

Once upon a time, a teenaged woman sat looking out of her bedroom window. It was a late spring evening, and the cherry trees were in full bloom.

Suddenly, there in the window, floating between the cherry blossoms, was the face of a wonderful old woman. Her lined, fiercely joyful face was full of compassion and wisdom. She was beautiful in the fullness of her years, kind and infinitely strong. The young woman's eyes filled with tears, her heart with gratitude. For she knew that she was seeing her own aged self, from deep in her future. From that moment on, the young woman knew with unshakeable certainty that the same great gifts awaited her. She would move fearlessly into her future, knowing wisdom and grace would be her destiny. The young woman would never forget that ancient face in the window. She would always welcome the company and friendship of women, but a special place remained in her heart for older women who reminded her of that vision.

I have lived several lifetimes since that magical evening. I am closer to that face in the window, but I have many years left to go. If the next half of my life is going to be as eventful as my first half, there's plenty of adventure to come. I can look around me and see that there is a whole generation of women who are moving into their aging process, and know that this time to come will be radically different.

Fifteen years ago, I went to an event celebrating International Women's Day. The keynote speakers were both older women. The first presenter was a woman who had travelled to Europe. She shared with us some of her 14,000 slides of various archeological sites honouring the Goddess. Her name was Rosemary Ann Conway. The second speaker was one of the quintessential short, round, rosy-cheeked grandmotherly looking women—until she opened her mouth to read her poetry. She had a mind and wit like a rapier—slashing through every misconception about being female in the shortest time imaginable. She had us weeping, laughing and cheering for more. Her name was Gert Beadle. A few years later, she would be decorated the highest humanitarian award our country has to offer—the Order of Canada. Those two wise women changed the direction of my life.

Despite the youthful, anorexic images presented in magazines and on television as the ultimate in femininity, the reality is very different. The majority of women in Canada are over 40, and certainly weigh more than an average of 125 lbs. The most empowered, energetic and interesting people I know are women over 40. The first of the famous 'baby boomer' generation has just hit 50. Trust me, soon it's going to be hip to be aging. I know things are changing when I mentioned my age to another woman on the phone. "Only 44?" she remarked. "You poor thing."

About four years ago, I heard of a gathering on Vancouver Island called the "Amazing Grays". It was a gathering for older women, to celebrate the passage into their elder years. From all reports, an amazing time was had by all. Every year since then, women have gathered to celebrate, to network and to spend time in the company of other like-minded women. It turns out that the "Amazing Grays" was the vision of yet another gracefully aging woman, Betty Nickerson.

When I first came across her book "Old and Smart: Women and the Adventure of Aging", I knew that I had found something

Wise Woman

significant. Aging as an adventure? Why not, it sure beats being relegated to a corner rocking chair for years. Betty has al-

most thirty years more experience on this planet than I do, and every one of those years counts. She erases the stereotype of the "little old lady" and replaces it with a much truer portrait of older women that I know.

"Age Mates" is the term she uses to describe the wonderfully dynamic, energetic, interesting women in their 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's today. "Unprecedented millions of women are in the same time frame with us...It is astonishing to realize that we travelled so far in time to discover that few knew we were coming. Society and governments seem surprised to find millions of older women appearing at this time in history. Since we are virtually unknown for who we are, what we care about and what we can do, we must speak for ourselves. Society's attitude toward age and aging urgently needs readjustment. We are entitled to an honest representation of the potential and vitality of today's mature women, far different from the absurd stereotypes by which we are often portrayed. Much waits to be discovered, comprehended and applied if we are to truly understand the possibilities of our mature years. Our challenge is to write ourselves into existence, make the truth real to ourselves and others."

One year ago, I sat in a circle with twenty older women. I was moved to tears as they shared their names and stories, and spoke of their need to break through the limiting stereotypes of aging women. I was inspired then to arrange a gathering for even more women to come together, to celebrate the freedom that our maturity can and will bring.

The first Wise Woman Weekend is scheduled for September 5th, 6th & 7th at Naramata Centre. It will be a rejuvenating and relaxing weekend. We will meet, talk, share our stories. We can dance, stretch, drum, sing and paint. We will listen, laugh, make new friends and renew old acquaintances. Betty Nickerson, author of *Old and Smart* will be joining us, as will Gert Beadle, her health permitting. There will be formal workshops, and plenty of opportunities to share stories during informal circles.

Frances Hatfield will help us climb *Goddess Mountain*, through mask-making and dance. Janelle Breese-Biagoni will share her *journalling techniques*. Noor-Un-Nisa Joan Smith, reiki master and deep country dweller will lead those of us wanting to mark the passages of our lives through a *Wise Woman Ceremony*. Naturopath Audrey Ure will share her *knowledge of healthy living* for mature women. Ann Eaton will reveal her secrets to *Growing Old Disgracefully*. Joan Moffet will explore the interface between conventional and not-so-conventional *healing techniques*. Margery Tyrrell promises to *move us beyond words* into a dance with our authentic selves. Transformational counsellor Gudrun Carstairs will give us *techniques for personal growth*. There will be a healing house and 'Wise Woman' Store.

