



Winter 2013

“Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.”

Albert Camus

Many of us are still basking in the glow of our Whistler Gran Fondo experience. Thanks to the efforts of thirty cyclists on Team Callanish, our sponsors, and the generosity of a vast number of people, we were able to raise substantial funds to sustain the work of Callanish. We are extremely grateful to everyone who contributed.



Janie Brown
Executive Director

A comment from one of the riders, after the event, has stayed with me. “The ride was amazing, but it was the sense of community that made this event so inspiring.” The West African writer and teacher Malidoma Somé, says it this way, “we have an instinct of community.”

The Callanish community expanded to include many new people who I hope felt welcomed into the flock. The flock was certainly invigorated by the newcomers.

A few nights before the ride, we invited all the riders to come to a “circle” at Callanish, for the out-of-towners to meet the rest of the team, and to set our intentions for everyone to be safe, to finish without injuries, and to enjoy ourselves. Oh, and for the weather to cooperate! We each spoke our wishes aloud and we pounded on the Callanish community drum to energize our collective intentions. People took turns around the circle to speak, if they wished to, about who they were dedicating their ride to. Allison Prinsen had designed an armband for the team jersey on to which these names were printed. People honoured family members and friends who had survived cancer, as well as their beloveds who had not. It wasn't long before there were tears. The collective heart had been held in the strength of a circle, unafraid of sorrow.

Philip was our Team Callanish advisor for five months, giving us much-needed riding tips. Despite being on chemo, he came out on many of the training rides. The day before the ride Philip called me to say he had just seen his oncologist and had received bad news. He had to go back on chemotherapy.

“I don't think I can come,” he said. “I will be such a dark cloud over everyone. What do you think I should do?” he asked.

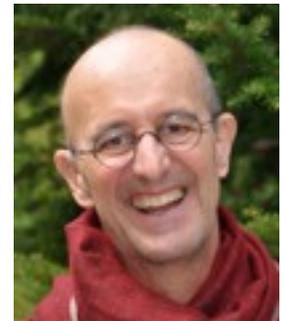
“It's up to you to decide, of course, but you could have received this news on Monday, rather than today, and if so, you would have already completed the ride! If you decide to come, you will be doing what you love, cycling, and you will be choosing to be with a community of people who love you,” I suggested.

I knew that he and Emma would make the decision together.

cont. page 3

Reflections on Callanish October, 2013

On arriving at the Brew Creek Centre for the May 2013 week-long retreat, it became apparent to me that this was to be a unique and very special experience. The staff facilitators were in the parking area to greet us and to not simply provide a first orientation and direct us to our accommodations, but to accompany us personally and transport our baggage as well. I was struck by this as a symbolic gesture as well as having a well-considered operational purpose. I could sense that I was entering a community that nurtures the interconnection between the practical and the symbolic, which appealed to me very much.



James Coverdale

The path that had led me to this day had begun about a year and a half earlier. At that time, I'd already stepped away from my work in the architectural field, and had enjoyed the preceding summer caring for and enjoying family property, up the coast from Vancouver. In glorious autumn, after experiencing some unusual facial symptoms, I was diagnosed as having a brain tumour. Things then moved very quickly. In November just before my sixty-first birthday, the tumour was surgically removed, and I entered a treatment regime that included radiation therapy and chemo-therapy.

During this time, my spouse & dearest soul friend, Lynn, suggested that I may consider exploring the resources offered by the Callanish Society. She was familiar with Callanish from her Mother's experiences there as a participant several years earlier. I began with the two of us going to a counselling session with Janie Brown. This fruitful session led to a number of one-to-one sessions for me with Janie, during which she guided me through wide-ranging challenging territory. I came away with a more open heart and a commitment to attend the next available retreat.

Due to a last minute cancellation, Lynn was invited to join the retreat as well, so we were very privileged to be together for this experience. The week was an inspired/inspiring blend of activities that took place in and around the beautiful site and buildings at Brew Creek, skillfully led (& exquisitely fed!) by the wonderful team of facilitators. An atmosphere of mindfulness and compassion was nurtured in everything that we did.

The entire group, participants and facilitators alike, quickly became a safe, supportive forum for whatever any of us brought to the foreground, particularly during our collective ‘check-in’ circle sessions. Tears and laughter intermingled as we spoke our thoughts and stories. For me, a shared narrative fabric emerged shimmering out of the warp and weft of our commonalities and respective uniqueness. I felt gently, compassionately soothed, strengthened and restored by the experience.

cont. page 3

To Sing Our Hearts Out: The Power of Music and Singing

I've recently been captivated by the 'Freedom Songs' of the Civil Rights Movement which Martin Luther King Jr. said were critical to their fight: "They give the people new courage and a sense of unity. I think they keep alive a faith, a radiant hope, in the future, particularly in our most trying hours." (Shelton, 'Songs a Weapon')



Danielle Schroeder

What stands out most for me in these words is how their freedom songs gave people a sense of unity. Singing together was a way to encourage individuals to add their voices to their collective experience which brought people out of isolation, validated their struggles, mobilized their collective efforts and even offered hope and inspiration in a time of darkness and despair.

