

# Report of Programs Concerning Youth

*[Editor's Note: Each year Friends attending Annual Session hear reports from two important programs of the Yearly Meeting—camping and youth. A good portion of our ministry is to youth through Junior Young Friends Conferences, Young Friends Conferences, and Camping Programs. I wanted to share these reports with the full Yearly Meeting membership through the Interchange so that you could see the value of our work with youth. These programs continue to grow each year serving more of our young people, and with the growth comes a need for additional support.]*

## YOUTH PROGRAMS FOLLOW-UP REPORT

by Michele Levasseur, Youth Secretary

In addition to the six magical weeks of camp sessions and the two weeks of staff training, there are between eleven and fourteen weekends from September to June when BYM youth gather for community and spirituality. For these weekend conferences Young Friends (ages 14-19) and Junior Young Friends (ages 11-13/14) travel around the Baltimore Yearly Meeting globe. In the past few years we have been welcomed by Friends from Adelphi, Alexandria, Annapolis, Baltimore Homewood, Baltimore Stony Run, Frederick, Goose Creek, Gunpowder, Herndon, Hopewell Centre, Langley Hill, Little Falls, Maury River, Nottingham, Richmond, Sandy Spring, State College, and York. YF's have also enjoyed the Clearing, which is under the care of Richmond Friends. This year we will add Dunning's Creek and Shiloh Quaker Camp to our list.

The YF's group has grown to around 70 teenagers and 8 adults, so we generally must visit larger meeting houses. The YF Executive Committee has tried to gather for retreats and work weekends at meeting houses that are too small for the entire group.

There are typically about 20 middle school age attenders, 4 adult and 3 high school age presences at each JYF conference, so for these gatherings middle sized meeting houses are perfect. (Yes, this is all very much like the three bears!)

Each of these gatherings has an amazing story to tell. YF's have been shepherded and challenged by the wisdom of Frank Massey, Sam Legg, Joe Volk, Fran Donelan, Rachel Harrison, Patti Nesbitt, Vonnie Calland, Tom Fox, George Price, John Calvi, Jay Marshall, Retha McCutchen, Veronica Parke, Peggy O'Neill, and Alan Schintzius during contemplative and informative workshops. They have been taken off the planet through drumming, circle and sufi dancing, singing crystal bowls, meditation, and cleansing ceremonies. JYF's have discovered their limitlessness through a ropes course and

## GIVING IS GOOD

As you prepare to make your end-of-year gifts, please remember all you have read in this issue of *Interchange* about ways in which Baltimore Yearly Meeting has enriched the lives of those who have taken advantage of the many opportunities it provides and the programs it operates. Please feel moved to make a generous contribution towards its efforts.

In order to reduce Monthly Meeting apportionments our budget now includes an expectation of contributions from individuals such as yourself. We will be budgeting more to camp property maintenance in our next budget (2004) but there is serious deferred maintenance now. We hope your generous gifts will exceed the budgeted amount and will enable us to attend to deferred camp property maintenance.

Thank you.

Marion Ballard

Clerk, Stewardship & Finance

a healing workshop. They have helped to improve the environment during workdays at Opequon Quaker Camp, The Wilderness Retreat Center, and on the Chesapeake Bay. (They have also learned how to cook for 25 people and how to clean up a really messy meeting house!)

Adults who have been present with our youth so that they could be together include: Tom Fox, Tom Horne, Ted Heck, Betsy Tobin, Josh Riley, Abby Gaffron, Audrey Banach, Laurie Wilner, Jen Schneider, Matt Gordon, Gabe Leasure, Katy Shutz, Peggy O'Neill, Alan Schintzius, Cindy Frazier, Ron Aikens, George Price, Dave Lewis, Rob Lumley-Sapanski, Sam Austell, Bob Goren, Nancy Moore, Delle James, Lamar Matthew, Barbara Galloway, Rob and Lainie Duncan, Matt Thompson, Jason Eaby, Diane Eaby, Kristy Vant, James Matsen, Alison Downey, Kate Fullerton, and Cara Banach. Many of these adults have also led workshops on healing touch, massage, meditation, finding and caring for the Inner Light, Quaker history, dance, and hugs.

*(Youth Programs, continued)*

You may ask, what is the point of all of these lists? Well, this is the foundation of the BYM Youth Programs. Without all of these parts, a Quaker youth community would not exist for our teenagers. Our camps create an incredibly powerful community in their six short weeks. Our youth programs continue that, and also create a unique space for Quaker teens whether they attend camp or not. Developing an identity is the most important work that a teenager will do. The BYM Youth Programs support this process by providing a safe and spiritual haven for teens as they figure out who they are. The friendships made during the weekends last a lifetime really!). Many YF's count on sometimes distant Friends to help them through a crisis, make decisions, and for deep listening. I cannot describe how important these relationships become. To be a Quaker is challenging in this world; this seems to have always been true. We support Quaker teenagers in developing a commonality and a deeper understanding of what it is to be a Quaker.

