a covenant so we are not required to guarantee the number of women coming to Womenspirit. This does mean we may have to share the Mountain at the event. Beth also reported we awarded three scholarships to the Spring Event. Women have been generous in donating to the scholarship fund and donating Silent Auction items; the proceeds from the silent auction go to fund scholarships at the next event.

Coco registrar Claire Crutchley presented the membership report and numbers for the current event. There are currently 121 Womenspirit members, with four new members at this event. The attendance at the Spring event was a total of 71 women, 31 at the Institute and 69 at the Gathering.

New coco members were affirmed by the membership. Jean Hansgen as Volunteer Coordinator and Margaret Schmidt as Scribe.

The Spring 2009 PC was recognized and introduced by Event Coordinator, Donna Larkin. The membership recognized the wonderful work on the event. Fall 2009 EC, Edie White, was introduced.

Jean Hansgen, new volunteer coordinator, asked for volunteers and women interested in finding out about being on a PC or presenting a workshop or track to talk to her.

It was a fun meeting with lots of gifts distributed although some of us were soggy from the rain showers right before the meeting!

Free Flowing Institute

The Coco has decided to try something innovative and creative for this fall 2009 Womenspirit Institute. Many times over the years women have talked about coming up to The Mountain before the actual event starts for personal free time and/or opportunities to explore Highlands and Cashiers.

This is the first time ever offered at Womenspirit -- **Free Flowing Institute**. The planning committee is not scheduling tracts but instead promoting an opportunity to create your own **Free Flowing Institute**. Without a formal schedule there will be an opportunity for rest and relaxation in addition to crafting and shared experiences either on or off The Mountain.

This fall 2009, October 14th & 15th women can plan on relaxing at The Mountain on Wednesday and Thursday or just Thursday. The rate per night is \$75.00. And of course this great rate includes your 3 meals per day. On the day that you arrive this includes dinner.

A singing in the round worship service will occur on Wednesday night after the evening meal. Women are encouraged to bring the words to songs and musical instruments to bring us lovingly into our fall **Free Flowing Institute** space. An informal worship service will occur on Thursday night after the evening meal. Both of these worship services are being coordinated by MJ Lieberman.

So imagine coming to The Mountain for rest and relaxation. Or for your choice of other activities like hiking, bird watching, meditating, crafting --crocheting, knitting, scrap booking, beading, you name it.

Activities off The Mountain will include a short drive to the gorgeous meadow labyrinth in Otto, North Carolina. Here's the Otto Labyrinth web site for more information.

www.mountainvalleycenter.com/labyrinth/htm

Do you want to shop in Highlands or Cashiers and explore the wide variety of stores and crafts? Here's the site for a great magazine publicizing what Highlands and Cashiers has to offer including current monthly events.

www.themountainlaurel.com

For additional information about this article and fall 2009's **Free Flowing Institute**, and the worship services please contact Alice Carnes (formerly Hugi) at:

alice.carnes51@yahoo.com

Crones' Counsel - Celebrating Wise Women -October 21-25 - Atlanta, GA

From Betty Brown

Calling women 50+ to join with over 100 women from the West for this 17th gathering of crones to celebrate life and aging.

What can I tell you that will make you jump and say, “*I gotta go to Atlanta. I won’t miss this Gathering!” *Well, I could tell you about the :

Opening and Closing Sessions you won’t want to miss rich with dance, song, ceremony and group journeying (come early Wednesday and leave after lunch on Sunday)...or

A Friday Outing of a Special Family-Style meal after touring Antebellum homes in our town of Roswell (all prepaid)...or

A special mediation room designed by Heather Crame that portrays a sacred journey through the cycles of life – from dreams and visions to wisdom and enlightenment - with the elements, seasons, directions and moons depicted in paintings of 13 marvelous women...or

A Reader’s Theater called “She Rises Through The Sickle Moon” written by Martha Adams honoring women of action throughout history....or

