A Tribute to Ann Emerson  
by her daughter Lynn Emerson

Ann Emerson was born Minnie Annetta Elliott on May 31, 1914, in Cambridge, Illinois. Because she was unmercifully teased, she later changed her name to just “Ann” as soon as she came of age. Below is baby Ann with her mother.

Her mother, Bertha Davis Elliott, was a homemaker and her father, George Elliott, was a farmer, machinist and lumber-mill owner. Both were school teachers when they met.

Mother was accepted to the University of Chicago on a scholarship and worked as a personnel director to fund Crones Counsel XVII: Ann Emerson—Most Honored Elder, age 95.

After graduating from high school, Ann’s sister, Robin, asked her to join her in an adventure in California where Robin had a job sky dancing. One girl would climb to a platform at the top of a pole where she would sit for a couple of days as a stunt. All food and waste would be hoisted or downloaded by a bucket. At night the platform was surrounded by a canvas.

Mother began writing, especially poetry, at a very young age which culminated in her desktop publishing of an anthology (90 years of her poetry) as well as her life story. Her website is under construction and we are hoping to have it updated in the not-too-distant future. Here is a link:

whub49.webhostinghub.com/~annspl5/Ann's_Place/Welcome.html
her studies. One night a graduate student from Toronto, Norman Emerson, who was funding his studies as a janitor, swept out her office and swept her off her feet. They were married January 16, 1942.

Mother raised three children while father taught archaeology and anthropology at the University of Toronto. Father moved the family out to a privately owned lake where we had 60 acres of lake and 600 acres around the lake to play and roam. The lake in the background, the house and ruins in the foreground date from the time when Bond Lake was a park and radio cars came up to the lake bringing picnickers from Toronto. Our house had been the electrical sub-station.

Through the years Mother had an insatiable curiosity and desire to search for truth. She made in-depth studies of world religions including how the Bible came into being, ancient civilizations, metaphysics, archaeology and unorthodox archaeology, the life and work of Edgar Cayce. She wrote innumerable stories the more she learned. Before she returned to the U.S. from Canada she had a library of some 4,000 books.

Mother was a gardener, always creating rock gardens, flower gardens and vegetable gardens. In many cases, she would have to bring in soil and break up the rocky terrain. She taught us how to swim when we were approximately age 3, and over the years I learned that she taught many of our friends to swim. The rule was: before you can take out a boat (rowboat, canoe, sailboat), you had to be able to swim the lake. So Saturdays were often spent with her in the rowboat with a trail of swimmers beside her headed for the Clay Banks at the end of the lake.

Mother loved to refurbish antiques and would search the countryside for dilapidated barns for old, long-left treasures. She knit, sewed, used natural dyes to dye wool which she would card and spin into yarns of all colours.

When Father died in 1978, Mother settled his affairs, loaded up their truck camper, and drove 12,000 miles (alone) around the United States visiting, and having many adventures along the way. She made a second trip and also a trip to South America and Hawaii. She attended a Psycho-Spiritual Integration workshop at Esalen in California and called to tell me she was in the hot tub nude with other participants!

In the late 1980s, Mother bought her first house ever and lost it due to a downturn in the real estate market. Her brother Bob gave her a plane ticket to fly to Washington state where he and his family lived. During that trip, Mother rented her little cliff hanger overlooking Similk Bay, even though she could not
Starting a New Chapter at 70

by Marsha Scarbrough

My mother died at 70. After I turned 69, I realized that I was going to be blessed with more years on earth than she had, and I wanted to honor that by making them the exciting adventure that she never got to have.

At that time, I’d been living in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for ten years. Although I love Santa Fe, I’d grown tired of the cold winters. For four years, I’d been traveling three of the coldest months to warmer climes. I’d always wanted to live in another country. In the back of my mind, I was looking for a new home. During the summers, I’d been teaching English to speakers of other languages who were faculty and staff at universities in Central and South America and Spain. My winter trips included visits to former students who had become friends. In 2016, I visited Spain for the first time and stayed with a former student, who is a Fine Arts professor and performance artist in Madrid. I loved the city, the weather, the food, the wine, the music. On my own, I visited Seville, Cordova, Granada, Barcelona, and Toledo. I fell in love with Espana.

