

Attachment 17

EPISTLES

Epistle from the Children's Program

Heather Elrick Forbes read the Epistle from the Preschool Children's Program.

I like to play playdough in the afternoon.

I played with somebody; I played with Natalie.

I climbed up the rock.

I played *Candyland*.

I played with the pigs.

I played with the goats, pretending I was a goat.

I learned to skip.

I liked being together

I liked eating with the other friends.

I rest while I'm running.

“Roar.”

Attachment 18

EPISTLES

Epistle from the Upper Elementary Program

The Upper Elementary class of PYM 2008 liked capture the flag and the Frisbee golf because it was like archery. We liked community night.

We especially liked the sacks and hot salsa and the dinner pancakes.

We liked the ball games, and the Farley storytelling was awesome. We liked singing.

We made beady baby animals by stringing beads on lanyard strips.

We pretended to be teachers and we screamed and took a nature hike.

We particularly liked free time. Shannon liked having Tinuiral so she wasn't the only girl. The only thing Javier didn't like was not being able to listen to his I-pod.

But all of us wanted warmer water in the pond and more free time during the kinds' program.

We'd like more adult leaders so we could break into smaller groups.

We wish the path to the pond was not so steep. We'd like a volleyball tournament. Javier wants to use his I-pod. We all want an all day nature hike.

And we want to not write an epistle.

Attachment 19

EPISTLES

Epistle from the Lower Elementary Program

Chris Mohr shared a visual Epistle which the children drew, including stars, flowers, and music.

Dear Friends Everywhere,

We pretended to be coyotes. We saw a fox. We walked in the garden. We saw goats and pig. We went swimming in the pond. We blew up lots of balloons. We painted each other's faces. We joined Meeting for Worship and memorial Meeting. We learned about THANKSGIVING and BLESSING. We played the "*achoo bless you*" game.

Attachment 20

EPISTLES

Middle School Epistle of 2008

During our stay at Walker Creek Ranch we enjoyed swimming at Turtle Pond and canoeing with JYM. We also played an exciting game of capture the flag.

We went for a beautiful hike in the morning, and we saw deer, pigs and foxes on our walk to the garden. In the garden we pulled weeds and picked raspberries and strawberries. Some mornings we corded Yucca plant while listening to stories about the Miwok tribe that used to live here.

Thursday afternoon we sat through Memorial meeting and listened to people talk about Friends who had died.

Thursday night we went to a dance with JYM and a few adults.

Friday night will be the talent show which we are excited about.

We have had a great time and look forward to coming back next year.

Written by: Jesse Anna Samantha
 Sydney Sam Hannah

Rest of group: Caterina, Saul, Claire, Alan, Brendan, Leo, and Cooper.

Attachment 21

EPISTLES

JYM Epistle 2008

This week at Pacific Yearly Meeting was full of many interesting events for the members of Junior Yearly Meeting. Upon arriving, we set up our residence in the Buckeye Room. Throughout the week we had many activities including swimming and canoeing in the pond, star gazing, capture the flag in the cow pasture and missing breakfast after staying up too late. Early in the week we had a meeting with the parents of JMYers for them to voice concerns. Of these there were many and the process was long. But eventually we were able to come to an agreement that worked for all even if it was not perfect.

We had daily business meetings to discuss schedules which were always busy. On Wednesday we had our annual Respectful Relations (Sex, Drugs, Rock and Roll) talk with the young friends. As always this was a powerful experience and greatly helped to bond our community. On Thursday we held our intergenerational dance which completely rocked. There was music from 60s to present day and a few musical numbers from member of JYM. Friday we took a bus to Petaluma where we learned about peoples' rights in encounters with the Police from a local youth organization called "Impact" and then put up flyers and took a survey of people in the local community.

The idea of a year-round paid youth coordinator has been seasoning for many years. On this 2008 PYM gathering, this subject was heavily discussed in both JYM and the greater yearly meeting. In our business meetings we opened dialog concerning this issue and what we would seek from a youth coordinator. After deliberation we formed a committee and came up with a minute to present to the greater PYM. The subject of a youth coordinator was discussed in great detail during plenary. It was a difficult issue and the course was not always smooth. Unity could not be reached in the allotted time and extra time was required. The concept of the paid youth coordinator position was quickly approved. After further dialog the community approved M&Os proposal to appoint a planning committee to further define the roles of the youth coordinator and develop a clear budget.

Friday night we had our nominations process. As always we finished in a timely manner meaning we got done with the process by 2:30 in the morning. Also we had a POWER CLEAN!!! to make our residence livable for the traditional all-nighter as we had completely destroyed our room over the course of the week. On this final night a large group of JYMers and Young Friends climbed a hill where we had a drum circle, held worship and watched the amazing colors of the sky as the sun came up. We returned at 6:00 and finished writing this epistle.