Wonderful workshops with everything from “Detox Your Body” to “Mayan Record keeping” to “Inner Soul Integration with Collage to “Spiral Dance of the Sun and Moon to “Planning and Doing a Croning Ceremony” and, much, much more....or

Storytelling, Crone Circles, Honoring the Elders (80+) Ceremony, Artisan Marketplace, Drumming and Dancing, No-Talent Show, singing, exercise, food, fine weather, the 227-Acre Retreat Center, fall leaves, rocking chairs, a labyrinth, a flowing river, easy access everywhere, sites in and around Atlanta to visit before and after the Gathering, a chance to give to Outreach, have your picture taken and put in the 2010 calendar, attend a Town Meeting and express your views, ride a bus in Atlanta traffic, journey spiraling in and out, or to transform yourself yet again.

Yes, I could tell you all those things but will that really make you jump out of your seat, fill out that application, and say, /“I gotta go to Atlanta,/ I’m/ not miss this gathering!”?/ I think not. I think what makes us all do special things for others and ourselves is expressed with one simple word – LOVE.

You and I both won't miss this gathering because we want to spend special time with wonderful, peer and older, women feeling connected and juicy. We want to talk with and be listened to by those who value who we are. We want to feel important and never marginalized. We want to experience life fully, age consciously and share our mutual energy force. If all this isn't an expression of LOVE and the reason why you come to Atlanta – to continue your journey – then mere tantalizing tidbits will fall short. So, we'd LOVE to have you come - and - /strike up the chorus,/ “We'll Have a Real Good Time, Yes Mam.....We'll Have a Real Good ‘Loving’ Time!” betty brown www.cronescounsel.org.

This retreat may be of interest to WS members. Please tell participants that I am thinking of going. Blessings, Toni



Jean Shinoda Bolen, M.D.

**Autumn Equinox Women's Retreat
September 19-25, 2009
Your One Wild and Precious Life
A Deepening Gathering for Women
Feathered Pipe Ranch, Montana**

"Doesn't everything die at last and too soon?"

Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

-----Mary Oliver, The Summer Day

Dear Friends:

Come join me and Chalise Brooke Medicine Eagle at the Feathered Pipe Ranch in Montana, for Your One Wild and Precious Life: A Deepening Gathering





for Women.

Come to meet Hecate, the goddess-archetype at the threshold of transitions: Goddess of the Crossroads, midwife, witness, and personification of intuitive and psychic wisdom. She is the third, crone aspect of the great goddess, associated with the waning moon, autumn and the third phase of women's lives. Humanity is at a Hecate crossroad and women's consciousness and choice as crucial/. Chalise Brooke brings us the Indigenous wisdom of the Grandmothers, of White Buffalo Woman and the

ancient prophecies as they relate to this time of change and challenge on Mother Earth. Through Brooke's stories, shamanic journeys chants and dances, we can learn what has been forgotten or suppressed by western patriarchies and held in the consciousness of indigenous peoples.

Midweek, we'll descend into a shamanic cave which may have been a prehistoric initiatory chamber or a place to communicate with the spirit world. The winding path down feels labyrinthine. When inner work precedes this, it becomes an enactment of symbolic journey to the center, into the womb of mother earth, to the underworld, down to our own depths--and back, changed, transformed, or with something of value. Wherever we are--in circles, in the cave, in the sweat lodge (which is optional), the intention is provide a place for learning, truth, laughter, kindness, and wisdom. With a shift in consciousness, we become aware of synchronicities and come into communion with the larger life around us.

Warm best wishes & many blessings,
Jean

For Bios and Registration information about the workshop and the Feathered Pipe Ranch: www.featheredpipe.com/workshops/jean_shinoda_bolen.php

Kim Schleicher kim@featheredpipe.com Tel: 406-442-8196

Chalise Brooke Medicine Eagle <http://www.medicineeagle.com>

Please visit my website jeanbolen.com for more information.