In Betty Brown’s book, There and Back ..., I read about how she volunteered at an English Immersion program near Salamanca in exchange for a week of free room and board at a resort. I asked her about it at Crones Counsel, and she gave me the contact information. For one of my six weeks in Spain in 2016, I volunteered at Pueblo Ingles in the charming medieval village of La Alberca. I loved the experience of one-on-one conversation practice with educated, professional Spaniards, and some of them became close friends. By the time I got back to Madrid, I realized that I had a dozen friends there. By the time I got back to Santa Fe, I decided to start looking into what it would take to move to Spain.

The primary requirement for Spanish residency on a retirement visa is being able to document an annual income of 25,560 euros. I just squeezed by that and then pressed on to get an FBI report, private Spanish health insurance, a letter from my doctor saying I had no infectious diseases, and other bureaucratic requirements. It took a year to get all the paperwork together, and when I would hit a Catch 22, I’d write my new Spanish friends, who always came up with a creative solution. Since I lived in New Mexico, I was required to apply at the Spanish Consulate in Houston, so the application process included three trips to that Texas metropolis.

My visa was approved the week of my 70th birthday, which was also the week of Trump’s inauguration. I felt huge relief at not having to live under that impending dark regime in my own country. I happened to be in Los Angeles at the time. One of my friends there went to a charity event where she was introduced to a man who said he was from Madrid. She said, “That’s interesting. My friend is moving to Madrid.” He said, “I’m a correspondent for the Madrid daily newspaper, El Mundo. We want to interview Americans who are leaving the country because of Trump, but we can’t find any.” My friend put him in touch with me. He interviewed me in his car, as he drove me to the airport to catch my flight to Houston to pick up my visa.

The story ran before I even arrived in Spain. It was picked up by newspapers in Argentina, Columbia, Chile, and then by newspapers in Spain.
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and Puerto Rico. I was deluged with new Spanish-speaking Facebook friends. People offered to let me stay in their homes, give me free Spanish lessons, meet them for coffee or wine. By the time I got to Madrid in March 2017, I was a media celebrity. I’d been dubbed “La Primera Exiliada” by El Mundo (The First Exile). I was interviewed by local television and radio shows. Features about me for CNN en Espanol and Univision brought me attention throughout the Spanish-speaking world. The fact that I was 70 and alone captured everyone’s imagination. People stopped me on the street to congratulate me on my courage, and they still do. This April, El Mundo ran a follow-up story about my life after one year in Spain. The version on their website included a short video starring me as the brave, dancing, roaming crone that I am!

Crone sisters, I’m having a blast!

I rent a small studio apartment in the Madrid neighborhood of Chamberi. It’s near a big university, so my neighbors are students, professors, families and elders but no tourists. I’m surrounded by markets, cafes, produce shops, butchers, bookstores and friendly bars. I am between four metro lines, and public transportation is convenient, fast, and inexpensive. For less than $15 a month, as a senior resident, I get unlimited metro and bus rides. Along with my twice-weekly Zumba classes, walking to the bus or metro stop gives me the perfect amount of exercise. My private health insurance costs about the same as Medicare with Medigap and Plan D, but it covers everything including lab work and basic dental. I pay for my thyroid medication, but it costs 85% less than it costs in the U.S. even with Plan D.

I have so many friends! Most of them are Spanish and much younger than me. They range from 27 to 57. Luckily, many of them either speak English or are trying to learn, so when my basic Spanish fails me, we can still communicate. They include artists, teachers, journalists, scientists, filmmakers, actors, yoga instructors, dancers, a chef and a Japanese circus performer. Evening socializing in cafes over wine, beer and tapas is almost a daily ritual. Wine and food are important, but conversation is more so. We talk about life and love, art and politics, travel, movies and books. We eat, drink and dance.

I’ve never been a morning person, so the Spanish schedule suits me fine. Because the weather is hot many months of the year, a
A lot of life happens at night. Lunch is at 2, dinner is at 9, conversation continues long after that. Dance clubs open at midnight and close at 6 am. In summer, free concerts start at 10. People stay up late and sleep in. Stores open at 10 am. Although some of my friends go to work at 8 am, most start at 10. Many people, including me, still indulge in the civilized custom of siesta.

