

Attachment E: Epistles:

Junior Yearly Meeting
Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF)
Young Adult Friends (YAF)
Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association

Junior Yearly Meeting

Peace is...

Happy children making friends
Nonviolence
Finding shells in the creek
A green planet
Love and friends and happiness
Dancing with friends
Daddy and mommy
No war
A smile and a wave
Hearing the birds sing
Pass
Smiles from Sylvan.

Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF)

We began the new SAYF year, as Austin would say in his unforgettable epistle, like fresh socks walking into West Knoxville meetinghouse and concluded it at the end of the sock's dirty, dirty and strewn across the floor, here at SAYMA.

Knoxville, Knoxville first retreat
New Year, new friends, old friends meet
Let's do the time warp again

New place, Old Greer house
We flew off the trampoline
But no one got hurt, no, magically we were buoyant above the Greer house for oh so so a-bouncing on our trampoline road the like a fish rides a sea. for road the like a fish, rides the sea.

Chapel Hill meeting
Full of crepes and ice cream cake
It seems the rest of this stanza was left foolishly blank.

Atlanta Meeting
First business then snow
Snowball fight, GET ME! Wait! No!

A walk in the rain
In a Nashvillian park
The dancing, it dried us, and washed off our bark and shirts

Hard Labor State Park
Outdoor swimming and games
Bonfire with smores
Lucky like Becky, that ridiculous name
And then SAYMA came, the best of the best
But graduation always puts our heart to the test
The end.

Young Adult Friends (YAF)

Once upon a time, there was a YAF who lived in a hole in the ground. Not a dirty grimy hole filled to the ends with worms, nor a dry dandy hole with no place to sit, but a YAF hole, and that means comfort.

Like every YAF, this YAF liked to start of every morning with a hearty business meeting.

One day, a great spirit (or a demigod, depending on the translation) came to the YAF and listed three things necessary for the YAF to find happiness.

Now the YAF felt perfectly happy already with the state of past large hearty business meetings, but had never been one to deny the leading of a great spirit (demigod). So the YAF set out.

First, the YAF set out to find fortune. Almost immediately upon embarking, the YAF happened upon a queer race called the SAYFERS [ooh, aah], who had teamed a rare beast called the FAP [gasp, roar]. No longer a ferocious adult presence, the now friendly AP was all too happy to part with her riches.

With coins in pocket and smile on face, the YAF continued voyaging. However, having always sat down to business meeting at the spur of the moment, the YAF was less prepared for the next challenge, which required the daunting task of PLANNING AHEAD [Duh, Duh, Duh]. After many attempts at communication, the YAF managed to summon the mystical matriarch Mary Ann Downey [mystical noises]. She imparted upon the YAF glorious secrets of the art of time management, gift searching and spirit-led process.

Using these newfound riches and skills, the YAF finally found courage to leave safe harbor and face the great unknown. Having rarely ventured out to be a part of the greater world of SAYMA, this last challenge proved to be the most daunting and intimidating yet. The YAF certainly made mistakes, but due to the continued support and love of (capital F and lowercase f) Friends, encountered along the way, the YAF gained confidence and comfort in knowing that this last task would be a long and fruitful one. The YAF was excited about continuing to grow.

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association

Epistle of the thirty-eighth session of the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association of the Religious Society of Friends: Meeting at Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, North Carolina, June 12-15, 2008.

Greetings to all Friends, Yearly Meetings and Friends' Organizations! We assemble in the beauty of the southern mountains at a season of warmth, with the hum of cicadas, rejoicing in the gathering of Friends and the fellowship of the Spirit.

Friends were encouraged at the opening of business to live “our lives in the power of love and not worrying too much about the results. In doing this the means becomes part of the end...we must literally not take too much thought for the morrow but throw ourselves wholeheartedly into the present. That is the beauty of the way of love, it cannot be planned and its end cannot be foretold. (Wolf Mendl in *Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 1985, p. 188)

Following the theme of Yearly Meeting, “Out of the Harbor: Our Voyages of Faith,” eight Friends launched us on our voyages of faith by sharing their awe-inspiring journeys during the open plenary session. We were humbled, delighted, inspired by Nicholas Wells’ account of growing up Quaker; Bonnie Hardie’s and Conrad Honicker’s brush with death and lessons in accepting the unexpected; Dick Houghton’s experiments using mechanical engineering as a creative path and kinesiology as a spiritual one; Woods Nash’s photo’s in a Haitian orphanage gently holding a starving child on his lap, of work in an African AIDS hospital, and in a Cambodian factory producing clay water-filter pots; Pam Beziat’s photos of her nursing work in Central American and her organic garden in Nashville; and Hannah McDermott’s heart-warming account of growing up in SAYMA.

Hearing these histories gave us an acute awareness and deep appreciation of the treasure we have in individual SAYMA friends.

In the second plenary, Friends heard stories from Armenia, Greece and the Bedouin lands from our own Kathleen Mavournin, receiving grounds for reflection on the growth of wisdom, kindness and discernment.

We honor the contributions of our visitors and representatives of wider Quaker organizations. We heard of the work of the Friends Committee on Outworld Relations, the Friends World Committee for Consultation, American Friends Service Committee and its Southeast Regional Office, Friends committee on National Legislation, Quaker Earthcare Witness and Quaker House.

The Faith and Practice Revision Committee presented a well-written section on the care of children in our meetings [which was approved]. We also approved revisions to our section on Equality. Friends were not in unity at this time on a section on government. Of greatest concern was language regarding making decisions on reproduction and family planning by individuals unhampered by legal restrictions.

In the light of our equality testimony, we conducted a threshing session the role of meetings in performing legal marriages while only heterosexual marriages are recognized by our current laws. Careful and thoughtful planning had established guidelines for the threshing that resulted in a productive, open and useful session.

Two Meetings brought concerns regarding Friends Meetings authorizing legal marriage certificates for some couples when they are not legally allowed to do so for others.

Meetings are struggling to find ways to honor all marriages equally. We wish to avoid the inequality required by laws giving privileges to heterosexual but not same sex couples. Friends are seeing ways to witness for marriage equality to the larger society.

Gay and Lesbian individuals expressed the alienation they feel because of the wider society’s rejection of their marriages. Friends unite to focus concern on strengthening and supporting couples.

At the close of business the Yearly Meeting considered and approved a minute to stand d act against the practice of torture based on the Golden Rule.