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womenspirit



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Section 2. Poetry, Prose and Pictures

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 - Sacred Play: Creating Justice for Women
 - Reclaiming ME!
 - Lilith
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The Church Ladies

by Donna Coffey

The church ladies are coming to save me.
Their faces are whiskered like kittens.
Their loins are girdled, their breasts bridled.
With cloaks and staves, they circle my home.

I am not in that house at all.
I walk Stamp Creek. I eat
ferns with my eyes. Memorize
how leaves palm light and hold it,
send down dark where the creek pools
deep enough to swim. I step in.
Savage am I, godless in green bliss.

Lost am I, churched in laughter.
Hands stained with fern from where I lay.
Angel-spread, embedded. I do not pray.

The church ladies are trussed to carry
heavy loads. Mouths pursed around
their pickled tongues, the pink
they hide with vigilant teeth. Their heads
are bobbling, side to side. Their eyes
are stoned like sphinxes, buffed
with sand their stone boots trod.

Hoods on their heads, a cross that burns,
they gather, a coven grim with glee,
a hanging mob with spoons and brooms.
They fall to their knees and circle me
like Muslims at Mecca. Their pilgrim knees
are pocked with pebbles. Their legs are fat
and wrapped, white and uncaressed.

The Jordan is no bigger than Stamp Creek.
I've thrown a stone across the both of them.
My mother's bones for a green kingdom.
Water taught me nothing can be kept.
When the bed went dry, I wept.
Rain returned and I unlearned fear.
Water, like blood and dogs, finds its way
home. This is the shore of rejoining.

Come, ladies. We will practice immersion.
I will unbind you like a broken foot.
Enter the brown water, sink to silky mud.
Rest there, for the first time rest.
In slow time hold your breath and watch
fish dart between stones. Almost decide
to stay. Then dig your toes in, rise and shout,
flapping your arms like water birds'
great gangly wings, stained swans and
clumsy angels taking to the sky.

Sacred Play: Creating Justice for Women

by Jean E. and Edith WhiteCain

After Spiraling into The Center and claiming our Power, now is the time for UUWomenSpirit members to embrace Sacred Play, step out into the world and empower women of all walks of life as they in turn enrich and empower us! We know "She Changes Everything She Touches and Everything She Touches Changes."

How do we go about sharing that with the larger community?
To paraphrase Arlo Guthrie, "If one person a day, just one person a day, walks in and says, 'She Changes Everything She Touches, Everything She Touches Changes' and walks out. You know, if one person, just one person does it they may think (s)he's really sick .

..
(If) three people do it, three, can you imagine, three people walking in singing a bar of 'She Changes Everything She Touches' and walking out? They may think it's an organization. And can you, can you imagine fifty (Women) a day, I said
fifty . . . a day walking in singing a bar of 'She Changes Everything She Touches' and walking out. . . . friends, they may think it's a movement!

Lilith by Carole Dixon

When I came to realize that conventional religion was no longer the path I could follow I turned to the Ancient Ways of the Goddess. I immersed myself in study choosing the Solitary path, a Kitchen Witch studying herbs and their healing ways, not straying too much from the dutiful life of a good Southern wife and mother.

However, there has always been a rebellious streak in me and not having a typical testosterone-bloated Southern father (he was after all a Methodist preacher in his younger years) I did not embrace the notion of male supremacy. As much as I love men, it was a struggle to be my true self with the men in my life. Often the male involved thought I was way too sweet and nice to ever cause any problem and was aghast when my "evil twin" appeared. Sometimes having witnessed the evil twin first, the male involved became intrigued and a power struggle erupted.



Other times, I was immediately proclaimed a BITCH as I would not bend to the masculine will.

Enter Lilith....in my former conventional life I took a four-year course given by the Episcopal Church, Education for Ministry, which included an intensive study of how the Bible came to be. Ironically, this course gave me the information I needed to find my true Path. During this study I found so many references to how the Christian Church could not stamp out Pagan worship, so it chose to incorporate many of the customs, rites, etc., in order to bring the masses to their knees. And here I learned of Lilith, some say the **original** original woman.