NOT WITHOUT CHALLENGES

My new life is not without challenges. Although I knew some basic Spanish and have traveled in Mexico and South America, I’m struggling with the language. I’ve been taking private classes, studying online, and doing language-exchange sessions. I can make myself understood, but I can’t always understand. Spaniards speak fast with a staccato rhythm, lisping accent and a lot of slang. I’m still getting used to it, and the intellectual effort can be exhausting. I recently met the challenge of speaking only Spanish for eight days at the Pueblo Espanol language immersion. That definitely kicked my fluency up a couple of notches and gave my aging brain quite a workout.

Finances are a bit challenging because, since the dollar-to-euro exchange rate has fallen, I don’t have as many euros per month as I did when I arrived. Although basic living costs are lower than in the US, Spanish taxes are more than I imagined. I’m fine. My ends meet, but there’s not enough left for extensive European travel. That fact motivated me to revitalize my writing career. I took an online travel writing course, and now I’m selling articles to International Living magazine. My young, hip Spanish friends want to know all about my studies with indigenous teachers. They’ve taken it upon themselves to organize workshops where I facilitate shamanic drum journeys, so that helps out too.

For my 71st birthday, I threw myself a party. I filled my tiny apartment with 10 friends and served American Thanksgiving dinner. I couldn’t find a whole turkey, so I made do with a breast. They marveled over the exotic stuffing and canned cranberry sauce (that I bought from the Taste of America store). Indeed, I am thankful . . . for this adventure, for these new friends, for this vibrant culture, and for the bonus years that my mother never had. I intend to fill them with fun, laughter, friendship, and life fully lived.
An Invitation

by Janet Morrissey

“We’ve got to walk like a lion,
Soar with the eagle,
Sing with a nightingale,
And live in love and peace.”

Several months ago I heard the song “Noah” for the first time. It’s hard to believe that it took me this long to hear it because it was written in 1973 or thereabouts. I was intrigued with the beat and the lyrics. It took a little looking on the computer, as I did not know the title, only the chorus. I found by going on YouTube I could listen to it sung by Frank Sinatra. It doesn’t get much better than this.

Each time I heard it, I thought of the women, the Crones, who I see at the Gatherings and these words seem to fit. Reflecting on the stories heard during storytelling, I can feel their roar as each one walked with the lion and shared their strength. Through special songs such as “By Breath,” they sound like nightingales, giving hope and belief in oneself. In the drumming circle, we can feel ourselves soaring through space from the healing powers of the drum. Always, the space Crones create is filled with love and peace.

Looking at the logo for the XXVI Gathering and reading the theme: SuperCrones, SuperPowers, SuperLives: We Persist, I again thought of the words. They seem to apply to all of us who come to celebrate our aging and grow stronger with each year.

At times we all need something to get us up and going again. I invite you to listen to the song. It’s easy to find on YouTube. As you listen, what picture comes to you? Can you see yourself as a lion? How would you be walking? Slowly, pondering or fast and furious? Perhaps, you would rather soar with the eagle? How would that feel? When you’re feeling a little pinched and life is getting a little rocky, try walking like a lion or soaring like an eagle and remember to sing your heart out.

I’m going to be looking for lions, eagles, and Crones singing their nightingale songs at the Gathering. See you in Bellingham.

ALTERNATIVE DAILY PRAYER

By Kaya Kotzen

Oh, Goddess, who are in us
Truth, power and love be thy names
We are all one.
What’s done is done on earth, we find our heaven.
As we live for each day, feed our bodies bread, let us learn from our experiences, as we learn from those who share their experiences with us.
Let us learn strength from our temptation.
Patience, moderation, and forgiveness.
For ours is the wisdom, the power and the glory, to share, forever and ever.
So must it be!

To Lynn, 2003

By Ann Emerson

When things were dark and dreary in my life
When I felt nothing in this world was left for me.
You came across the miles so you could see
What you could do to make a change for me.
You put your splendid talents to my needs.
You put my house in order once again.

