



The word 'inspiration' is defined by Webster's dictionary as someone, or something, that elevates us, moves us, or encourages us. It also means 'to breathe in.' The derivation of the word comes from the Latin root *spirare*, to breathe, and *spiritus*, the spirit. I am inspired everyday in the Callanish community by people who are dealt extreme and unexpected challenges in their lives. They choose to lean into what comes with courage and dignity, honesty and goodwill, rather than to turn away. They restore faith in me that healing is always possible no matter how ill the body is. We can all breathe in the possibility of the spirit.



Janie Brown
Executive Director

It was during our Fall Equinox circle in September that I found myself elevated to new heights. I left the circle that evening with an unusual sense that I could be, and do, a whole lot more than I thought possible. It was a feeling I don't remember having for some time.

The circle gathers every three months to mark the change of the season. There are past retreat participants, their families and friends, young adult cancer network members (YACN), supporters of Callanish, staff and volunteers. Anyone can speak for as long as they wish and no one has to speak. The role of each circle member is to listen with caring attention. There are no direct responses or reactions after a person speaks. A few moments of silence ensue before another person speaks. The evening unfolds one person at a time, one breath at a time.

Before very long you find yourself moved, and curious, connected and inspired. Every person who speaks contributes to the energy of the evening, and each one stands as encouragement to someone else to risk sharing. There are always tears, and always laughter. There are poems, songs and stories. There is living and dying, beginnings and endings. I imagine our circle lives among many circles of people gathering like this across centuries, around the world. The simplicity of sharing the stories of our lives renews our humanity.

Philip Ho Faz Lee spoke of his journey back to competitive cycling after Stage IV nasopharyngeal cancer and how this past summer he completed one stage of the Tour de France. As Philip spoke in his soft Irish lilt, the room became very still. His humble, humorous and heartfelt story was captivating. Then Rima shared (see pg. 2) about how Philip had become her inspiration. Three years after a terminal diagnosis of metastatic breast cancer, she has taken up cycling. She recently pushed herself to complete 100 kms over 10 consecutive days, which she did, and more! Rima publicly thanked Philip across the circle that night, for being her inspiration. There were not many dry eyes in the house.

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I am alive.

Winter 2012

I'm floating down a steep and windy descent in the heart of the French Alps, sweat from the ascent already turning to salt. I feel joy, elation, ease and purpose. Air rushes against me as my body, mind, spirit and bicycle travel in excess of 75 km/h. As I approach another hairpin, I brake and lean into it, choosing a line for maximum speed without sliding. Centrifugal and gravitational forces are exerted on my muscles and bones. Exiting the bend, I gain momentum as gravity pulls me down the mountain. It's a corporal experience of the laws of nature.

In March 2012, when I began training for this stage of the Tour de France, I rediscovered the pleasures of a racing bicycle; the sensation of channeling energy to the pedals, riding in a pack or behind a line of cyclists at speed, the challenging exertions of climbing. I entered and won races, and finished the season with the Whistler Gran Fondo. What a stark contrast to my reality in November 2009.

Three years ago, it was difficult for me to walk for 10 minutes. My body was weak from chemotherapy and radiation treatment for stage IV nasopharyngeal carcinoma. Despite losing my taste and suffering from constant nausea, I did my utmost to maintain my body weight by adhering to a strict eating schedule as I was terrified of being fitted with a stomach bag. I never thought I'd have the strength to exercise again but as I healed, I started to jog slowly. On the first snowboarding trip after my diagnosis, I managed only a few descents before I was exhausted but was so happy to be outside again. I began mountain biking in the lush BC forests with my friends. Uphill was physically demanding and downhill was thrilling! Amidst the trees, I would breathe to rid myself of anxiety and become completely engaged in my pursuit.

As the long descent comes to an end, the road begins to rise again. I shift gears and ride out of the saddle to maintain momentum. My legs tell me the road ahead is challenging. I remind myself that every mountain pass

cont. page 2



Philip Ho Faz Lee

One day my life seemed normal, going along its track. The next day, the shock of a cancer diagnosis and I was derailed, stopped in my tracks. It was shortly after 9/11 and I felt not unlike the people in New York, an unexpected terrorist attack by my own cells.

With overwhelming emotions, my tears flowed endlessly and fears burdened every thought. I had to face the inevitable sorrow and grief, now my constant companions. I was struggling for my life, and an inner call for action to do something, anything, and everything to help me live, became my challenge. I left no stone unturned in my search for answers.



Christine Nichols

But in all of this, tucked away, was the matter of my broken heart, the feelings of betrayal from my body, and the questions of finding courage in the face of fear, and hope in the face of my despair. And what about the incredible sadness that I was causing to all my family?

As the preparations for my stem cell transplant proceeded, I did not know what my journey would entail. I felt a deep inner need to understand what was happening to me. I wanted a roadmap to navigate the rocky path ahead.