Sound inviting? It will be an absolutely marvellous weekend. If you are a wise woman, you'll be there.



by Laurel Burnham

SEPTEMBER

5, 6 & 7th



Growing Old Disgracefully
It's about destroying stereotypes and addressing more important questions like: "How can I have more fun in my life?"

Ann Eaton is the founding member of the first two **Growing Old Disgracefully** groups in Canada.



Climbing Goddess Mountain
Make a four part mask, to renew and revive our present, personal imagery. Includes movement as we explore ourselves.

Frances Hatfield has been an artist all her life. She is presently creating soft sculptures of the Goddess in her many forms.



Journaling to the Self
A journal workshop to assist in a journey of personal growth and self-discovery. Techniques include 'Cracking the Code' & Imagery.

Janelle Breese-Biagioni is a certified instructor of the Journal to the Self and is author of *Head Injuries: The Silent Epidemic*.



Crone Circle
In the company of like-minded women, an exploration of Cronehood and an opportunity to speak from the heart.

Gert Beadle is a member of the order of Canada and was a founding member of a credit union for women. She is a poet and has published five books of her work.



Wise Woman Ceremony
Wise Woman Circle
We will create a ceremony to recognize both the passage into the warrior/matriarch span and into the elder/crone.

Noor-Un-Nisa Joan Smith is a Reiki Master, private counsellor, and Sufi Teacher. Assisted by Laurel



Naramata Centre
Naramata, BC



Keynote Speaker

WOMEN & THE ADVENTURE OF AGING

A wise and witty woman, Betty erases forever the stereotype of 'little old lady' and replaces it with the truth – older women are dynamic, experienced, wise Age Mates. She speaks frankly about health, children, money, grief, spirituality, memory, fitness, the care and treatment of doctors, the adventure of sex and much, much more - all with warmth, intelligence and plenty of well-placed chuckles.

BETTY NICKERSON writes, consults, and lectures for women's & seniors' groups and government agencies. Author of *Old & Smart*.

TO REGISTER: Send in your name, address and phone no. **with** 50% or more of total costs to: Visions...unlimited • Wise Woman Weekend, 254 Ellis St., Penticton, B.C., V2A 4L6.

A brochure with schedule and more extensive write-ups will be sent upon receipt or by request.

SEMINAR FEES

	WEEKEND	Saturday only	Sunday only
before			
Aug. 15	\$80	\$55	\$40
after			
Aug. 15	\$90	\$60	\$45

Refunds if requested before Aug 25th (less \$15 for paperwork)

For Women
40 years & Better!

Wise Woman Weekend



*Keynote
Speaker*

FROM ALONE TO ALL ONE

Connecting body sensations with feelings, understanding emotional states and letting go of the critic. When everyday life presents us with a happening that we find upsetting, it is often not the actual circumstance, but our interpretation based on past experiences that creates our upset emotions. Old and unresolved emotions get stored in the body and resurface when present experiences are close enough to the old experience.

GUDRUN CARSTAIRS is a Registered Clinical Counsellor, Therapist, Trainer & Author of:
From Alone to All One

Meals & accommodation are optional

ACCOMMODATION for TWO NIGHTS

- Private \$75 Shared \$50
- R.V. Space \$18 per night
- Tent \$15 per night

MEALS

Breakfast	Sat	_____	Sun	_____	\$ 5.00 each
Lunch	Sat	_____	Sun	_____	\$ 7.00 each
Dinner	Fri	_____	Sat	_____	\$12.00 each

For a more detailed brochure
and schedule of speakers

☎ **250.492.5371**

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Visions...unlimited,
ISSUES Magazine,
Holistic Healing Ctr.
Penticton

Menopause & Beyond

A question and answer time with someone who has gone through this natural process with practical suggestions for our change of life.

Audrey Ure, graduated from the National College of Naturopathic Medicine in Portland, Oregon in 1988.



Moving Beyond Words

Come prepared to move from the creative heart of each one of us. This self-paced workshop stems from *Authentic Movement*.

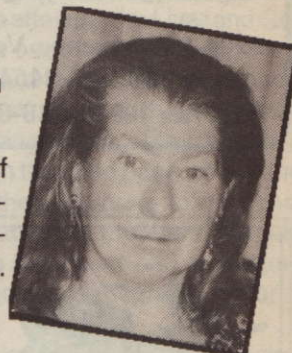
Margery Tyrrell has a background in Tai Chi, Chi Gong, dance and creative expression.



Foundations for Healing

An introductory look at the framework of vibrational healing techniques with time to try a couple on ourselves.

Joan Moffet is a practising therapist of integrated medicine, with a home physiotherapy service. She has almost completed her Healing Touch Certification.



Mistress of Ceremonies

Inspired by all the wise women in her life, Laurel is providing the impetus and direction for this weekend. An Amazing Gray in Training.

Laurel Burnham is a feminist, activist, community organizer and writer. She knows she will eventually become an awesome Crone.



Easy Stretching

Early morning yoga to enliven the joints, muscles and mind.

Angèle publishes ISSUES Magazine, owns the Holistic Healing Centre in Penticton and organizes the Spring and Fall Festivals of Awareness. Encouraging and educating people to understand 'Why we are the way we are' is the main focus of her life.