You found a new regime that we could share.
We coped with many changes and quite gradually
My strength and hope have been restored again.
Once more I face the world with dignity.
Life opens up.
I’m competent once more.
That is the gift my daughter gave to me.
Our theme originated from acknowledging through difficult times in the past the women who have PERSISTED, contributed to community survival, and stood for equality and justice in life. Our theme is to support your super strength and contribution. Each of us has been a heroine in her own life, using Super Powers of Love, Friendship, Persistence, Survival, Courage, Energy, and more.

Come together to share our strength and support each other in continuing to build our Super Lives. Renew old friendships and meet new friends.

Gathering details and Registration form are on the Crones Counsel website: www.cronescounsel.org

Call Maggie Fenton, Registrar, 740-625-7278 or email her at cronemaggie48@gmail.com

NOTE: All contributors must be registered for the Gathering. Artisans’ products offered for sale must be Crone creations.
She spent her 78th birthday on the road and arrived in Anacortes in June 1992.
And find herself she did. She met Ann Kreilkamp. [See “Early History of Crones” below.]
In 1993, Carol Piche, Lana Rosten-Mahoney, and Fran Yazzolino formed a Troika and Crone of Greater Skagit Valley was formed. Mother met Ann Kreilkamp through Crone Chronicles and wrote articles for the magazine in 1995 and 1996. Mother worked with the Troika, was the founder of Anacortes Crone 1 and received support from Crone of Puget Sound. The purpose of Anacortes Crone 1 became aging consciously and celebrating aging with pride, power, purpose, and passion.

Early History of Crones

Ann Kreilkamp holds a doctorate in philosophy, is an astrologer and interpreter of metaphysics, a writer and most recently is co-founder of Green Acres Neighborhood, which publishes articles on exopermaculture. In July of 1989 Ann experienced The Crone archetype energy in a “numinous life-changing dream.” She was shaken awake from behind by a huge blackbird which cawed — or crowed at her, “Wake Up! Wake Up! It’s Time! It’s Time!” Crone energy is so powerful, so magical and she knew it had long been buried in the collective unconscious. She remembers, “I knew with a kind of precocious certainty that only when I was old would I be released from the nonsense that goes along with being female in this society. I couldn’t wait to be freed from the focus on ‘appearances’ so that I could become fully myself, inside and out.”

After Ann’s dream, she networked with others to experience what she called “miraculous archetypal activation” of the Crone energy. Crone was fully present in matriarchal times until the patriarchy took over and pushed Her into a subservient role. But Crone is the crowning stage, the stage when long experience has been distilled into essence, personal into soul. Crone wanted to soar once more.

Ann K continued, “The propulsive force of the dream was so powerful I knew that I was not alone. That any energy which seeks release from the deep sleep of the collective unconscious knocks on the doors of many individuals at once.” She fired off a letter, “Calling All Crones,” and women from around the nation replied. From that overwhelming response, The Crone Chronicles: A Journal of Conscious Aging was published. It grew to an 80 page quarterly, full colour cover with a national and international circulation that grew to 15,000. The Toronto Globe & Mail said that Crone Chronicles “is doing for Crones what Ms. Magazine did for feminists.”

As the magazine grew, Ann learned the wisdom and tolerance that comes from encompassing so many others’ points of view as the Crone speaks within each of us in our own unique voice. Crone voices were heard and printed widely. Crones listened without rancor or objection, spoke their own truth, became tolerant of all voices and allowed others to have their own truth.

Crones conversation groups were formed. Personal truth-telling became a path to social change. Issues of sexism, ageism, trivialization of women’s ideas and opinions were transformed to validate women’s experiences, honour their wisdom, activate their personal power and gain strength for their journey. The aggregate power of these groups has led to political and social change, bringing equality and justice to women everywhere. For example:

Crone of Puget Sound (croneofpugetsound.org) has been an organization since 1987 and was founded by Joyce Winsor. Here is an Interview with Joyce Winsor.

The first National Crones Counsel gathering was held in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in 1993 and has flourished for 25 years.
Mother attended many Crones Counsel gatherings and during the yearly “No Talent/Talent Shows” she gained quite a reputation for telling what she called her “naughty little old lady jokes.”