The journey to “birthing my new self out of my old cells”, became a profound growth experience for me. Waves of gratitude and love, fear and enduring fighting spirit rolled over me. I had been given another chance to dream, to know love, to feel hope, and find wisdom in the qualities of my heart. Survival meant a new set of life’s rules was starting, and I needed help.

Along came Callanish, an oasis for the fearful hearts! Their gentle invitation brought out the willingness to bare my soul, to travel the emotional landscape fully. Here I could strip away layer after layer, slowly replace fear with hope, and discover strengths with kindred souls. Witnessing others’ courage instills the flame in me! And the laughter is infectious too!

I continue to be deeply touched and newly opened with each retreat I have taken. And with each writing group I find more truth, compassion and gratitude to nourish my soul, my spirit and my heart. The German poet J. W. von Goethe said this: “Change is inevitable, growth is optional.”

As I move through life, I know I am supported by wonderful people in a community of caring.

Janie Brown cont.

It is not that everyone needs to take up a competitive sport to be an inspiration. There were others in the room who inspired us by just getting themselves into the room that evening, despite having had chemotherapy that day. Others risked speaking about their fears, or allowed themselves to weep in the open. People inspire others by showing up to participate fully in life, regardless of their circumstances.

What these two young people, Philip and Rima, taught me that night is that when you set your intention and do something that you never dreamed possible, it elevates not only yourself, but a whole community stands upon your shoulders.

We hope to continue to be inspired by the passion of Rima and Philip and invite cyclists (or wannabe cyclists!) to join “**Team Callanish**” for the next Gran Fondo from Vancouver to Whistler on September 7th, 2013. We will keep you posted with further details.

I am even considering buying myself a new bike!

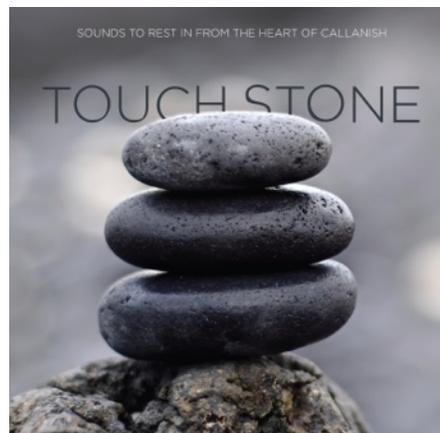
A few months ago I wanted to do something memorable to prove to myself that 'anything is possible'. As I celebrated my 3 year anniversary, a stage 4 metastatic breast & liver cancer survivor, I set a goal earlier this summer (2012) to cycle 100 km / 62.13 miles in 10 hours (10 km per hour each day) for **ten consecutive days**. I completed this goal this summer & cycled 104 km / 64.62 miles in 9.5 hours. I'm very passionate about cycling and it has contributed to my success of living a healthier lifestyle.



Rima Andre

A big thanks to The Callanish Society for their support, love and continuous encouragement! I love our amazing community at Callanish! Let your mortality light your fire, so that you act with passion & soul. Become intoxicated by your life & not your illness. Exceptional patients don't try not to die, they try to live until they die! Then, they are successes, no matter what the outcome of their disease, because they have healed their lives, even if they have not cured their disease. Photo of my victory!

Announcing our new Callanish Relaxation CD



The double CD set includes: Relaxation induction, Metta meditation, crystal bowls/chinese gongs and improvised piano and song created by team members: Janie, Liz, Gretchen, Laurel, Danielle and Maryliz. Cost \$20.00 (all proceeds to Callanish). Please call or email us to purchase.

Philip Ho Faz Lee cont.

helps us understand who we are, after every peak is a descent, which allows us to embrace ourselves, let go and move on....

Quotes that helped me in the past for the new season...

"Pain is temporary... quitting lasts forever"

- A controversial Lance Armstrong

"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so"

- Sarah Sample quoting Shakespeare's Hamlet, for mindfulness practice

"Think of one inspiration each day"

- Callanish

"You have to celebrate each victory and congratulate yourself, for this is so difficult"

- Anonymous lady in the chemo ward on cancer treatment

"Imagine good times ahead, things you will do, and believe they will happen."

- Carly Fleming

A shiver sparked up my spine as I stepped through the entrance to Callanish. I stood in a wide, open, empty, entrance space. An urban sense of grace surrounded me with quietude and presence. There was no receptionist other than my heart.

Danielle put down the phone and stepped into the room to greet me by name. She is tall and warm, like sunshine on dark honey, and welcoming. She leads my friend and I on a tour of the building as we go back over the questions about the retreat which she has already answered for me on the phone. Mostly I am feeling the space, testing my intuition in it, and looking for the outside limits. That has been my guiding instinct since childhood. I am looking for a place to rest in the middle of my cancer crisis. I need to sink into myself and contemplate my life without having to respond to any demands.



