

## SAYF Epistle March, 2012

*On the weekend of March 23-25, 2012 Southern Appalachian Young Friends met at the Asheville Meetinghouse with a theme of express yo 'self. This is our witness. This is our story.*

Having met one another at SAYF and gotten to know one another through conversation, Bananagrams and Boggle over several years worth of retreats, this community is very important to us. We will be joining our lives in marriage May 12 at Nashville Friends Meeting and would be honored and happy to have every SAYFer near & far and Friendly Adult with us in Worship and Celebration. We've got a crazy big house and can make room for any of you, if you can join us. We'll be sending out an email with details and will make a FB event as well.

With love-

Mark & Mary Linda

At nurturing last month we went round and round about worship journals and what they mean. It made me realize that they're how we remember retreats. I have a folder where I keep nearly every epistle since I started coming. I can look back on what the graduates were saying my first SAYMA. There's a really funny story in there about Alise (pronounced Alice if you don't know) and a moth and lots of waffles. I laugh every time I read it. So now here I am, coming to the other end, where more and more of my epistles are reflective and talk about people half of ya'll don't know. And one day it will be like that for you, you'll graduate and talk about Taylor & Braden & Miyoshi and all the other seniors and hardly anyone will know who you're talking about. One day shoe covahs will just be a story. But that's the way things go, and that's how it should be. It's coming to the end for me, and I think I am ready. Immortality wouldn't be fun forever, and SAYF is the same way. You can't stick around too long. To quote one of my favorite songwriters, "we've done well here, but it's time to go".

Maybe this is the epistle I was meant to write at SAYMA but oh well. I'll just have to even better then. ☺

~ Taylor

PS In place of shoutouts, here's a whisper-in. You can't hear it.

SO, this is me giving up on trying to write a poem, and just telling you straight out that I love all of you, that all of the music made the retreat super chill, and that John Watts and Maggie are really intense and great. I'm going to miss everyone so much in 'til June. Everyone just seems so grown up & comfortable with themselves and safe that its great. I'm sad for all of the people who couldn't come to this retreat, & I'm sad that I won't be at the next one.

See you at SAYMA

Emma S.

No more shoutouts? Okay. I did want to mention that last time we were here, Yoshi wrote the Japanese character for love on all our hands. After our van crashed, we realized the characters were still on our hands. Me thinks love and luck can be synonyms.

Normally I hate rap music. To me it just sounds really angry and hateful, so it makes me feel sorry for the artist. I didn't love John Watts in the beginning, but after a few songs I got really into it.

I'm now looking around the room. Where's Jonathan?

The talent show was absolutely, fantastically brilliant.

I woke up this morning, and at first I was really sad to leave, but then I just found myself thanking God for me being here.

The singing was probably the most spiritual thing for me. I think there's something special about the Asheville Meeting house.

Love,

Grace                      GOODBYE

*Jon Watts and Maggie and Meagan and Pickle Bear Popcorn Puddin Pudge ( the Beneficent Bunny) were in the Asheville Meeting House in a BIG way this weekend. In deference I'm letting my pen slide on in effortless free form Here, on the page of a worship journal at the end of another exceptional gathering of Light that Illuminated the dark corners of my grief and exposed my hurts to healing, just a feeling, that the time I shared with Sally will never fade from my heart; that the years we spent together will be polished by these gentle tears and held as shiny sanctuary for all the communities she touched, for all the corners of souls her light illuminated; exposing their Hurts to Healing.*

*In Peace,*

*And without judgment,*

*Aaron*

*PS Lost in waiting*

*For a perfect day, blind that*

*They were all perfect.*

Another SAYF come and gone, only one more and then SAYMA. The theme was expressing yourself, and all the creativity released this weekend was incredible, not only were the workshops fun, they produced wonderful things, I know I will remember the sexy dance crew dance for a while. Then there was John Watts and his amazing poetry/songs, they spoke to me more strongly than other songs, I'm a fan now. Dragon Tales and Blue's Clues was lovely and nostalgic. The vegan soup tasted good and I was extremely happy about it. Everything that happens at SAYF seems wonderful to me, everyone has so much love, so I love you all in return.

♥ Miyoshi

PS Let's get Naked then clothe ourselves in righteousness.

