

SAYF Worship Journal
March 2018 Retreat
West Knoxville Friends Meetinghouse

On the weekend of March 9-11, 2018, the Southern Appalachian Young Friends met at the West Knoxville Friends Meeting. This is our witness. This is our story.

Dear SAYF,

I have one more retreat left before I graduate. I don't know what's going to be my light at the end of the tunnel when I no longer have SAYFs to look forward to every month. This weekend was healing for me in so many ways. When we were flying kites, Ian said "I've literally never had this much fun in my life" and that made me so happy. I felt like a little kid again running around the fields. Realizing that I'll be leaving soon has made me pay a lot more attention to the newbies and the younger SAYFers. I trust that this community will be in good hands with this next generation of SAYFers. I'm glad I've kept coming to as many retreats as I possibly could, because you never know which retreat is gonna be the best one yet. My heart is going to be filled to the brim on this van ride home.

I love you all,
Evangeline

Dear SAYF,

Each time I experience the type of joy I felt in the field while watching the kites dance around in the sky, I know that in that moment, I am exactly and undeniably right where I need to be. While flying the kites, I was thinking (while looking up at the sky) about how each one of the kites up in the air were connected to a SAYFer. It began to feel like a map of us, up there, just hangin' out. The whole kite flying experience was semi-surreal for me; from the big circular kites, to the itty bitty SAYF kites, my brain was having fun trying to make sense of it all.

I am (close to) entering my last year of SAYF and I am painfully aware that moments like this one are, for the first time, in danger of running out too soon. Revisiting the site of my first retreat, way back in 2013, has been wonderful.

SAYF has been my rock for so long, and the realization that my time to move on is creeping slowly closer is wild. When I was younger, I thought that my last retreats would feel suffocating and sad, knowing that time was slipping through my fingers. As this experience that I had thought so much about as a young SAYFer becomes a reality, I am able to realize that it is not as scary as I once thought. I am going to miss this, but I know that it will continue to give young people the same gifts it has given me.

I love you all,
Cora

Dear SAYF,

I am so glad that I was able to come to this retreat. It's been so long since I've seen you all and it felt good to finally come back. Now that I'm writing this, I'm realizing that I was at the January retreat, but still, two months is too long. I'm glad I got to talk with some of the newer folks, as well as talking with old friends. I would like to give a shout out to all the people who managed to get those kites airborne for longer than a minute. My kite would always fly around in a circle until meeting its end with a not so spectacular nose-dive to the ground. Anyways, I'm very impressed with your kite-flying abilities. I can't wait to see you all at the next retreat in Durham, which is hopefully gonna be lots of fun. If you can't make it to Durham, you'll be missed and I hope to see you at SAYMA.

I love you all,
Henry Chapman

Dear SAYF,

This retreat seemed to fly by so quickly. Perhaps it is true that time flies when you are having fun, or maybe it was just because I was asleep for half of the time. It was wonderful to be back in this community of kind, loving people, and you continue to amaze me every time. This retreat sent a warm welcome to many first-time SAYFers, as well as a bittersweet goodbye to those who have been with us for a long time. Like a kite, SAYF may not go in the direction you first thought, but it flies nonetheless, and remains beautiful.

With love,
Oliver

SAYF,

well, holy moly me oh my. I love this community with so much of my heart. It's been awhile since I've been to a retreat due to various things such as: Model U.N., a play, and disease. But coming back has filled me up with so much joy. I had been feeling a little out of tune with the community, and getting back into the swing of things was really nice and comforting. It's hard to believe that I have been going to SAYF for 3+ years now, but I've been amazed at how much I've changed, and how much of a role SAYF has been in that change.

This retreat has been full of friends thought lost returning, and has been incredibly healing. I love you all. See you at Durham.

- Matilda Chen

It's been a hot second since my last SAYF. I missed you all, and I'm so glad that I came. Gonna try to make time for more in the next year, but I can't promise anything. Still, I love you all, and I really wish someone hadn't got rid of my kite that definitely didn't look like garbage. Also we shoulda left the water bottles up there.

Haiku (I don't know how many syllables it's supposed to be)

(Ahem)

Ice tray the gang, (aye)

I don't speak no slang (what?)

Lipton is the drank (ooh!)

Empty clip go "clank" (yuh)

(brrraaa)

* Colorized 1846

- Atobots (optimus PRYME)

- Haha you thought my name was optimus pryme?

DON'T judge a book by its cover.

- Fish - bowl

- sooper - bowl

Dear SAYF,

I'm so glad to be part of such a loving community. I truly hold this close to my heart. I know this place and fabulous people have made me a better person.

- With more love than it feels like my heart can handle
David Myers

3/11/18 March SAYF

Dear SAYFers,

This retreat was a very important one to me. I feel more close than ever to this place and those in it. I feel just as welcome now as I did the first time I came. You guys are kind and funny. The fishbowl was very powerful for me and I'm lucky to have been a part of this group. I carry each and every one of you in my heart. Much love and well wishings, Annie.

P.S. Thank you for letting me be a part of this. I feel like I have friends that are family because of it. LOVE to you all! And GO forth and have compassion.

Dear Friends,

This retreat is certainly a good one. I have made new friends, and became closer with the friends I already had. It feels like SAYF is going to end when all of these amazing people graduate, but it won't. I don't really know where I was going with that, but all I want to say is, this place is definitely my second home. I have loved this retreat so so much, and I will miss everyone very much. You all are my family forever. I love you a lot. Ok I'm done bye.

- Aslan

There are so many moments during this retreat that I wish I could remember forever. I wish I could hold this moment tight and never let go. "But nothing gold can stay" and I can't stay. My time as a member of this community has reached its end. I never actually thought this day would come. While you're in SAYF, it feels like it'll never leave you. And it won't. SAYF will always be there for you. But the day will come when it's your turn to say goodbye. And that day will come much faster than you believe. So please please please cherish each and every minute with each other. This is a safe space for you to learn to break out of your shell.

The next time I see you all, I will be graduating. So please can each and every one of you come to SAYMA so I can see your beautiful face for one last time.

I see so much light within you all that it warms my heart.

Please take care of my babies while I'm gone.

I love you so much,
till next time
Mama SAYF
(Julia)

This was my favorite retreat ever! I've NEVER had so much fun with a group of Quakers before! I feel like my soul has been washed, cleaned, and folded. Here's some inspiration:

Chillin with the Quakers (AY)

Real love ain't no fakers (Yaa)

Flying all those kites (Huh?)

Reflection's what I write (Datway)

- Anonymous Ian

Loves of my lives,

It used to terrify me to see new faces join SAYF in place of the old. Now nothing brings me greater joy and security. Stick with it. It ages well. Or, rather, it makes you age well.

Love love love, V

P.S. Yes, god is Gay.