Margaret Callahan

This place is alive. It has integrity. Who are these people who have empowered this old house with their hearts? I want to know them. I buy the Qigong CD for me, and the cookbook for a friend, and tell Danielle I will e-mail the application. I am the last of 8 applicants. I feel a weight beginning to lift from my chest. Some things are wordless and cannot be shared.

Molly and I go for a tea and a walk. We talk about it. I have already projected myself to Brew Creek wondering what part of the land will be familiar to me, what will echo with the old memories and what will wake up in me? Anticipating sparks.

I have decided to e-mail the application to Doreen. Preschool friends, we have shared our lives, and now are sharing cancer. She will love it. I'm convinced! She agrees to come and is put on the waitlist. Doreen is accepted, and so am I. We are headed into adventure land. When I lose my financing the week before the retreat at Brew Creek is to start, I uncharacteristically pick up the phone and ask for help. Janie is immediately supportive and generous. Pride is not an issue when the need is true and the giver's heart is open. She and I become friends in that moment.

Driving up the Squamish highway, we stop for a walk in the rainforest and a view of the falls. I am taking my time to enter retreat, and my husband, Brian knows how important that transition is. He squires Doreen and I with humor and tenderness, buys us lunch, and then finally points the car at Brew Creek. We turn in and find the women of Callanish waiting for us in the parking lot. Someone welcomes Brian and takes him off on a tour so he can fully appreciate the architecture and the land. Someone takes Doreen's bag, and someone else takes mine and retreat has begun. Welcoming smiles, gentle "how are you's?" And who are you anyway? The opening round of many inquiries inviting me to reflect; to share what is floating on barely submerged surfaces; and a warm humour tickling a laugh in my belly and tears in my eyes.

I sit on my bed, alone. What am I doing here? I open my window and the creek is there... a steady flow...gurgling and lapping...I settle back down onto the bed and consider the intentions I am bringing, for myself, and for Doreen, for the group. Do I really want to open into the unknown with a group of strangers? Really, the question has no resonance. I am wanting to backpeddle and isolate. I admit I am scared. I feel better immediately. Having sorted my things, and created a small shrine I find Doreen and we go for dinner.

The week is like the entrance, one long welcoming song. Every moment and movement is orchestrated to anticipate and meet our individual needs. The staff serve us, sit in circle with us, and share their own poetry and experience. Brew Creek is a haven. The land is rich and beautiful, and the stewardship of the staff sparkles in unexpected places along the trails and the creek.

I look at the choices I have for the week and decide it is an opportunity to go beyond myself in a rare environment where I will be held and respected without any doubt, and the hesitations will all be my own.

My connection with Callanish began over 15 years ago. Janie and I worked together at the Vancouver Cancer Centre and when she came back from Commonwealth, a cancer retreat centre in California, I knew that her dream of starting a retreat program for cancer patients would soon be realized.



Sarah Sample

Since the very first retreat, I have been encouraging patients to go to Callanish. In fact, I sent a good friend of mine to the first Callanish retreat after she told me how fearful she was of dying. Today, my friend expresses to me often that Callanish has changed her life. Over the years I have heard this over and over from people whom I have sent off to Callanish. It has given so many patients much strength, hope and courage to face their most difficult life and death challenges.

In the early years of Callanish, I began to attend events and benefits and soon became a 'Friend of Callanish.' It gives me much pleasure and comfort knowing that my small monthly donation will go directly to supporting patients. I will *always* be a friend of Callanish. I will continue to attend music concerts, and community support gatherings. I try not to miss the 'changes of the seasons' circles at Callanish. It feeds my spirit as I witness many stories of grief, loss, hope, love and strength.

After many years of encouraging patients to go to Callanish retreats, I had the honour and privilege last February of washing dishes on retreat. Even though I knew to expect feelings of connection, love, respect, safety, and the flow of giving and receiving from the Callanish group, more than ever, I felt admiration for the care, detail and attention that is given to patients. I witnessed how people are able to face difficult life circumstances including facing the possibility of their mortality in the comfort and safety that is created throughout the week.

Last month when I attended the Fall Equinox circle, I was a little late getting there and I entered through the front door just as the circle was sitting in silence. Ah! Beautiful, beautiful silence. I sat down on the couch outside the room to sit in silence until the meditation ended. I knew I was home. Home in my heart. Space for my heart. To the Callanish group of amazing, dedicated and caring people, I thank you for being there for patients and families and for providing a sacred space for me. And thanks for allowing me to wash dishes.