This retreat was simply amazing. I came into this retreat hoping for a good one but I got a great one. The air was filled with laughter...and the theme songs. We went on a wonderful hike through the botanical gardens, where a few of us got wet and listened to two amazing and hilarious musicians. The writing workshop with Jon Watts was really eye opening and talking about nakedness with Maggie was eye closing.

This being my last retreat of the season, I need to give my most extreme heartfelt thanks to all of you. Since I have been going to SAYF my life has been completely transformed and with some of y'all going to graduate, a little bit of my life leaves me too, but even so, I always know that you all will be with me helping to guide my decisions by just proving to me that people can be amazing. I couldn't wish for a better place.

Oh, and the talent show was amazing!

~Erik pim-yam Nilsson

duh duh

Dear Beautiful Young Friends,

I love you all more the love itself and words can't really explain how I feel for you all. ♥ This retreat was different for me. I took a lot more [time] observing the community than actually participating and you guys are just such joyful kids and it makes me smile everytime.

Yours Truly,

Ka-KA-Ka- Ka-Kofi

Pre-PS Lekey I missed you a lot.

PS Gressa I still love you but you're just so mean.

PPS Erik, You better panda your way out of it.

PPPS Levi, Broh you sexy!

PPPPS Zan, let me remind you nothing is more important than SAYF.

PPPPPS Katy, shorts are not pants.

*Austin brought me here....last time it was Nia. I love it here. I love the people and just how no one judges anyone. Everyone loves everyone and its not some high school crap...Michael's my son. I adopted him yesterday. Austin didn't evidently approve...But I love both of them. Guthrie. I really shouldn't play Wink with that guy. I love the game but when a 13 year old half your weight can hold you back...it's kinda sad. No. It is sad. Rebecca & Angelina they did my hair...talked to them about things I never thought I could ever talk about to a girl. I love Rebecca. Anyway I love sayf, and everyone in it.*

*(plus. Austin)*

*Shoutouts!*

♥, Isabelle

*Pat: Why did you think you had a chance?*

I missed being here when Jon Watts came the last time (two years ago?) but I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know him a little and participating in his & his friend Maggie's workshops. His activities in writing showed us a neat way to follow our leadings, and when we got (or are able to get) into the groove & flow the leadings come more in line with the Light.

Maggie's workshop on Quaker nakedness spoke specifically to our hang ups & trappings related to our bodies & our clothes, but alluded to our feelings about our lives in general & the paths we take. Being authentic Quakers and not being ashamed or silenced by society but standing straight, tall and proud of our heritage as Friends was an underlying theme.

Jon & Maggie's rendition & raps on Quaker history were a joy to hear. Clearly they have found a calling – something that is difficult to do yet easier by following their leadings. My hopes are that each of you find your calling in life as well.

Chuck

PS The talent show was incredible. You all are amazing.

Well this was an incredible weekend, despite the development of yet another chalazion (??) in my eyelid. I had so much fun with the dance choreography workshop, the rehearsal with Dee, Dominique and my lovely group of Nick, Miyoshi, Hannah and Brian, as well as being the emcee for the talent show. I hope you all enjoyed my funny jokes!

I still can't believe this is the last time I'll be sitting in this beautiful room with the amazing mural! I found the dragon hiding in the mountains!

Jon Watts and crew were awesome. Their message was so true and meaningful.

Who knew that getting naked had so much meaning?

This retreat was really fun. I'm glad I got to meet the newbies and see the twobies from a while ago. Definitely my favorite part was watching Dragon Tales (her fruit hat replenished itself, wait.... Now it's gone!) and Blues Clues (w/ Steve and Pluto as a planet!) Remember: If we use our minds and take a step at a time, we can do anything that we wanna do. See you all in Berea! Quelf rules! I'll miss Erik!

Signed

That One Guy

PS I correctly identified Oriana!

PPS A bunny?

*SAYf is really a loving group. If one of every ten people came to SAYF the world would be a better place. I have been adopted like family into SAYF. It's a place where teens can be themselves. I have met people so different their cool. I feel like myself here.*

*/cold prickly/ with lots of warm fuzzies./ Life is short so be happy.*

*From*

*Love*

*Michael H. ♥*

Getting naked in a spiritual context means. To me, being willing to let God know me. It means holding nothing back, keeping nothing of myself from God so that God may use me. One way I am called to do God's work is with SAYF. I've never been directed by God to get literally, physically naked, although I suppose that is a possibility.

