



Stone Circle News

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Happy 25th Birthday Stone Circle.....by Jan Herrick

I am very proud and happy to announce that this year, 2024, Stone Circle will be 25 years old. I have been told that most women's groups do not last this long, so I guess that we must be doing something right. Allow me to reminisce a bit and look back at the highlights of our quarter century history and how we began.

I went on a trip to Guatemala in the late nineties. I would take early morning walks in the small villages, with my camera in hand, and watch the women gathered around the circular washing areas. There were mothers with babies on their backs, small children, grandmothers, all ages of women together, talking, laughing, doing their daily work together. I was struck by those circles of women sharing time together supporting one another so naturally.

That image didn't leave me when I returned home. I realized how distance has separated many of us from family and long-time friends due to the movements of modern life. Gone are the days of families living in close proximity allowing for the wisdom of generations to be shared easily. I thought about my Mom and how she was separated in her later years from her women friends, who had always given her love and emotional support. Our own mothers, sisters, grandmothers, and friends might be far away, but perhaps we could create new circles of support for women wherever we happen to be. This is how the concept of Stone Circle was born.

I shared my ideas for Stone Circle with my friend Salome. We had both lived and worked together in the DC area before moving to Florida. It did not take long before we had fleshed out our vision for Stone Circle and prepared for our inaugural event, a Summer Solstice ceremony in June 1999. Since then, Stone Circle has incorporated monthly gatherings called For Women Only, seasonal events like the Summer and Winter Solstice, as well as In the Company of Trees close to Arbor and Earth Days, Decade Day in February, our WOW (Women of Wisdom) luncheon, and numerous other events. Over the years we have gone on countless cruises, trips to Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon, as well as a wonderful and memorable trip to Ireland. When Covid interrupted life for most of us and our gatherings were suspended, I started writing the Stone Circle blog, Being Here Now. To date, I have written over two-hundred of them.

Yes, we have grown and prospered over the years! It has been a fabulous 25 years and we have plans for more in the future. Our Newsletter, website, and weekly Insights and Energizers keep us connected and informed. We are always open to new ideas and opportunities to grow. Our original vision of being a resource for Women's Spirituality has not changed, only deepened. I am grateful for all the women who have come to Stone Circle for nourishment over the years, as well as those who have given their gifts and talents working tirelessly to keep us going. A humble and gracious "Thank you" to all of you! Happy 25th Birthday to Stone Circle, and many more.

Affirmation Corner, A Beautiful History.....by Margie Gray

It is amazing to me that it has been 25 years since I sat with Jan and Salome and listened to their vision for starting an organization that would support women in their spiritual journey. I was excited to be a part of Stone Circle. I offered my support in any way it would be helpful. I have had the opportunity to collaborate on retreats and share my understanding of how to be a co-creator of our experience. Affirmation Corner has been my ongoing connection to Stone Circle in spite of moving away from Florida 15 years ago.

I love the women who have been such an important part of my life. Those connections have enriched my life and provided the love and support I needed to thrive. Getting to know all of the women of Stone Circle, past and present, has been a gift. I know I'm not alone in saying that Jan's leadership and friendship has been a blessing in my life. Affirmations remind me of the value of those connections.

- ★ I accept the love and support of wise women now!
- ★ I gratefully receive love and support of those women who have gone before me now!
- ★ I receive the wisdom of generations of women now!
- ★ I support others in serving their higher good now!

This is the 68th Affirmation Corner I've submitted for the newsletter. I gain more than I give by contributing to Stone Circle. I'm grateful for all of you and for our connection that is possible because of the vision of our founders.

On behalf of Stone Circle I would be remiss in not offering a special thank you to one of our ladies, Eleanor Overdeck. She is a lifelong friend of Salome Harasty, Stone Circle's co-founder. Since Salome passed away Eleanor has sent a very generous donation to Stone Circle, often several times a year, in honor of Salome. You might have seen her name in our Prayer Circle in the Newsletter before. She has been dealing with a serious illness for some time and as of her latest correspondence and donation to us, she has a positive health report. She has never been to one of our gatherings since she lives in Indiana, and her only connection to us has been through our Newsletter and other mailings. Thank you Eleanor! Your donations are used to support other women. You may be far away but you are part of the Circle of love and support always.

*Women have gathered in circles
since the dawn of history
for birthing,
to share story,
at cisterns for washing,
at fires for warmth,
at wells to draw water,
in embraces of profound joy,
in prayer, in rings of sorrow and
mourning.*

*With hands grasped, we gather our
collective wisdom, energies and
strengths binding us and guiding us
into the future. Each woman brings
her gifts, placing herself
as a stone in the unbroken circle.*

© Janet Herrick

Prayer Circle

Kathi
Jody
Eleanor
Arline
Sonia
Vanessa

Please let us know the names of those you would like to have included in our prayer circle.