Attachment 22

EPISTLES

Epistle from Young Friends

Young Friends Epistle, Pacific Yearly Meeting 2008
Walker Creek Ranch, Marin County, CA
Seventh Day, Eighth Month

Pacific Yearly Meeting this session was full of life and energy. The site, Walker Creek Ranch, sparked the spirit of adventure with a multitude of hiking trails and the spirit of community with the hospitality they provided. We came together on many things this week, including a rockin' dance party, taking dips in the pond, and some mind-opening worship sharing. We felt a strong bond being formed between Young Friends and Junior Yearly Meeting. We came together with them on many endeavors, including a service project in the nearby community of Petaluma, as well as joining them in intergenerational games and a respectful relationships talk.

The light was shining in all when the gathering approved minutes regarding the affirmation of wanting and needing a Youth Coordinator. Young Friends felt particularly moved to action for this cause, and together with Junior Yearly Meeting made a stand for our needs, and for the healing of the community. After challenging discernment in plenary, our faith in the elders was reaffirmed with the joy we all shared in this unity. We were joined by many new Friends, as well as many who returned from a long absence. Our final evening of worship and togetherness moved many Friends deeply with the power of Spirit.

Some young friends that felt particularly moved to be a part of the ad-hoc Youth Coordinator planning committee are: John Stitzer, Maia Wolff, Darcy Stanley, Sola Wolff, Anna-Lisa Chacon, Heather Alden.

Attachment 23

EPISTLES

PYM EPISTLE 2008

Greetings to Friends Everywhere:

From July 28 to August 2, 2008, Friends met for the 62nd annual gathering of Pacific Yearly Meeting at Walker Creek Ranch in Marin County, California. Managed by the Marin Agricultural Land Trust, this home to wild turkeys and turkey vultures, grey fox, and bobcats, as well as goats and cattle, provided us with mostly local organic food and dairy products, and enabled us to hold our plenary sessions in a large heated, lighted, windowed white tent erected just for us, on a site used throughout the school year for children's environmental education.

Our discussions of our earthcare responsibilities have been focused by our mindfulness of this summer's more than 1000 wildfires in California. Our consciousness was also awakened, and several of our members directly affected, by the upcoming November election which will include a proposed state constitutional amendment limiting marriage to unions between a man and a woman.

In the context of these exterior events, our theme this year asks "What does it mean to be a faith community? How can we experience it?" Ministry during our all-morning worship and worship sharing, which included our Children's Program participants during the first quarter hour, was especially revealing of what Friends carried in their hearts during the week:

"I could feel her [Spirit's] breath on my skin."

"I live in a constant tension between the Testimonies and the needs of society."

"Integrity is the whole of life open to Truth; through it we are able to heal the fragmentation of the world."

"There can be no peace without a planet."

We were asked to live within a "covenant of mutual vulnerability."

One Friend reminded us of the connection among salvation, health, wholeness, and integrity by inserting the word "integrity" for "salvation" in Philippians 2:12-13: "Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own integrity with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for God's good pleasure."

Our Clerk reminded us that Spirit is simple and clear, that we are seekers after Truth and unity with the Spirit, and that we are here not for producing, but for community. In this spirit we welcomed among our 424 attendees, visitors from New England, New York, Philadelphia, and North Pacific Yearly Meetings as well as others from FGC, FCNL, FWCC, QEW, and AFSC.

Attachment 23 (continued)

In addition to Interest Groups, Worship Sharing, Community Night and other activities, Friends had an early-morning opportunity for Bible Study as well as a daily discussion group on Transformative Quakers, exploring how the vision of some important Friends has impacted our Society.

One plenary session recalled the work we had done throughout California this past year through several dozens of our members' contribution to the Alternative to Violence Project in California prisons, and our support of the Quaker Earthcare Witness staff members' six month walk from Vancouver to San Diego. Ruah Swennerfelt, in sharing her experiences of the walk, reiterated themes we labored with throughout the week, such as community and relationship-building across different branches of Friends.

In another plenary, we considered in small break-out groups the congruence between our actions and our beliefs. We heard of the tension between JYM and the greater Meeting in matters of trust and integrity as we were asked to listen to and for the Light in each other.

We also heard Vanessa Julye from FGC's Ministry on Racism encourage us to become aware of the white privilege that surrounds European-Americans like water around a fish, but that does not surround persons of color in everyday situations like shopping, driving, or encountering the police. In visiting our Yearly Meeting for the past three annual sessions, she has been able to be a mirror for us, revealing the ways in which racism continues to linger in our Society.

Our entire community came together for our annual Memorial Meeting for Worship where treasured memories were shared about the lives and impact of 44 beloved Friends who died in the past year.

With valuable input from both our Young Friends and JYM communities, we considered a new direction for our Yearly Meeting—the establishment of a full-time Youth Coordinator position. This would be the first employee in the Yearly Meeting's history. An ad hoc planning committee will consider the scope of the job responsibilities, a detailed budget for the position, and how it will be implemented. Interested Friends will visit Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups to discuss how such a position could serve the needs of their members of all ages.

By the end of the week, we found that, in the traditional Friends' practice of listening to the Epistles of other Yearly Meetings and Friends' Gatherings, we shared the often repeated sentiments of feeling "supported and strengthened by one another in our shared struggles."

In Friendship,

Joe Franko, Presiding Clerk