The Thing is

to love life, to love it even
when you have no stomach for it
and everything you've held dear
crumbles like burnt paper in your hands,
your throat filled with the silt of it.
When grief sits with you, its tropical heat
thickening the air, heavy as water
more fit for gills than lungs:
when grief weights you like your own flesh
only more of it, an obesity of grief,
you think, *How can a body withstand this?*
Then you hold life like a face
between your palms, a plain face,
no charming smile, no violet eyes,
and you say, yes, I will take you
I will love you, again.

by Ellen Bass

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.

Energy Muffins

These wonderful muffins are loaded with goodness and are always a favourite on our day retreats in the city. Yield 18 muffins.

½ cup yogurt	1 ½ cups spelt flour
½ cup water	2 teaspoons baking powder
1 ½ cups organic quick oats	1 teaspoon baking soda
½ cup organic ground flax seed	1 teaspoon salt
½ cup grated apple	½ teaspoon ginger
½ cup honey	½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ cup oil	1 cup chopped dates
2 eggs	½ cup chopped nuts

Combine the first 5 ingredients and soak for about half an hour. Whisk together the honey eggs and oil, then add to the oat mixture. Sift or stir the spelt flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ginger and cinnamon.

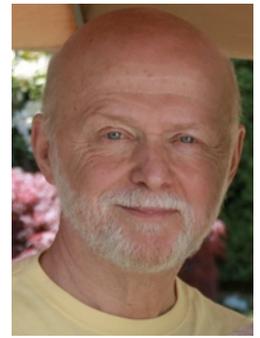
Add the sifted flour mixture to the wet mixture along with the chopped dates and nuts.

Mix just to moisten. Bake at 375 degrees for 20 – 25 minutes. Don't overbake or they can tend to be dry.



Honouring a Volunteer

We heard a great deal about Neil and his wife Kathy, when we met their daughter Allison who attended a Callanish retreat following a bone marrow transplant for leukemia six years ago. From all accounts, they were the parents everyone should have in life! When we met them both, we had to agree! Neil has become one of our trusty volunteer drivers for the weeklong retreats. He picks retreatants up from their homes or hotels (usually nice and early I hear!) and drives them up the Howe Sound to The Brew Creek Centre. There are stories of roadside stops to look at the views, Starbucks conversations in Squamish, and even some nursing care was required on one trip! Neil is one of the warmest, most friendly people we know, and we are deeply grateful for the way he safely cares for our precious retreat participants. I am sure he treats everyone just like he did Allison when she was ill. Congratulations also to Neil and Kathy for becoming proud grandparents to Hazel Grace, born December 30th last year to Allison and Dax.



Neil Prinsen

We Remember with Love

Marisa Castelo
 Stephen Dickter
 Sue Harradine
 Lisa Hetman
 Debra Karby
 Marilou Levangie
 Marina Van Der Heijden
 Marlene Van Yperen

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 **Kirsten Andersen, Marisa Castelo, Lisa Hetman, Debra Karby, Genieve Lemay, Alain Leung, Sue Harradine, Martin Holloway, Lisa Johnson, Rod Kirkham, Hugh Macht, Rachel Nash, Ginger Richards, Michael Rosen, Marlene Siemens, Nicole Siemens, Sara Taylor and Margaret Tse** for their generous memorial donations

The Brear Family and Keep on Swimming for their continued generosity in honour of Ashley Brear

Glenn Iles and the staff of The Brew Creek Centre for their ongoing love and support

Michael Luco of Earthrise for his generosity in providing stunning flowers for retreats

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

Patrica North for the Vancouver Chamber Choir music tickets

Eva Matsuzaki for writing such beautiful thank you cards

Allison Prinsen for designing our 'Callanish Writes' book covers, Holiday Cards and CD graphics

Bill Sutherland for taking such good care of our garden and for also helping us with retreat set-up and take down

Dan Helmer for his ongoing support in maintaining our website

Alan Tapper and Daphne Lobb for their birthday donations

Mike Cates for making and dropping off his fabulous baking

Louie Henley for her food & flowers, concert tickets, art supplies 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

Shelly Hutchinson of Jordans Carpets for donating the underlay for our new carpet & **David Clarke** for his design advice

Mike Cashin from Crew Studios for his generous donation of time and talent in the production of our new Touchstone CD

Emma Cassidy & Andrea Freeman for retreat day cooking and baking

Jenn Bos for being so generous with her time to run errands in support of our day to day programs and events

Danielle Schroeder for her donations from her bike ride in memory of her mother **Barbi Bluman**

Shabbir Dhalla for the generous donation of a stay at the Royal Anne Hotel in Kelowna

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

Casey Wolf for donating fabric for the art room

Our fabulous baking team of **Sherri Silverman, Janet Silver and Susan Stine** for donating their time and the ingredients to bake the much loved and infamous Callanish cookies

Eva Matsuzaki & Andrea Freeman for volunteering to wash dishes on retreat

Marguerite Mousseau for helping with the sand tray room