Calendar for 2024

January 20 For Women Only, 9:30 AM

February 7 Decade Day, Wednesday, 6:30 PM
10 Chinese New Year Celebration
17 For Women Only, 9:30 AM

March 16 For Women Only, 9:30 AM
23 Soup Supper Saturday, 1:00 PM

April 20 For Women Only, 9:30 AM
27 In the Company of Trees,
Saturday, 10:00 AM Mennello Park

May 18 For Women Only, 9:30 AM
26 Dress Up Tea , 2:00 PM TBA

June 14 Inn at Cocoa Beach
(5 room,10 ladies kingsize beds,
reserved overnight)
15 Summer Solstice, Sat. Sunrise
Cocoa
15 For Women Only, 9:30 AM
At the Inn
23 Seasons 52 Anniversary Lunch,
Sunday, 1:00 PM



Question from Jan...

Especially since this is our 25th Anniversary year, we really want your input. We want to know some of the things you would like to do, places you want to go, trips to consider, and even restaurants you might want to try. Please let Jan or Dorie know your thoughts and ideas, no matter how impossible, outrageous, or difficult they might be. Remember... all things are possible where women are concerned. And, as Ruth Bader Ginsburg once said, "Women belong in all places where decisions are being made."

Funding Donation Request

Stone Circle is totally dependent on your donations for all our operating expenses, the newsletter, the website, monthly gatherings and additional events. If you benefit from any or all of these items, please consider supporting us in some way. Mailings, website servers and printing costs add up very quickly. All donations are welcome and greatly appreciated.

Interesting Awakenings

by Dorie Croissant

Stone Circle has provided quite a few interesting awakenings for me over the years. For those of you who have been fortunate enough to take part in one, two, more, or all of the gatherings, you know how much forethought has been put into the planning and execution of the rituals that take place. Every ritual has a meaning. Every meaning has a purpose.

The goal of bringing women together so they can be stronger together has definitely worked. Twenty-five years of Stone Circle history has more than proven that concept.

Of the many different offerings for women to gather, I have to say that the solstice celebrations are the most memorable. Mainly because before Stone Circle I never paid any attention to what a solstice was, or what it meant, or how it was celebrated. A solstice was something just not on my radar.

The Winter Solstice was my first solstice ritual. As bizarre as it sounds, and Jan will remember this, I almost walked out. She had a plethora of scarves and leaves, flowers and feathers, and material of every sort, for the women to decorate themselves with. There was the ritual of songs and readings and dance (I say dance, but it was more the movement of dance). Then the fire and throwing into the fire little pieces of paper that had our personal "letting go of" wishes. I found it all a bit strange, and it made me uncomfortable. That was then. I think I have a better handle on the Winter Solstice at this point in my life. I have found meaning through the years in the darkness, the stillness, and the opportunity for reflection and renewal. Interesting awakenings.

The Summer Solstice, for me, is all about the sun rising on the longest day, the chance to be outside and notice, really notice, nature with gratitude and celebration. I really appreciated the early morning trips to the beach to catch the sun rising. There is something soul searching about watching the sun come up in all its glory with a group of women who are all there for the same purpose. More interesting awakenings.

Favorite Memoryby Arline Conklin

There are so many happy memories since I've been with Stone Circle. Some are from members who are no longer with us. Jean Gold and Jean Henry were a delight and Jean Henry always had funny stories of her dog. Dorie, Del and Virginia moved away. Del always had a happy smile & Virginia's office stories kept us in stitches, plus she always brought Christmas hats and head bands that were fun to wear at our December meeting. They are all so missed but of all my favorites, our Tree Day has to be number one. During a pleasant day sitting under the magnificent, huge oak tree, Jody would read us the story about a boy and his giving tree. We also always had time to walk around and enjoy the lovely area.

Unconditional Caring...by Sonia Diaz

I joined Stone Circle some years back, and from day one I loved the dynamic of the group. When we begin and when we finish we are encouraged to bring to the table what we bring and what we are taking back. I have also participated in discussions of all sorts and themes. I've participated in rituals, I've stayed overnight at the Inn at Cocoa Beach, driven to the beach to watch the sun rise and sat under the oldest tree in Orlando, discussed nature and meditated around the grounds of that beautiful park. I have made life-long friendships, and I have grieved the loss of some dear friends.

Everyone in my family knows that the third Saturday of the month is Stone Circle day and don't plan anything because I will probably say NO. What have I learned? Many things, as you might agree. The most memorable, in my opinion, is the friendship, camaraderie, and yes... love for each other. I have witnessed this group at their best. The advice, hope and unconditional caring for each other. The wisdom from ladies who have lost partners and continue to strive. Some of these ladies are well into their 80's, so beautiful and giving. I truly believe that this group of ladies is nonjudgmental.