I think God calls people for two different, often overlapping purposes. The first is so we may reach out to others, helping, sharing and giving of ourselves. The Other is so we may grow as individuals, developing our relationship to God, learning to trust and be trustworthy. Being called to "get naked" could be a call to obedience, or faith in God or it could be a call to let your nakedness be a sign to the world, as Maggie and Jon talk about.

Mary Linda

I really liked the workshops, the music was great and the morning things were fun as well. Don't really know if it was better than my first retreat or not. Just different. I guess some things better and some not as good. Food was pretty great. Also not having to wake up crazy early. Being sort of sick the whole time made it worse. Maybe I'll express my thoughts in haiku, the shortest form of poetry.

SAYF, the place to be  
Fantastic for friends and fun  
The worship's great too.

Also the SAYF website name is great: AwesomeSAYFers[.org]. Take that Southern Arizona Youth Football. Our URL is better.

Asheville again. It's so pretty here. The people are wonderful too. This retreat was pretty much amazing. The food was excellent. Whipped cream on waffles is a joy and I love when Quaker soup tastes good. The botanical gardens were pretty. Dead fish are sad. Picking up dead fish is brave and also gross. John Watts is pretty much the coolest kid ever. Actually that's not true, but he is fairly awesome. I'm so excited to wear my new naked Quakers t-shirt. I feel like this weekend was so full of stuff that I want to talk about but my brain isn't really functioning and this epistle is all rambling and weird. Is it still cool if we do shoutouts, Taylor? If its not....sorry. if it is.....then that question was unnecessary. Shoutouts!

Hannah: darling wife. So much love. Will you stow away on the bottom of ur van and come back to Chapel hill?

Hi BRADEN.

Nick: You smell good.

Rebecca: filing papers Deborah?

Hudson: I've officially invited you to all future SAYFs. Now you have no excuse for not coming.

Anna: You're really cute. And also an amazing singer.

Erik and Oliver: Da.

Everyone who left early: Why you leave so soon?

Emma: I could hear everything you said last night.

Isaac: Your head feels like velvet.

Asheville: thank you for your lovely Meetinghouse.

SAYF: thank you for being wonderful.

Oliver: We need to rent the toasted little toaster.

Much love, Oriana

SAYF is incredible. I have met so many amazing people, and it's only my second retreat. Never in my life have I felt so loved and accepted, and never in my life have I been so happy. After my first SAYF in Atlanta was over, I started counting down the days till Asheville SAYF, and it didn't disappoint. The people here are the most amazing people I have ever met in my entire life, and I wouldn't give them up for the world. Everybody is just so incredible, and I am extremely grateful to have met all of you. And by the way, how epic was John Watts? And the talent show. I love you all, and people like you give me hope in a better and brighter future for our world. Thank you all!

~ Lillian from Nashville

Shoutouts: You are all awesome & no way can I fit the shoutouts on 1 piece of paper!! LOVE YOU ALL!!!

*This room makes me think about what it is that I love about the Religious Society of Friends. Behind me is a painted wall, it is very beautiful – rich colors, beautiful scenery, sky, trees, flowers, mountains. This painting is, to me, a lot like religions that are based on believing certain things. They may inspire you to some extent, and for many people, the painting fills their souls. The painting can represent a view of God.*

*In front of me is a window, and outside that window are the actual sky, trees, birds, flowers and mountains and I can experience them directly. They are not just colorful, they are hot, cold, wet, dry, quiet, loud, sweet, bitter. Being a Quaker, to me, is about experiencing God, Spirit, the Light, directly, like being outside, instead of relying on someone's painting or description.*

*With Love,*

*Mark Wutka*

So this retreat? Amazing. The talent show was jam packed. Singing with a mic for pretty much the first time was intimidating but really fun. Thanks to John Watts for the awesome workshops and the concert was pretty fantastic. Good job to the Asheville Friends for having tacos and potatoes at the same time. So now for some shoutouts!

Jane: is going to write her own shout out. She says: Well I think singing in the talent show was a good idea after all.

Lillian: You are nice, talented and pretty. DON'T be sorry.

Isabel: You're my Asian buddy.

Erik: I wish you could come to Berea!

I LOVE YOU ALL BYE.

♥ Anna