

SAYF Worship Journal
November 2019 Retreat
Nashville Friends Meetinghouse

On the weekend of November 15-17, 2019 the Southern Appalachian Young Friends met at the Nashville Friends Meeting. This is our witness. This is our story.

Things I'll remember:

- Piano playing by many artists
- Understanding that as a White person I want to stay awake to the history and current action of acting like no one else exists or matters. We have to grieve our huge errors of killing and devaluing Native Americans and all others who have stood in our way. It broke my heart and blessed me to hear Albert Bender speak yesterday.
- Love the energy of everyone with each other and SAYF and self respect
- Thank you. I feel full - I grew. I appreciate each minute of this.

Friends, Thank you for a beautiful retreat. As Lead FAN, I put all the weight of responsibility on my shoulders for the success of this weekend, completely forgetting until things got underway that I actually only carried a small portion of responsibility - this is your community and each of you, each of us, carries a part. If you don't carry your part, or if I don't carry my part, the well-being of the whole suffers. We are all in this together. Thank you all for showing up in body and spirit and embodying the HARMONY ethic Albert Bender spoke of. I am always humbled and fed by you, SAYF.

With gratitude,
Kate

Ok time for an Oliver style list.

Here are the best parts of this retreat.

- 1) Lots of chill time
- 2) So many good snacks
- 3) Planning making this retreat smooth
- 4) Becoming a nurturer (sort of) with my main man Oliver
- 5) Amazing late night talks
- 6) I'm not extremely sleep deprived
- 7) Everybody felt together this retreat
- 8) Stepping up my game for sayf as well as my personal life
- 9) Those grapes were mucho gusto
- 10) David Gonzumaa (gome-zoo-mah)

- All my love

Aslan Joy

It was wonderful to be reminded of the infinite power of gratitude at this wonderful and thoughtfully spiritual retreat. Gratitude is always uplifting regardless of being offered or received.

In light of the fragile nature of our being, and against the nearly infinite improbability that we should exist at all, it behooves us to be grateful

for every thought that we think,
for every word we can speak
for every breath we can breathe
and for every hand we can hold.

AARON

A tire's hissing leak
Jagged metal remains of
What was meant to save

Thanksgiving is time
for bounty and peace; untold
is the genocide.

Robert Sears

OOF. I don't usually write epistles so we'll see if I tear this out or not. But this retreat was an especially excellent one. I felt more nurturing than I have before, although I've been a 'nurturer' for a few months now. It's strange becoming the older generation. I remember my first retreat, three years and one month ago now, and how different I was then. SAYF has been such a fundamental part of those three years for me, a magical community to learn and grow from that seems almost impossible to explain to anyone. I find it hard to put into words the sense of belonging I have here, and the amount of love I have for everyone who has made that possible. The casual emotionally vulnerable conversations and cuddle piles and walking over to someone and just starting a conversation because it's comfortable to do so and the Friends made in one weekend that last for life and the values I've learned in this group that I feel so safe growing up in...

the theme of this retreat was gratitude. I will always be grateful for you all.

Love,
Sadie

Dear SAYF,

Holy heck this retreat just flew by. SAYF always feels so short when I look back on it, and this retreat really made me notice that. But, high speeds and all, this retreat's been really really awesome. The Frist (I think that is how you spell it) was a super cool museum, and combined with Albert's talk, I think I learned a lot about the situation of the first nations people in our country. We listened to lots of anime music, played lots of games, and of course, chomped many leaves (crunch crunch). Thank you all for this amazing community full of amazing people and activities, I'm so glad to be back with you. (after seven months whoops)

- Eternal and boundless
Love, Maggie

P.S. As requested by Beth Myers I wrote a poem about our flat tire on the back.

we journeyed through asphalt trails
the hiss of wayward air dogging our path.
the night froze our breath and our resolve
for lo!
a small sword hath plunged itself into our
wheel.
A most ferocious enemy to our mechanical
sanctuary
but, with tired eyes and frozen fingers
we persisted onward, indignant of our wounds.
the puncture stops not our trip,
for we are determined folk
unwilling to yield to a persnickety hole
and thus, the weapon a several inch piece
of metal was dug out of our tire which
is great because how we can successfully
take the kidnapping van back I'm sorry
I ran out of poetry juice.

