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## Drumming Circle Creates Good Vibrations

By Cathy Dausman



A drumming circle in Lafayette. Photo Cathy Dausman

The sounds of a communal heartbeat - good vibrations - echoed loud and clear recently in Lafayette. Barbara Kloss, the group's self-proclaimed "instigator" was excited about the attendance for her newly formed senior drumming circle. For the last year, Kloss lamented the fact that there seemed to be "no daytime drumming circle near us." So she took matters into her own hands and formed one.

Lafayette Library and Learning Center declined to host the circle - she said there were concerns about the group's noise level - and Kloss was unwilling to commit to room rental fees at the Lafayette Senior Center. She finally found a home at Lamorinda Music, where "one of the [Lafayette] senior commissioners pays for room rental."

No music experience is necessary, and drums are provided for the circle that meets at 11 a.m. the second Monday of each month. Donations are accepted, but no one is turned away. Sixteen women, ranging in age from their late 40s to beyond 70s, showed up for the second meeting to learn from Mary Ferrick how to improve brain health and have fun.

Ferrick holds a master's degree in social work and has been drumming for 30 years. "You are a walking, living, breathing drum," she told each participant. Following her lead, the group rapped on frame drums and hourglass-shaped African djembes - one, two, three ... one, two, three ... with fingers or mallets. The beating resonated around the room before settling in each sternum.

"See how naturally you fell into the elephant rhythm!" Ferrick exclaimed. "It's very matriarchal," she added. Ferrick explained research shows that women became the world's first drummers when they discovered the musical beat grains made while being winnowed in a bowl or shallow pan. She passed around the depiction of a woman drummer circa

2500 B.C.

Ferrick was on a percussive mission, using the primitive rhythms to encourage meditation and healing. She said the drum's vibrations can "wash away trauma and pain."

"Be sure to drink [plenty of] water," Ferrick said, and then cautioned participants not to worry if they fell out of sync with the rest of the group. It never happened. The women, smiling and relaxed, some with eyes closed, kept the beat.

When asked why she wanted to form a drumming circle, Kloss replied with her own questions: "Did you see the smiles? Did you feel the energy?"

At session's end, one woman said she'd bring her 96-year-old mother next time. Another, upon leaving, shook her head incredulously, simply saying, "Wow."

Lamorinda Community Drumming for Seniors (all adults welcome, no children please) meets at 11 a.m. the second Monday of each month at Lamorinda Music, 81 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. For information, e-mail [Community.drumming.seniors@gmail.com](mailto:Community.drumming.seniors@gmail.com) or call (925) 385-0963. To learn more about the history of drumming, Ferrick suggests reading "When Drummers Were Women" by Layne Redmond.



Instructor Mary Ferrick

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