Although the challenges and experiences of the individuals and families we support at Callanish are very different from the lived experiences of those who took part in the Civil Rights Movement, I do believe in Martin Luther King's understanding of the role of music and singing in our individual and collective lives. After all, I often ask myself: In the face of illness, and uncertainty, how can we strengthen our collective resolve? How can we access joy, inspiration, and hope in the midst of such heartache and loss in our community? My answer: *To sing our hearts out!*

I will admit that it has taken me years to articulate such a seemingly simple conclusion and even longer to turn it into practice. Not being a trained music therapist, I had not considered bringing music and singing into my therapeutic work with people living with cancer. In fact it only happened a few summers ago, on a beautiful sunny afternoon when a few of us from our Callanish team were spending the day together, and I rather spontaneously decided to pull out my guitar (which was covered in dust after hiding in my closet for almost 10 years!) Of course they were all surprised and delighted to find out that I not only played guitar but also loved to sing! So for the first time we joined our voices and sang together, laughing our way through songs like 'Let It Be' and 'American Pie.' At the end of the day Janie looked me right in the eye and told me that from now on I should be bringing my guitar along with me on our Callanish retreats. At the time I thought she was crazy!

I learned that summer day, and each time since, when I've brought my guitar into our Callanish circles, that when there's really nothing more to be said, we can always *sing our hearts out*. And when we sing together something transformative can happen. At times, this transformation is the soothing and calming of our weary hearts; at other times, singing puts us in touch with inner feelings and inner thoughts. Sometimes singing can be so much fun that it can help uplift our spirits, make us laugh and give us respite from everything that's going on in our lives.

It is my hope that the collection of songs in our 'Callanish Songbooks' encapsulate our shared group experiences. I can think of many moments when 'Let it Be' by the Beatles has been the song we've sung to help us accept our lives as they are, or 'Imagine' by John Lennon to help us hold onto our hope and faith that anything is possible, or 'Ice Cream' by Sarah McLachlan to open our heart and remind us of all the ways we are loved and can love in our lives, and of course, 'I'm Yours' by Jason Mraz because, well, simply it makes everyone feel so darn good!

Much to my surprise, I have now started writing my own songs. My first song came to me midway through one of our weeklong retreats. I was sitting alone on one of my afternoon breaks and the words "it's all in the wobble" kept repeating over and over in my head. So I wrote them down on a piece of paper, and the next thing I knew I was putting chords to what would become my first song called 'All in the Wobble.' It took me awhile to have the courage to play it in public, but thanks to the love and encouragement of our Callanish community, I am now starting to play my songs in our Callanish circles.

It has been tremendously uplifting and inspiring to me to see the way our community has wholeheartedly welcomed and continues to rejoice in the healing power of music and singing.

"One of the marvelous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing."

Jean Vanier



Dax Naples

I climb on my hybrid early one spring morning to meet the group at Higher Grounds café questioning why I would make the choice to participate in a cycling event from Vancouver to Whistler. I have not ridden a bike more than 50 kms in the past 15 years let alone 122 kms in a single day. This is my chance to get into shape I keep telling myself, you have always wanted to do some sort of race. Rolling up to our meeting spot I see a group of people riding bikes much like my own, dressed in shorts and tees, soaring with enthusiasm but short on cycling proficiency.

The first ride, 30 kilometers, is challenging but the conversation and coffee make it an enjoyable morning. Within a short few weeks the group becomes Team Callanish, riding fancy new road bikes, committing to regular training, and working on technical skills like the group peloton. I begin looking forward to the training sessions, riding with the group, increasing my fitness, but most of all stopping for coffee and getting to know my teammates.

Each member had joined the team for reasons of their own, but each individual provided the group with support I have never had the opportunity to experience. Every member encouraged each other equally and for me being part of the group became more important than a personal goal. I felt pride and honour being a member of such a selfless group who showed genuine care and concern for each member's needs. The morning of the Fondo I put on my kit and climbed on my bike to meet the team. I took a short glance at my sleeve containing the names of the individuals each team member was honouring on this journey. I saw the name Allison Prinsen, my wife, who had leukemia eight years ago, and would be waiting for me at the Finish Line. I felt part of something that was so much bigger than myself. Pulling up to the meeting spot I saw 30 individuals that over 5 months had become a team. The Gran Fondo was a wonderful ride. I rode parts on my own and parts with my team, but the months of training together made me feel like I was always with the group.

