

SAYF Worship Journal
Nurturing and Steering Committees Retreat

On the weekend of February 24-26, 2012, Southern Appalachian Young Friends met at the W. Knoxville Friends Meetinghouse to consider ways to plan for nurturing and steering of the whole group for the rest of the year and into the fall. This is our witness. This is our story.

I felt this Nurturing Retreat was successful as a whole. I feel like a great deal more thought was put into everything, and that the changes, although subtle, are more group changing as a whole. I love the new introduction to “worship journals”, and although not an extremely noticeable change, I feel it will make as much of an influence as hoped. As for the rest of the retreat, I’m starting to feel that closer, tight-knit bond that nurturers have, and the time not spent shaping the rest of the SAYF community was spent with my favorite people in the entire world. I love the new Quelf game, and think it would be a great ice breaker for newbies at retreats to come.

I had had a terrible week before this retreat (stereotypical I know) and it definitely helped take my mind off things. Thank you all for Nurturing me, especially Lekey, who helped more than she knows just by letting me talk. And I conclude I love you all, have a safe trip home. ☺.

Patrick

PS This is my first epistle! Yay!

PPS Here me, for I have spoken! (ask Nick).

This was a retreat about epistles. And after talking about them for hours, I feel like I should be able to write a good, reflective epistle interworked with meaningful spiritual thoughts and witty comments that made this retreat ‘different’ or ‘special’ but it’s hard to do.

So being tired, here are some shoutouts! OK, not really.

I really liked some of the conversations we had in the nurturer business meeting. I feel like we all work well together and really care so much for this community as a moving, changing, loving environment. Having a weekend to just lie around with beautiful people and play silly games just kind of made this weekend seem really peaceful and far away from everyday life. There’s just something so simple & pure about playing board games that makes me feel young. Idk, it’s hard 2 explain so that might not make sense.

You are all beautiful, amazing people, and have all changed so much since I met you. I know that I’ve also grown and changed a lot since I first started sayf. And with people working so hard for its future, I’m really excited for all sayfs to come.

So before I make less sense or Guthrie has to correct any more of my spelling mistakes

I’m gonna go.

PS: The chicken's on Fire!

~ Emma

Dear Friends,

Thank you for a wonderful retreat! Gathering with all of you in mutual concern for the betterment of our community; sharing ideas and forming consensus in a worshipful setting; made for a much appreciated escape from the recent pressures of the wider world. I love you all and I love SAYF,

Aaron

Dear Beautiful SAYFers,

On the way to the van to sayf coming from school, all in could think is I really need this right now. I've been going through a lot and this community is one of the few places where I always feel at home. I see everyone growing in the community and couldn't think of a better place to be. Everyone here has grown and will grow into the smartest and most loving people I know. Then again, I don't have much of a social life in the first place. I love you all so much and I wouldn't trade you guys for anything in the world.

Truly Yours,

Kofi

PS Lekey, you are one of my favorite, no, you are favorite person in the whole entire universe. You are so beautiful, welcoming, talented and you sexy gurl. So stop putting yourself down. It's soooooo ridiculous. ♥

PPS. Mark and Mary Linda, you two are the most adorable things ever in existence and are the most joyful bringing two I know. It's so beautiful it almost brings me to tears.

PPS Zan I missed you.

PPPS Nick you hella sexy in those glasses, don't ever take them off.

PPPPS Ceal, I miss you & your lawn chair.

Opening circle reminded me once again of what busy lives we each live. How do we simplify our lives and incorporate the Light and that spiritual dimension while maintaining our busy schedules? I was reminded of the book by Milan Cundra called The Incredible Lightness of Being. On our busy lives the Light is so, so incredible that it lifts our Being up out of our busy schedule and allows us to float above it all. We only need to keep that Spirit of whatever name you wish to call this Lightness in our conscious and daily thoughts.

Periodically throughout my daily life, I think of you SAYFers and hold you in the Light. I know that when you're feeling tired & down, you have a place in your mind where you go to be SAYF with your friends. Thank goodness for SAYF.

It was wonderful seeing and visiting and sharing my life with the other FAPs, Therese, Aaron, Wren, Mark and Mary Linda. What a joy to see the Love in you all. Therese, we look forward to seeing you as you continue to serve on Steering Committee. Thank you so so much for your many years of service as the Ad. Asst. You have been such an asset. And Mark and Mary Linda I'm so happy you have found each other. Your love shines out.

Love to all & peace, Chuck

Dear SAYF,

This SAYF retreat was really fun. I really enjoy the nurturing retreats because they're small. My favorite part was probably the chips & queso. Oh and Quelf. That game is amazing. I'm buying it when I get home. Sadly, we're about to leave each other. And we will have to go back to school/work. I love how close we all can get when there is a smaller group. It lets you connect with everyone in a great way. I think this was overall a wonderful retreat, with WONDERFUL PEOPLE!! 'Til next time.