The last Crones Counsel we attended was in beautiful Simpsonwood, near Atlanta, Georgia, in October 2010. Mother was the Most Honored Elder at age 95.

ANN EMERSON

She Filled My Life with Joy & Grace

by Barbara Aiello

BARBARA AIELLO with Ann.

LYNN EMERSON: Barbara is a member of Crone 1 in Anacortes, started by Mother and still exists today. She belonged to mother’s writing class in Oak Harbor, WA, for a time and was a devoted friend for over two decades.

“Ann Emerson filled my life with joy and grace. A sweet smile and rosy cheeks were her trademarks of optimism. Ann wrote poetry of infinite creativity and prose of intellectual purity.

“On her 100th, I wrote: ‘My sweet friend — you can’t realize how much your loving friendship means to me. You amaze me with your knowledge about things of which I know only a smidgen. Your poetry is eloquent and sings to my soul; I look forward eagerly to future “chapters” of your life story.

“Dearest Ann, it was such a lucky day for me when I joined Sheri’s writing class and met you! May you have peace and contentment in your heart as you approach your 100th birthday.

“If I could have chosen the perfect mother, it would have been you! You are very dear to me. You are a blessing in my life — I am so appreciative.

“Upon hearing of Ann’s passing, our mutual writing instructor shared, ‘Ann has finished that last chapter. It feels like a light has gone out in the world.’”

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Dearest Mother Ann,
By Patsy Rose Stocker, your adopted daughter

I felt so incredibly Blest when we met 40 years ago at a Seth & Metaphysical Workshop. I was out of my element and you put your protective arm around me and told me to just relax and “hang close to you.” I did and it was the beginning of one of the most meaningful relationships in my life. I LOVED being your adopted daughter – what love – what wisdom – what honesty and humility – what an incredible journey – from visiting you in Toronto – to Crone conferences – to Anacortes – to phone calls and emails. I am forever different because of your love.

I remember the last Crone Counsel we attended together. As we left I could hear your voice as we sang to one another, “How could anyone ever tell you that you are anything less than beautiful? ...” Again and again you touched the very depths of my soul with your unconditional love! I loved sharing that love with Lynn and all my adopted sisters.

I’m certain you’re watching over us all as we finish up our unfinished business over here. I’m reaching out again to “hang close to you,” as I did at the beginning of our relationship. I need to remember who I really am.

Much Love

ANN doing her never-ending research.

ANN, her daughter LYNN EMERSON WALSH, and JACKIE GENTRY, Crones Counsel XV — 2007.

ANN AND NORMAN with their three children:

ANN AND NORMAN with their three children:

Honored Elders — ANN EMERSON and LYDIA GALICK, XV
I leave telephone, tears in my eyes
You have just shared your poetry with me
Magnificent in power and imagery
Canticles delineating inner struggling
To make some sense of life with all its pain,
Recurring emptiness and sometimes sad despair.
The beauty of your words touched something deep in me
Your inner comprehension baffles me.

I have not written for so long a time.
What was it stayed my hand from writing feelings down?
For many years I poured my desolation out
The rapture, then futility and dawning hope.
Was it maturity of sorts that choked the flow?
Have I become so stayed, so tame I cannot feel?
Though I have lived three quarters of a century
My heart is young and knows its yearning still.
Longing to romp with someone at the dawn
To share with wonder the first rays of day.

My stumbling words hold not a candle to your metaphor
Yet, sharing, you have touched a chord in me
And opened up a torrent from within
Frozen and hushed by time’s vicissitudes
Wherein I judged how simple were my lays
How insignificant my verses all had been
How limited my power to express
In words that others would find inspiration in.

No more! The door has opened once again
The joy of words comes surging back to me
Across the miles I send my gratitude
To you who opened up this shuttered door for me.
Together in Stardust

By Holly Jaynes and Sally Scott

Sally brought Enid’s ashes home today,
A blue box in a crisp white bag.
I’ll decorate the blue box with “Tiger” Enid stars.

She is stardust now.
We come from stardust,
We return to stardust.

We’ll release her ashes in the Atlantic Ocean,
And next fall in the Pacific Ocean
With her “adoptive mother,”
Ann Emerson
Together in Stardust.