Approximately 5 kms from the finish I found myself becoming emotional thinking of all the challenges and goals each member had overcome and accomplished. Down the final stretch the cheer from the Callanish supporters drowned out the rest of the crowd. We all completed our goal that day and were graciously treated to a wonderful feast at the Brew Creek Centre prepared by the generous volunteers.

Callanish has the ability to make everyone feel welcome and included. From this experience, Callanish became an important part of my life, they became my community.



Team Callanish Riders

Janie cont. from Page 1

Philip called me two hours after our conversation to say he would be riding. "I will be more miserable if I stay at home."

About two weeks after the ride, Philip told us that something very surprising had happened on the ride from Squamish to Whistler. He placed second in his category, and seventh overall in the Medio event!

"I rode in defiance of my dis-ease during the ride, and felt only compassion, love and oneness," he told us. And in an e-mail from Ireland this week, almost two months since the ride, Philip said "a long lost familiar vitality resurfaced and empowered me for my everyday life from that day on. I reconnected with my human spirit."

An intentional community can achieve great, and seemingly impossible things. When we walk (or cycle!) together as friends, not alone, we all succeed.

The collective heart of Callanish is undeniably alive and well.



Finn, Philip & Emma

James cont. from Page 1

Along with a set of skills for self-care and contemplative practice, I emerged from the retreat with a deep appreciation for the value of gathering as a group of individuals with quieting the mind as a shared objective.

In the several months since the retreat, I've had the privilege of establishing a practice of regularly attending meditation, yoga and other sessions that take place at Callanish House in Vancouver, often on my own and occasionally with Lynn or with our daughter, Nina. This has become extremely beneficial in so many ways to me and my family. The vision, wisdom and warmth of the whole Callanish community, the staff, the volunteers and my fellow participants, really help me to live my life day by day, moment by moment with gratitude and appreciation. A touchstone, indeed. Thank you all.

Untitled

by Rumi

Do not worry if our harp breaks
thousands more will appear.
We have fallen in the arms of love where all is music.
If all the harps in the world were burned down,
still inside the heart
there will be hidden music playing.
Do not worry if all the candles in the world flicker and die
we have the spark that starts the fire.
The songs we sing
are like foam on the surface of the sea of being
while the precious gems lie deep beneath.
But the tenderness in our songs
is a reflection of what is hidden in the depths.
Stop the flow of your words,
open the window of your heart and
let the spirit speak.

What I Appreciate about the Callanish Community

I have been a part of Callanish for over a decade –heading towards two decades since I met Janie Brown. I was on the Board of Directors in those very early days when meetings were held in different members' living rooms. I did dishes on retreat on Vancouver Island and celebrated when "Callanish in the City" emerged from an intention that actually took root in the wonderful space on West 10th. More recently, in the last year and a bit, I became a member of the Callanish staff.



Joanne Reimer

Being a reflective person at heart, I often think about what draws me to Callanish and the answer for me is the sense of community I feel when I am at Callanish or when I am with Callanish folk. I am nourished by that sense of community in a myriad of very diverse and exquisite ways that has contributed to and enlarged my personhood and for that I am grateful!

Music is very dear to my heart and I love how Callanish incorporates music into the life of the house and retreats. For me, it began with Chor Leoni and the Christmas sing-a-long, June Goldsmith's and Mary Liz's concerts. I even took a stab at ukulele lessons and had a lot of laughs in that process. I still have my ukulele but the music at Callanish awakened something in me and propelled me to incorporate more music into my life. I had studied and played the piano – but that was solitary. I wanted that sense of community that I so appreciated at Callanish, so I joined a choir. I had never sung in my life before!

There is rarely an event at Callanish that does not include food and I am one of those people who "live to eat." Food is a huge part of the way we connect as a community at Callanish and I have enjoyed preparing food, sharing it with and serving it to others, and yes, even cleaning up. The food Callanish serves is always carefully considered, lovingly prepared and beautifully served so that all of one's senses – the sight, smell, taste, as well as sound from the conversation, are inevitably part of enjoying food at Callanish.

Meditation is another way I experience that sense of community at Callanish. I find it difficult to describe the power of sitting in silence with others in that spacious "big" room. When holiday Mondays preclude meditation, I notice the void and am so glad to resume the practice on the following Monday. I rarely miss!

