

A Letter from Terry Eaton

-- Honorary Grandmother of the Bear Tribe

A welcome bit of news arrived by e-mail from Pat Ross not long ago, advising me that the long dormant publication, Many Smokes, is being re-awakened as Smoke and Fire; I had the honor to be asked to contribute a piece to the new born issue. It has been 21 years since I last wrote for the Many Smokes issue that was dedicated to my mother, Evelyn Eaton, Grandmother to the Bear Tribe and to countless others who claim her as their own, as well, of course, to her direct grandchildren, Marte, John, David and Rick.



It was no easy task. My heart was shriveled as a fig. She had only just departed for the vast space reserved -- I like to think -- for the "blessed company" of the enlightened ones, the poets, teachers, healers, musicians, artists, guardians and those my own grandchildren call the Grandfeathers, who send their emissaries and blessings down to us at certain unexpected but ever welcome times. (A shining example: the four white swans that flew over the church steeple and circled the grave site of my children's father in the CT cemetery where he was buried a while back...who but Grandmother Eve could have sent them, she herself having taken the "swan boat" on her own immortal journey. Such are the reassuring signals we continually receive.)

Reading the memorial issue again I was struck by the outpour of love that permeates the pages and by the inclusion of her own words of wisdom that hold as true today as when they first appeared in her books, one of which, The Shaman and the Medicine Wheel, is still in print. It was an early issue of Many Smokes that originally caught my mother's attention and subsequently led her to contact Sun Bear and Wabun, who later became fast friends. I know the writer side of her is delighted to see the magazine she found such favor with republished at a time, perhaps now more than ever, we need to be reminded of our interconnectedness and our "bounden duty" to love one another, to honor and respect all "faithful creatures" and to be grateful guests of our Earth Mother.

In time I hope to be deserving of the mantle I inherited to be the present day honorary Grandmother to the Bear Tribe and that I, as my mother did, will put in place the four H's -- Honesty, Humility, Harmony and Humor, to carry on the tradition that befalls elders who are asked to take such a fearsome responsibility. I smile as I write those words because in truth I adore being a grandmother. It is the choicest role I've ever played and I only wish I can still be around to be a great-grandmother. In the meantime, I enjoin all of you in your Pipe circles, lighting the Pipes in harmony, sending the prayer smoke to Those Above and inviting the seen and unseen presences to sit with us, as they always do, blessing ourselves and asking to be of service for the highest good. It can't hurt and it might be helpful! All good wishes for the launching of Smoke and Fire.

Love and Light, Terry Eaton.