Lilith's sin was that she would not submit to the man, especially during sex. She preferred being “on top.” If Adam personifies our proper behavior within society, Eve is the part of ourselves that we show to society, then it follows that Lilith is our natural, passionate, most animal self. Somebody has to be blamed for the evil that exists. Lilith is our Shadow Self, defiant, uncivilized, sexual, everything our society frowns upon. And I embraced her. I was so tired of being the good little Preacher's kid and all that had come to mean as an adult.

I can look back over my childhood, teen-age years and see how Lilith was there, pushing me a bit, teasing, waiting until I would claim her as my own. When I got much older, I welcomed her while still holding on to Eve when dealing with society. As I grow older still, Eve is taking a back seat while Lilith holds the reins.

Holding Lilith with a tight rein has resulted in our personal demons – neurosis, distasteful behavior, imbalances that can lead to our destruction. The results are all around us, right-wing extremists, televangelists, public officials being “outed” for some indiscretion or another. The harder we try to suppress our dark side the stronger it becomes until it breaks out and reeks havoc. Lilith's demon spawn.

What speaks to me of Lilith is that we need to embrace her freedom, her ability to be “on top,” to be an equal, her realness, her power. She is the Mother of the Night, the hidden mysteries that society prefers us not to know. We need to become more individualistic, rebellious without harm, embracing our dark side in a healing and wholeness of what is.

From Goddess Oracle by Amy Sophia Marashinsky: “ I say what I mean and I mean what I say. I dance the dark and the light, the conscious and unconscious, the sane and the insane, and I speak from myself authentically with total conviction without regard for how I might look. I never make excuses. I feel my feelings deeply and profoundly, I never hide. I am female, I am sexual, I am POWER, I am greatly feared. All the parts of myself flow into the whole; all my divergent selves unite as one. I listen to what needs to be heard.”

Reclaiming ME!

When I first arrived at UUWomenSpirit, you came to know me as Janie Cain. I even helped you remember it with, "It rhymes, Jane Cain!" For more than a decade, you've stood by me through so much. Yet, with your help, step by step, I've continued to break the unhealthy patterns in my life. Symbolic of the process of Reclaiming myself, I've reverted to my birth name, Edith White. I'd love for you to call me "Edie," it means "beautiful."

My love offering to you is the chant which came to me while I was on a different Carolina mountainside on VisionQuest in 2007 (thank you, Spider & Pele!). When we meet face to face, I will gladly sing it to you. The last two lines were added during the last turn of the wheel:

Grandmother comes she calls to me,
Come forth, be whole be healed.
Grandfather comes and calls to me
Come forth, be whole be healed.

I stand before you and I say,
I'm here, I'm whole. I'm healed.

In the Spirit of Life and Love,
Edie



Nothing Is As Constant As Change

by Kate Stockman

Greetings, Sisters! It's been a while since I have been in touch with the Womenspirit circle, and I've finally had time to come up for air... and what sweet air it is! I have had lots of changes in the past few months, and I wanted to share some of these with you.

For the past six years, I was the Executive Director of the Dispute Settlement Center in Henderson County (NC). However, on January 29 I was laid off from that position. It was the third position in six months that the Executive Committee decided to eliminate at the Center because of their fears of the economy and the consequent adverse effect on funding. That first night, I was deeply concerned about how I was going to support our family; the next morning, I woke up thankful that I didn't have to go in to work! While I loved the peace-building work we did at the Center, for the past 6 months my work had become all about money and was very stressful. So I felt relief not to have to be dealing with that kind of pressure day-in and day-out. I also had a deep sense that all would be well.

Additionally, last June I spent 2 weeks in southern England visiting sacred sites with a group of 6 other women. (I drove a 12-passenger van for 1,500 miles on the *other* side of the road without a scratch, dent, scrape, or parking ticket! I am so proud of myself!) We visited sites from the prehistoric past (Stonehenge, built 5,000 years ago; and the Shell Grotto, an underground temple created by an unknown culture around the same time) to the ancient past (the Chalice Well in Glastonbury and the hot spring of Minerva Sulis in Bath) to the recent past (Salisbury Cathedral, built in the 1300s) to the present and future (crop circles in Wiltshire county). It was humbling and inspiring to see that no matter what the age, the best skills and materials humankind had was used to honor Spirit (well, the crop circles are different; they are not created by humans...).

