



L'ARCHE NOAH SEALTH OF SEATTLE

FALL-WINTER 2016

Andrew Bernhoft is our newest core member!

Andrew's mom shared his Christmas letter from last year with us. Here is an extract from it:

And now for something completely different – Heeeeeee's Andrew! I have long hankered after trying my hand at the Christmas letter, but quite frankly, being part of a family of writers, not to mention the only one with Down's syndrome, I simply haven't had the heart to try. But when I saw two years ago, that Frobe the "Great" Dane, (he was only two at the time, what's so great about that, I ask you?) had written half of it (the Christmas letter, that is) (the half that was, I gather, rather better received) and that last year, Frobe was joined by his sidekick Percy as well as my 3-year-old nephew Julian in penning a one-act play. . . you will understand that I felt as though life was passing me by. Not any more. Carpe diem! Strike while the iron is hot! Mony a mickle maks a muckle, as Granny (Mum's Mum, from Scotland) used to say.

But there is an even more exciting reason why I am seizing this opportunity, while Percy and Frobe are gently snoozing and Julian is tucked away safely in Rhode Island awaiting the birth of his first sibling, my second nephew, (editor's note: the amazing Rory was born Jan 9th, and a very fine addition to the family he is), and it is this: if everything goes according to plan, *this will be the last Christmas I spend living at home!*

It all started at Easter when Mum and Dad took me to Seattle to visit L'Arche, a community for people with mental disabilities. I really didn't know what to expect, but here's what I found: three houses full of people, some with mental disabilities



and some without—it was hard to tell who was which, not that anyone seemed to care particularly—living together as friends.

It may sound sappy, but never have I felt so at home, so loved and respected for who I am; I knew instantly that this was where I want to spend the rest of my life. I mean, Mum and Dad are pretty okay and they get some things more or less right—Mom's motto for our homeschool was to treat each other with "Love and Respect", so you can tell that she was at least trying—but she does tend to slip into philosophical mode at completely inappropriate moments. You wouldn't catch Jean Vanier doing that! He's the French Canadian who founded L'Arche, and he really understands people like me. Just listen: "The great thing about people with intellectual disabilities is that they're not people who discuss philosophy..." (Get that, Mum?) "What they want is fun and laughter, to do things together and fool around, and laughter is at the heart of community." Now that, ladies and gentlemen, is my kind of guy!

I was fully prepared to stay there forever, so you can imagine how disgruntled I was when Mum and Dad showed up (on Easter Sunday, of all days—don't they realize that Easter is all about joy and new life?) to take me "home" to Ojai.

Since then, I've been back to L'Arche twice, and each time I can't tell whether I am happier to see them, or they to see me. Who cares? Either way, we get right down to the serious business of having fun. On our most recent visit we arrived just in time for the last Community Meeting before Christmas. A business meeting, we were told—but what a riot! Everybody was there, from all three houses—such a colorful, varied group, each one confident yet completely tuned in to each other . . . and the singing! I soon picked up the rules: start on any note you fancy, and sing as loud as possible at whatever tempo seems to work best for you. It was glorious! *O Come, Oh Come Emmanuel* was first; now, there's a carol that Mum only likes when it's sung by King's College, Cambridge, and other really fancy choirs, so I was a bit worried. But when I glanced over to check on her, her face was suffused with happiness and I'll swear there were tears in her eyes.

There was no doubt about it when we started on *Silent Night*. Never have I heard it belted out so loud, or with more enthusiasm. Honestly, it sounded more like a cheer at a soccer game . . . it was fantastic! Dad says there are still hoops to jump through (whatever that means), and lots more paperwork to fill out, but it looks definite. I'm moving out on my own! I can hardly wait! (STOP PRESS: Cinco de Mayo – 5th May – I came home to Shuinota House, Capitol Hill, Seattle. If you'd like to read more about my move and my new life here, check out Mum's blog: beyondentropy.blogspot.com). Also if you'd like to write to me, 1425 East Ward St, Seattle WA 98112 will find me. I'd love to hear from you!

Remembering Paul Tosaya March 6, 1926 -- February 25, 2016



Paul Tosaya, first and foremost, was a man of the Beatitudes. He had a deep desire for God and a deep concern and an active passion for helping the poor. He believed in living simply, in service to others all the while being a person who had lived through immense trauma during his own life.