The truly unique program offered by BYM, which encourages our youth to use Quaker process to self-govern is a loving act of trust. Our YF's learn about Quaker process by making decisions for the community through discernment and listening. The idea that teenagers can self-govern through the weighty process of discernment is quite revolutionary. But BYM Young Friends can and do just that. We decide everything from mundane issues such as quiet times, meal times, and payment to meeting houses to extraordinary matters like a Minute on Same Gender Marriage, in this manner. Of course, weighty issues take time, sometimes years to decide, (it can sometimes seem like years for smaller matters, as well!) I will never cease to be amazed by the respect YF's give to one another and to adults while working toward discernment.

Through the youth programs under the care of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, teenagers are empowered to be peaceful, thoughtful, kind, and simple beings in an often violent, selfish, and gluttonous world. Seeking teenagers, sleepless adults, and gifted workshop leaders gather a dozen times each year in hallowed meeting houses to create a sacred space for each other where each individual is cared for, respected, and nurtured. Together we seek ways to improve the world, our communities and ourselves week-



*Younger Friends creating a sacred space by drawing a Sand Mandala during Annual Session*

end after weekend, year after year. We openly seek to understand God, the Inner Light, that which is good in everyone, and that which is good in us. And most importantly, we create gathered communities where the individual and communal Light is safe and acknowledged.



The office staff of BYM serve individuals and Monthly Meetings by administering the programs of the Yearly Meeting. We support the work of committees, act as resources for Meetings and members, support the clerks of Yearly Meeting and Interim Meeting, visit Monthly and Preparative Meetings and Worship Groups, and carry out the administration of Annual Session, the camping programs and properties, just to name a few

The BYM Staff wishes you a joyful holiday season!

*The Baltimore Yearly Meeting Office staff (from left to right): Frank Massey, General Secretary, Pam Tyng, Bookkeeper, Michele Levasseur, Youth Secretary, Josh Riley, Camp Administrative Secretary, Jane Megginson, Administrative Assistant*

**Inside:** Reports from the summer, Camping Program Committee reflections, Statistics from the summer, Staff reflections & more pictures!

*a newsletter for alumni & friends of the baltimore yearly meeting camping programs*

Teen Adventure • Catoctin Quaker Camp • Shiloh Quaker Camp • Opequon Quaker Camp



## Welcome!

Thanks for taking the time to read this, the first issue of the BYM Camping Programs newsletter. I hope parents, staff, alumni, current campers, and the wider Quaker community will enjoy the material here.

In this issue you will find information about how the summer went at each camp, personal reflections from staff and committee members, important upcoming dates, and lots of other information.

Please send me any feedback and suggestions for future issues as well as any writings or photos that you'd like to submit.

- Josh Riley, *Camp Administrative Secretary*



## Teen Adventure & TA Leadership Training Summer Report

*by David Hunter, CPC member*

The Teen Adventure program enjoyed one of its best years ever this year. There were 72 TAer's, necessitating six trips. Alison Downey and Whitney Thompson have quickly become seasoned directors and provided support and leadership for their fantastic group of staff and counselors, most of whom hope to return to open the way for another great summer in 2003.

The trips continue to be based at the Common Ground near Lexington VA. The members of Common Ground bless the program with a stable home complete with pastoral beauty, warm hospitality and a tangible example of an alternative and sustainable lifestyle. Campers leave from and come home to a place that is dedicated to preserving the beauty of the earth in which the campers and staff have just been immersed. Their hospitality and generosity is never forgotten and always appreciated.

There were four Teen Adventure Program (TAP) trips this year designed to be enjoyed by young people coming to TA for the first time. The other two trips were Teen Adventure Leadership Training (TALT) trips. These trips include all of the fun and challenges characteristic of the BYM camping program, but also incorporate the teaching of skills that will be useful to participants as they pursue their interests in outdoor education, youth work, teaching or a host of other roles in which leadership skills

are necessary.

All of the trips enjoyed the leadership of a fantastic group of counselors who had benefited from a well run pre-camp. The creative and sensitive leadership on the TALT trips has produced another bumper crop of fantastic Quaker leaders. This was accomplished through lots of fun (campers found that the bus



wouldn't run unless the riders were singing LOUD camp songs) and ample opportunities for reflection, self-examination and spiritual growth. At one point both trips met on the trail for worship followed by a time when the group separated by gender for worship sharing, deep discussions of gender issues and the celebration of some rites of passage.