Ever since I returned from this pilgrimage, I felt an internal conflict between work and art. The journey has deeply affected my work, and it was so frustrating that I didn't have time or energy to create art after getting home from work. So being laid off was Spirit's way of kicking me out of the nest to let me discover my wings.



And what a flight this has been! For me, creativity is a connection to Spirit, and I have dived into my art and have been co-creating wonderful work. It is exciting and an addiction to the timelessness that comes with participating in the process and the flow. I have renamed my business **The Creative Flow** through which I offer handmade one-of-a-kind jewelry, books and journals, and fiberwork as well as teaching and facilitation. My “playshops” (we’re not working, so why call them *workshops*?) are

take-offs on many of the tracks and workshops I offered while active in Womenspirit. I have created a series of playshops entitled “Exploring Your Creativity” which encourages folks to “Dive in! The water’s fine!”

Further, two books I created were accepted into the juried exhibit “Inside/Outside Book Arts” at the Foundry Arts Center in St. Charles, MO. And my jewelry has been well received by folks at various shows I’ve participated in locally. Most exciting, The Grand Bohemian Hotel, a new luxury hotel in Asheville at the entrance to the Biltmore Estates, has accepted my jewelry to sell in their gallery. There is a possibility that my work may be sold in the hotel’s galleries throughout the United States (12 of them!).

Spirit has certainly guided me to continue believing in my artwork by opening the doors in this direction. I am waking up from sleep with designs and ideas in my head. I am so thankful for all these blessings! What gifts!

If you’d like, please check out my blog *Wanderings of a Wondering Mind* at <http://kate-stockman.blogspot.com/> and my Facebook account (let’s be friends!); there are more details and developments there. Also, some of my work can be found in my etsy shop at www.mountainmosaics.etsy.com.

I hope to see you all soon. Blessed Be!

A Simple Summer Solstice Ceremony

By Mama Donna Henes, Urban Shaman

The Summer Solstice is the longest day of the year. How long is that? The only way to really understand how long it is, is to experience it. Rise with the sun and stay in its presence until it sets.

Do what the sun does: Declare your finest intention at first light and follow it as it rises with the day. Express the fullness of your own inner illumination, your high noon zenith. Shine light and warmth into the evening. Set after a long day with the satisfaction of the glorious lightness of being.

- Get up at dawn.
- Watch the sun rise.
- Greet it.
- Bless it.
- Put a circular mirror outside in a sunny place.
- Fill a glass container with cold water and several tea bags — black, green, or herbal — and place it on top of the mirror.
- Go about your business for the day.
- The mirror reflects the longest, strongest sun of the year.
- The tea steeps in it until dusk.
- Watch the sun set.
- Drink the tea.
- Look into the solar-powered mirror.
- Bless your self with the warmth and energy of the sun.
- Bless the world with your warmth and energy.

Mama Donna Henes is a renowned urban shaman, eco-ceremonialist, ritual expert, spiritual counselor, award-winning author, popular speaker and workshop leader.

cityshaman@aol.com
www.donnahenes.net

Windows

by Ellen Shelton

Remember summer with windows open,
the midday furnace just beyond the screen
and the electric hum
of a fan blowing air across the room and back,
gently flapping papers on the coffee table,
sweeping over you and back,
steady and predictable but never cool enough?

Then, in the afternoon,
when the light outside grew suddenly dark,
and the curtains puffed and flapped
before a rush of wind
as fat drops of rain
swept like shot across the porch
and splattered through the screen?

How you rushed to slam the window shut
and wipe up the wet,
cooled for just a moment
by the wind and rain
you were closing out!