In 1942, when Paul was still a teenager, President Roosevelt authorized the deportation and incarceration act with Executive Order 9066. Sent to an

internment camps in California, Paul's family had to leave everything that they owned and all that was familiar. His father lost the family business, a noodle factory in the International District. Life in the camp was very difficult. The interred received army rations and lived in make shift buildings that were very hot in the summer and cold in the winter. It all took such a huge toll on families and marked people for life.

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After the war, many had to stay in California, having to work in the area in order to earn enough to return home. When Paul's family returned to Seattle they became involved in the hospitality business.

Paul spent a brief period with the Jesuits after which he got a Masters in Social Work at Gonzaga University and subsequently in the early 1970's became a member of the prayer group at St. Patrick's Church here in Seattle that eventually opened a L'Arche home for children on Capitol Hill in 1975. Paul faithfully served our community for 40 years, doing all the maintenance and yard work on all three homes.

Paul was laser focused in following and serving the Lord. He was faithful to daily mass and spent hours at prayer each day in our chapel.

In the beginning, Paul was very private and used to keep to himself but when Jen became director she cajoled Paul into attending Team Meetings, being part of the "check-ins" and becoming more a member of the community.

During those times he surprised us with revelations about growing up, his parents' noodle factory and being a house-boy in Spokane on order to earn tuition money to attend university. Then during a Fiesta time at a Community Retreat one year, Paul shocked us all by doing handstands and back flips – and not just because he was over 65 at the time but because this was our shy and retiring Paul!

Paul's life of ministry was not confined to serving people with an intellectual disability. Although he never told us, he was known for helping others and had a slew of "shut ins", people that were sick and needed help that he would visit and support in various ways.

Long before it became fashionable to be "green", Paul's extremely frugal nature meant he was wholly invested in recycling. In Paul's mind, everything had a second life.

Nothing ever got thrown away – which is one of the reasons we brought over a ton and a half of wood, broken electrical appliances, old paint, wood and machine parts to the dump when we needed to clean out the Noah garage. Not only did things not get thrown out with Paul, they got reclaimed from the garbage. Not many of us are, or will be, known as dumpster divers, period ... but in our 80's? Paul, being so much older than most assistants that came to L'Arche was remarkably accepting and welcoming of younger people ... many of whom would be taken on extensive hikes and return exhausted, fooled into thinking that Paul's age would limit his pace and stamina.

Then it took assistants a while to understand that his "WOOO ah!" wasn't really an expression of fervent support but actually his way of saying: "Holy smokes you've no idea how way off what you're saying / doing is right now – but the Lord loves you, so I will leave it at that."

Paul worked right up until when he left us last August. Despite the advance of Parkinson's disease, he would faithfully sweep the sidewalk outside of Noah House, clearing it of leaves and then the neighbors' homes. Paul's fall and disorientation in August had us bring him to Harborview Hospital. He was assessed as needing a wheelchair and more intense care than we could provide for him.



We will miss so many things that Paul bore witnessed to, his steely faith and committed prayer life, his love of core members, especially Carol Howard, his generosity, his ability to forgive, his candor, his stories, his interest in world events, his upbeat, good humor, his ability to see the good in people, and his playful impishness.

Yet what is so remarkable about Paul is not so much his freedom and lightheartedness when recounting some incredibly painful incidents in his life – he never complained – but rather, his experience of suffering leading to his resolute and inspirational commitment to following the Lord in such generous and faithful service to others.

May you rest in Peace, Paul.



SISTER BEA'S JUBILEE



This July, our friend, Sister Beatrice LaFramboise, SP (aka Sister Bea), along with several other faithful women of the Sisters of Providence, celebrated her 50th Anniversary of entering religious life!

Sister Bea has been L'Arche's main Vocational Support in helping situate our core members in new jobs and searching for volunteer opportunities. Her endless energy, generous supply of crafts, inclusion of our deaf core members, and deep faith continually blesses our community. We are excited for Sister Bea's new ministry in assisting Catholic schools and bless her as she continues to trust in the Providence of God.

Our Annual Community Retreat at the Guild

This year's retreat provided much enjoyment, reflection, creativity and celebration. We are so thankful to share time together at the Grunewald Guild—being two communities together is such a gift and it feels like home to be there.

As this is the year of Mercy, we decided to center our weekend around the theme of mercy, as well. This proved to be a weekend rich in depth and blessing, as we threw rocks into the river as a sign of letting go, shared stories and skits about self-compassion, and enjoyed resting and playing with one another.