My only hope is that, as we celebrate the 25th anniversary, this group continues to highlight the essence of Stone Circle, the importance of women helping women, and sharing the love we all have in our hearts. Let's continue the tradition of Stone Circle.

Looking Back...by Virginia Strait

Where do I begin to acknowledge the wealth of wisdom and knowledge? All of the ladies in the past two decades have influenced my life choices. Your resilience and determination are inspiring. Solutions you shared for some non-ordinary life styles and challenges helped me choose, keep going forward, upward, and not to give up in despair.

My former co-worker, Suzanne, was so awestruck with Jan during a flight, she invited me to the 3rd Saturday meeting at the church. The room was full of smiles, giggles, and women with open minds and hearts. I committed myself to be with everyone as often as they would have me. The spinoffs of Wednesday Night Study Group, Solstice celebrations, In the Company of Trees, Decade Days and WOW lunches have enriched my memories. There were Bunko games, tours to the Titanic, Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, New Orleans and Ireland that enriched my adventures. I offer some of the details to other ladies as needed, they think I am smart. I am just sharing what I have learned from YOU. It was only through Love that I got so lucky to be in the presence of fabulous ladies!!! Love from God -to be shared with You!!!

My Thoughts

by Joan Macias

Personally, Stone Circle has been life changing for me. When I first responded to the article in The Holy Cross bulletin, the Lord was calling me. I met the most lovely ladies who truly made me feel welcome. We were all able to discuss life's ups and downs!

Many favorite activities are forever planted in my memory. One favorite has been IN THE COMPANY OF TREES, also the Winter and Summer Solstices.

Number one is the lifetime friendship of ALL you beautiful women.

Decade Day February 7, 2024

Decade Day is the celebration of all women's lives and birthdays, but in particular we will celebrate those women who are entering a new decade in 2024. We live in a world that highlights youth and hides from growing older. At Decade Day those women already in a particular decade welcome those entering it, highlighting the positive gifts and wisdom associated with that decade of life.

We invite you to join us at Jill's home on **Wednesday, February 7th, at 6:30 PM** for this joyful ceremony. Please let us know if you will attend, and if you will be entering a new decade this year. Feel free to invite a friend. Bring an enclosed candle and a photo of yourself that is at least 25 years old. Help us celebrate women of all ages and all the gifts we are to the world.



25 Years of Memories...by Janet Herrick

There was something memorable every single year from the first to the present. The excitement of seeing so many women gather for the first celebration of the Summer Solstice in 1999 was a picture in my mind that will always linger. Many of those ladies have moved away or transitioned to beyond this life, but they will always be part of the Circle. My friend and co-founder of Stone Circle, Salome Harasty, is one of those who has left us for what lies beyond this life, but I know that she would be so proud to know that we are still inviting new women into the Circle after so many years. I would tell her that we did have a great idea, and that in bringing women together as a resource for spirituality is a very powerful thing that helps us all become our best selves. Nurturing ourselves is the basis from which we can nurture, care for, or help others.

Looking back at all the things we have done and experienced over the years, it is the women I have come to know that brings a smile to my face and gratitude to my heart. It is all those women past, present, and those who are yet to be welcome to the Circle, who are the Stone Circle. Our strength and growth really comes from each other, those women we lean on and connect with. They give us the power to move forward when challenges stand in the way. They are the ones we laugh with, cry with, and celebrate with. They have become our friends, no longer strangers, and we may not have met them any other way than in the Circle.

Yes, the meetings make us think. The rituals take us out of our comfort zones, but we find new ways to honor moments in our lives. The lunch outings fill our tummies, and bring us together to laugh. The cruises and trips open our horizons seeing and experiencing new and exciting things. All of it has made us grow and learn about the world we live in, but most importantly, learn about ourselves and foster our spiritual growth. Every moment we are alive is an opportunity to become the women we are meant to be. She is brave, strong, and fearless. She is a life-long learner always seeking truth. She is all of us. She is Stone Circle.

Winter Solstice 2023

We were a small group, but we were intent on celebrating the longest night of the year. Thank you Jill for being the perfect hostess and opening your home for this special night. We looked back at the previous year deciding what we needed to leave behind in order to prepare for a positive New Year 2024. Those intentions written on pieces of paper were symbolically burned as a final gesture of release paving the way for our positive intentions for the future.

1st Winter Solstice 25+ Years Ago



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Stone Circle operates as a nonprofit entity whose presence seeks to enhance the feminine milieu for women of the 21st century. We truly rely on the generosity of friends and those who participate in programs.