Hey again SAYF,

This retreat was a bit different for me. The vibes seemed off. Maybe it was how there was a lack of people, maybe it was how I was at a war with my body over sleep the whole time, it was just weird. None the less, I enjoyed it though. I always do.

After I miss a SAYF, such as last month, I always find myself checking the mailbox every day to see if the epistles had come. It's like hearing the voices of you beautiful people, even though you're not here. I've been thinking about this for a while, but I think one (of many) of my favorite things at SAYF is getting to listen to Walker play the piano, it's beautiful. I don't think that I could ever thank any of you enough for simply just being true to who you are. Thank you guys for being a part of this community. Without all of us here, it wouldn't be SAYF (obviously). I am already yearning for January's retreat. Until then, take care of yourselves, please. Each and every one of you are so loved, valued, and cared for so much.

Yours truly,
Ollie (:

P.S. David GonsumeZ IS real and he boppin'.

History is full of tales of people being cruel - it's hard to hear them. We heard one this weekend from Albert Bender, about his experience as a Native American lawyer, activist, journalist. It has left me with many questions about how to deal with my own privilege, how to live authentically, and how to be caring for people who have been hurt. I'm very thankful that SAYF is a place where people can be

brought up with warm fuzzies without ignoring all the cold pricklies that happen in the world. Thanks for being awesome SAYFers.

There are a lot of reasons I enjoy going to SAYF retreats. I love seeing the kids from all over the region who want to spend the weekend with Friends. It takes a lot to give up time at home. I applaud your intention and dedication. It warms my heart to see your friendships in action. The programming this weekend was especially moving and thought provoking. We adults talked about the meaning of Thanksgiving over and over. And lastly, the epistle writing time is such a nice closing to the weekend.

While the activities we took were educational and valuable, this SAYF felt to me like its role was more personally to shift my perceptions of taking on added responsibility, particularly within this community. Sorry if that was a mouthful, I honestly just kind of winged that sentence and don't know if it was even grammatically correct. ANYWAYS...SAYF. As sad as I am to see it happen, I'm realizing now that I have to somewhat step in the shoes of an "older kid", and that means my relationship to SAYF itself must also change. I have the great fortune of having excellent people who I love to be right there with me on this, but even so it's very bittersweet.

I am thrilled, though, to have reached out to others I wouldn't have normally hung out with even in SAYF, it's often easy to just stick to the same people the whole time. I'm starting new relationships, and I'm watching the relationships of others grow and blossom. All in all, I just saw in this retreat the shadow of a lot of things that are coming my way.

With tons of love, Oliver

P.S. it feels insane to be the YAC. I feel like I was stepping into some holy shrine or something, it's this coveted position. I dunno, it was just purdy cool.

It also means I slept in a blanket that Jonas slept in, so I'm basically famous or something.

I am a parent of a 16 year old Sayfer. I am thankful that he enjoys being here with his friends from SAYF on his birthday, and it was ok with him for me to attend as well. He doesn't have a community like this at home because we have very few teens. I know that this jewel of community will be brief since 18 and/or graduation is sooner than it may feel. The gifts of SAYF will last a lifetime. One woman I knew in her 30s who grew up in our meeting clearly counted her time with SAYF as the best part of her Quaker life, and probably continues to cherish her memories.

As for me, I have enjoyed talking with parents this weekend - having a community of our own, while being near enough to our kids to share with them some, but far enough away to not be in the middle of whatever they wanted to do.

- Joanne Rhodes

On November 16, 2019 we had a Cherokee Speaker, Albert Bender, who shared about the lives of Native Americans, as well as the association and pain he and others have with the Thanksgiving holiday. We went to an art exhibit of creations by Native American women at the Frist Gallery. That night parents had a lot of discussion following all of the thoughts and feelings that were raised. How do we celebrate being Thankful when the history of its origin is different than we thought and genocide followed?

Nashville
NOV.
11/17/19



Jim



Julia



Korri



Graham



Maggie



Sadie



Oliver



Oliver



Astian



Walker



David



Teo



Nevin



Eli (me)



Robert



Ava



Also Robert



Beth



Kelly



Chris



Aric? :/



Also Julia



Kate



Aaron



Ahh no I don't like forgetting names!! so sorry! :/


11/17/19