We enjoyed the space that's created when we are there—creating art, going on leisurely walks to town together, sitting on the couches in the centrum room—the retreat has a beautiful way of bringing us together and reflecting on our lives together. Of course the other best part is the talent show, which is always a hit among ourselves and the staff at the Guild, too.



Look out for the lovely curtain made out of painted circles and mosaic flagstones at our auction in November!

We are so thankful for the friendship of Dan and Lois, who were beloved directors at the Guild for many years. They welcomed us year after year with such warmth and love and are so hospitable and welcoming. It was oh-so-easy to bless them on their journey in true L'Arche fashion!

CORE MEMBER RETREAT



The retreat, wonderfully guided by Jennifer Kelly and Bob Sackel and set up by Mary Gaudette and Tony Davey, emphasized our role in community as gift finders, recognizing the juxtaposition of community and its tendency to wound as it blesses.



We took time to reflect on the challenges and gifts that we have encountered and received in our own community life. Additionally, the retreatants enjoyed walks on the grounds, creating art, and of course, the beloved and never-disappointing talent show and fiesta. The showcase included Xan's spoon balancing act, Patty's rendition of Country Roads and a very impassioned Happy Birthday song directed by Bill.

We were sent forth from the retreat with the question, "how we are made to feel special and how do we try to show others that they are special?" We invite you to ponder this question as well.



May the blessing of the Lord be upon Dan and Lois. We will miss you!

Community Mandate



Dave and Joan kicks the day off with a dialogue.



At breaktime, Bill wowed us by singing,
“She’ll Be Comin’ Around the Mountain!”



Eddie and Lillian share the hopes and dreams
gathered from their group.



Regional Gathering

In June our community gathered together to travel to Portland for the Western Region's L'Arche Gathering, "Sacred Roots". Communities from Spokane, Tacoma, Portland, California and Seattle spent the week celebrating together, as well as retelling each community's founding story.

Some highlights of the week included an annual talent show filled with singing, dancing, skits, and poetry; a region-wide dance party; and community outing to Powell's Bookstore with a stop for some fresh donuts! Our community, with the help of Jennifer Kelly and assistants, took part in leading the music for our gathering.

The week ended with each L'Arche community taking a turn to bless another community in the region. Our community presented Portland with various gifts and joined in singing the blessing song for their community. Each community also brought pictures of their members in their house groups to trade with another community. A fun time was had by all! We are looking forward to celebrating again in 2017!



It's Alive, It's Aliiiiiive!



We have been up to something truly delightful at Shuinota house this Spring and Summer. We decided to grow a garden!! With the help of some wonderful friends at the neighboring St. Joseph's cathedral, we set up two raised beds, and planted some tiny veggie and fruit starts. Our pals at L'Arche Tahoma Hope trades us all the plant starts for candles, thanks guys!

It has been a joy to watch the progress of our garden, from tiny babies to huge productive plants! Kale, swiss chard, onions, tomatoes, romaine, strawberries and peas have all made their way from the soil to our dinner plates. The harvest has been plentiful!

Vacations Galore!

Portland



Chillin' at Mary and Tony's Residence.
Thank you for your hospitality!

Spokane + Montana



Feelin' peachy keen!

Vancouver



Channeling the Olympic spirit!



Enjoying a walk through the rose
garden



Uh-oh! Four Monkeys!



Wild times in Canada!



In awe of Oregon Coast's beauty



Good times with old friends.



Visiting the train museum

REMEMBERING ROBERT ROSS



Sharing memories and releasing yellow balloons for Robert.



Sweet friend, wonderful housemate, talented artist, and exceptional human. We miss you, and cherish all the memories you gifted to us.

OUR 5TH ANNUAL BENEFIT DINNER



Patty & Eddie lookin' elegant with excitement for the big night!



Dave performs the mysterious disappearing coin trick.



The fabulous foursome captivating the audience with their Irish dance.



Welcoming and passing out our L'Arche glasses as gifts.

THANKSGIVING DINNER

We had an awesome Thanksgiving on November 19th with our family and friends! It was an evening filled with stories to share, laughter, singing, and of course, enjoying a bottomless pit of great food and desserts!



Big smiles all around!



Gerry and Nancy starting the evening out with a prayer.



Our talented chefs in action!

**Thank you L'Arche Tahoma Hope
for the memorable evening at the bowling alley!**



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