The sense of community I experience at Callanish is enriched by the diversity of people I have had the pleasure to meet, get to know, and call my friends. I meet people whose ages, interests, careers, cultures and character I likely never would have met were it not for Callanish. Generosity, grace, enthusiasm, equanimity, courage, and the ability to articulate with incredible insight are but a few of the qualities I have so admired in those I have met. They are people who are willing to embrace their vulnerabilities and seek moments of happiness and joy amidst moments of sadness and grief.

What I appreciate most about the Callanish community is the sense of openness and mindfulness toward all who come into the community, accepting that each is on their own unique journey and will take what Callanish has to offer in their own way, and in their own time.



Grains of Wisdom: The Callanish Cookbook was inspired by our nutritionist and cook Kathy Fell and is full of great ideas for healthy and delicious meals. It also features photographs and quotes from many of our retreats. Proceeds from the sale of the cookbook will help support Callanish retreats and programs. Please contact our office if you would like to purchase a copy.

Turkey Meatloaf

This is wonderfully tender meatloaf.

1 lb ground free-range turkey
1/4 cup celery, diced
1/4 cup onion, diced
1/4 cup zucchini, cubed
1/2 cup cranberries, optional
1/4 cup rolled oats (slow)
1 tsp poultry seasoning
1/2 cup stock or water
1/4 tsp mustard
3/4 tsp salt
1 egg

Lightly sauté the celery, onion, and zucchini in a little olive oil. Combine all the ingredients and mix gently. Scoop into baking dishes and bake until fully cooked in a 325° F oven. Time depends on the thickness of the pan you choose to use. Usually one hour is sufficient.

Serve with caramelized onions and mashed potatoes or oven-baked winter squash. This makes a truly homey winter retreat dinner.



Honouring a Volunteer

Marlene came on her first retreat in 2007, and has been a Callanish 'regular' ever since. She is often the life and soul of a Callanish gathering with her wit and wisdom, her sense of fun and of course, her fabulous style. She has taken many a person under her wing, with her love and support, keeping in touch and visiting Callanish participants in their homes, or in hospital. She has been such an example to others of how to live openly and honestly with the challenges of metastatic cancer and has helped our community in countless ways: compiling, editing and laying out all of our Callanish Writes collections, helping in the office, running errands, being a key member of the Fondo organizing committee and overseeing much of the after-Fondo Brew Creek celebration, baking muffins and cookies for the city programs, and keeping an eye on all of us facilitators.



Marlene Mills

We are so grateful to you Marlene. Thank you so much for everything.

We Remember with Love

Carol Daggitt
Kathy Collins
Dixie Tanner
Rick Watts

We send our love and thoughts to the family and friends of these remarkable people.

Special Thanks to:

All of our anonymous and monthly donors who give with such generous and ongoing commitment

The family and friends of **Carol-Anne Bickerstaff, Ashley Brear, Deborah Brown, Kathy Collins, Judith Radovan, Marlene Siemens, Sue Harradine, Lisa Johnson, Kiyoshi Matsuzaki, Rick Watts** for their generous memorial donations

The staff of The Brew Creek Centre for their ongoing generosity and support

Michael Luco of **Earthrise** for providing stunning flowers for retreats

Laurel Murphy and Margaret Bacon for the gift of healing sounds and touch for our relaxation group and home visits

Eva Matsuzaki for writing such beautiful thank you cards to our donors

Allison Prinsen for designing our 'Team Callanish' cycling jerseys and holiday greeting cards

Bill Sutherland for taking such good care of our garden

Don Matsuzaki, Buddy Sakamoto, Bill Sutherland, Doug Evans, Gerry and Joanne Reimer for driving to and from Brew Creek to help us with retreat set-up and take down

Dan Helmer for his ongoing support in maintaining our website
Kathy Fell for helping out in the Callanish office and kitchen

Gerry Reimer for patiently assembling all the small tables for our new sound room

Louie Henley for making the after-Fondo party possible, her on-going food & flowers, concert tickets, and much more..

Suzanne Hong at Granville Island Florists for bringing beauty to our retreats through her gift of flowers

Chor Leoni for their generosity through the proceeds of their 'Healing Voices' CD

Karen & Barry Coates of Fraser Meadow Organic Dairy for donating their fabulous yoghurt for retreat

Eva Matsuzaki and Lorna McGhee for volunteering on the kitchen team on retreat

Neil Prinsen and Jacky Fraser for driving participants to and from retreat

Daphne Roubini and Ruby's Ukes for ongoing support and donating pink ukeles from Vancouver's Cherry Blossom Festival

Nina Shin for the Nepalese singing bowls

Marlene Mills for her ting shas for meditation

Shannon & Marty Simpson for their birthday/Halloween fundraiser to benefit Callanish

Tracy Lucas, Gloria Harradine and friends for their fundraiser in honour of **Sue Harradine**