~ Nick

Ceal died one year ago today. She loved SAYF very much. There was a time yesterday when one of the nurturers mentioned the idea of having a clearness committee to help discern what to do when someone's significant other was uncomfortable with all the cuddling at SAYF. Ceal would have been thrilled to hear that, because she wanted you to know about using clearness committees to help discern things in your life.

I am very happy about that as well, and about how caring the Nurturing Committee is.

With love,
Mark Wutka

For some reason the time between Atlanta and Knoxville seemed like a trillion years. Nurturing snuck up on us, but I was ready to be in the presence of everybody again. Thank you FAPs for a lovely nurturing retreat. The food was delicious and the company was highly appreciated. Thank you Wren for bringing Quelf. We are highly addicted. I'm also loyal and successful.

It's weird to think this is the last time I'll visit Knoxville. Who knows where life will start taking to me? Almost everything that has happened in the past month can be described with the word "last". At least I'm not done with everything just yet.

With love and a "see you later",
That One Guy

PS I hit a perfect balance beam routine a little while ago. By perfect I mean I stayed on. I'm going to leave with that piece of dignity.....for days.

Coming into this retreat I didn't think we had much work to do. Somehow, it ended up that we had more than we could finish this weekend. Wow. We really put in a lot of great work, and worked hard almost all of the time we were here and still had time for fun. I'm really impressed with how much we got done, and how everyone contributed. Thanks to Elise and Emma for their clerking and I look forward to watching them, and the rest of the NC grow in the future. This is a very strong, productive group and I am excited to be a part of it.

Love always, Wren

Dear SAYF,

This weekend was perfect. I haven't been to SAYF since November and this was only my second retreat of this SAYF year too. I've been so busy working and dancing and being active in school that I haven't been able to relax the way I do at SAYF. I loved being with all of you this weekend too, and I can't wait for next month.

XOXO, elise a.

PS Clerking is actually a lot of fun. ☺

I'm thinking today of those who can't be with us for whatever reason. My thoughts and prayers are with each one.

Wren – you do a beautiful job of nurturing Young Friends. Thank you for the lovely way you encourage and teach.

With love, Mary Linda

So like things (situations, feelings, affairs) have been so difficult for me lately. Thank you Aaron for drawing me a cool picture just as I started my self-pity downward spiral. That's what this place (SAYF, Nurturing, Knoxville) has done for me this past retreat but also ever since I started coming five years ago. I don't really think things (see above definition) will be any better when I get back and they have been affecting me all weekend. I don't usually complain this much in epistles (worship journals?). What I am trying to say is thank you for your constant spontaneity, your compassionate constancy, your constant compassion. I haven't felt SAYF/safe in a while. We have done an amazing job of contemplating and hopefully affecting the direction of SAYF. The work we do for the community, the honest inquiry, practical idealism, problem-solving with intention to make things good, is exactly what I want to do with my life, and I think it is also in large part due to Wren. Isn't that exciting? Do you think I can do it? So here SAYF, this is my giant love letter that barely mentions our relationship (I'm writing a lot of those lately) and the beginning of my explosive unforgettable good byes. Thank you for teaching me silence and silliness, love beyond all love, and brilliantness. This is the first place I started to work out my true feelings and a place where people are encouraged, welcomed to express these feelings. Wow! I love it. Sorry to take it all so seriously. I hope the rest of these are funny.

Love ~ Lekey

I've only been to a couple, but nurturing retreats are so loving and wonderful, I'm quite put out that I won't be able to attend any more. SAYF is always a nurturing and loving environment, but these particular retreats are just that little bit more. Coming to this retreat I hadn't quite realized how little time I had left with SAYF, I'm going to miss the group which has, once again, managed to rejuvenate my spirit and keep me going. I feel that I was in a bit of a funk or a rut lately, and SAYF has recharged my battery so I think I can keep going. I really don't know what is going to happen when I leave this community. Planning what is going to happen next fall, and knowing that I won't see it happen is a very sad feeling, but I hope to make the most of the time I have left. I love everyone here so much. ~ Miyoshi (Nookie)

It's hard to believe this is my last retreat at the Knoxville meetinghouse. My first non-SAYMA one was here and I've been to so many that I can't even remember all of them. This is where Conrad taught us the Aristasha game, which maybe Bethany would remember. Phorest & Xavier jumped out of a leaf pile screaming "WINDOW!". Jim Pfitzer told us stories. Some of my favorite and least favorite retreats have been here. I will dearly miss this meetinghouse, with its sunlight streaming in and beautiful trees. It led to a very productive and also fun retreat this weekend. We definitely got things done and talked about. I look forward to writing in the new SAYF binder. And thank you so much, Wren, for introducing us to Quelf! That game sort of embodies SAYF – there are rules and things you have to do but it changes every time and you never know what will happen. I want to play it every retreat! I think Nookie (Miyoshi), Sugar Buns (Braden), Prom Date (Lekey), Cuddle Bear (Guthrie), Ginger (Patrick), Cleopatra (Catie), and Honey (Ruby) will agree with me (Sakrahelio or however you write that). As well as everyone who played the first time! I hope you all have a good few weeks before March & I'll see you in Asheville.

~ Taylor