It was a wonderful summer for all but there was a bit of bitter to go with the sweet in the end. The Camping Program Committee tearfully accepted the resignation of Alison Downey at its September meeting. While we will miss her warmth, endless supply of smiles, her passion for positive thinking and her open hearted honesty we will reluctantly send her off with a boat full of blessing to pursue her path in the northwest. We are grateful for her many years of service to the camping programs (we think that Alison participated in all of the BYM camping Programs, a rare distinction). Thank goodness, Whitney Thompson will continue to offer her able leadership to the program.



## Catoctin Summer Sum-up

by Marie Gagne Stacy, CPC member

In her director's report, Linda Garrettson describes a very spiritually rewarding summer for all who participated at camp. The staff and counselors were very experienced. Only three counselors were new in their position, and with the support of their fellow counselors and staff, were able to make a smooth transition.

The unit one ten day trips were very successful. On their solos, the unit ones experienced one of the few storms of the summer but came away with terrific stories. During project week, the service trip worked at Thorpewood, Way Station and at a retirement community. They also participated in picking up trash on the mountain.

During meetings for worship, campers, counselors, staff and directors centered on queries of, what is done in the silence, what is meant by "the way opens," respect, prayer and being grateful, to list but a few. The firecircle gives the community a great opportunity to talk openly about each individuals' spiritual life.

Catoctin Director, Linda Garrettson, feels blessed that her family has been able to grow up in such a loving and growthful place. We are very fortunate to have her gentle direction and spiritual leadership at Catoctin.

*Excerpts from Linda Garrettson's Director's Report, 2002*

"This may have been one of the smoothest summers I can remember in recent history at Catoctin..."

"My in-camp staff already had over 30 years of combined counselor experience and more importantly were all second or third year in-camp staff. They support the counselors, support me and keep camp running smoothly...I feel so blessed and thankful.

"We only had three new counselors this year. They have all hit the ground running. It has been SMOOTH! Our anticipated high return rate excites me, yet is also sad in the face of so many strong ris-



ing potential counselors from TALT. We will encourage them to go work at Opequon as they add counselors next year.

"Our acknowledgement of the spiritual richness in our ordinary day to day interactions is a real gift to many. I have found myself brought back to center time and time again in our meetings for worship...Camp is a vibrant place which nourishes us. We know that we have a special gift which we need to figure out how to share to a greater extent with the broader world—Quaker in particular.

## Shiloh Summer Successful

*excerpted from Dana Foster's Director's Report, 2002*

"I came away from the summer inspired by the work the counselors do, and wanting to sing their praises to everyone. I am amazed by their dedication, fierce joy, deep love for the campers, and willingness to give and give... to go out of their way to love others, even when they are frustrating. I see them being willing to be transformed by Spirit, and I get to watch their transformation over the summers I work with them. I have the most wonderful job in the world..."

"Trips are the counselors' works of art. Counselors this summer were very passionate about trips and loved being on them. Many counselors would rather be on trips than in camp. Both unit trips and project week trips went well this summer. I enjoyed the post-trip thank you circles very much. I felt that campers returned especially glowing and transformed from project week trips. There is something magical about mixed-aged groups on a trip. It helps both the young ones and the older ones.

"Out of curiosity, I counted the number of days when we are all in camp together, not counting changeover days or the days on which campers are leaving on trips or returning from them. We have 16 full in-camp days in the six weeks of camp. We are very much a trip camp..."

"Thoughts for next summer: Unit one long trip. We spent some wonderful time in post camp discussing whether we'd like some kind of longer trip for our unit one campers, and what that might look like. After a great group process and some inspired committee work, plans are coming together for a nine day trip next summer. Part of the time would, in the words of the counselors, give campers the "chance to fall in love with the trail."

After the seven trail days, campers will come back to Shiloh for two days focused on spiritual growth, introspection, and rite of passage/graduation from Shiloh.

During post camp we did some small-group all-camp feedback. I took notes on what the groups reported. Here are some things people said they liked about Shiloh:

- It's different every year—special days

and project weeks change, and we tinker and reinvent our program.

- We like four-day trips.
- The food is good. And we compost, which is good.
- We feel like there is less competition between BYM camps (and more healthy crossover) than there used to be.
- We're about self-growth.
- We're not high tech. No Internet access.
- We teach Quakerism.
- We teach respect for the environment.
- We teach trail skills, even to the youngest campers. The confidence they feel about having mastery of something like a tarp knot translates into the rest of their lives as well.
- Folks who work at camp experience and express our sense of the divine in diverse ways. We are able to model a variety of spiritual approaches.
- We play all-camp games after morning meeting every day.
- The counselor culture is fun and healthy.
- We balance goofiness and seriousness.
- We push people to new levels.
- The candle ceremony is beautiful.

# Opequon Summer Report

*compiled by Josh Riley*

Opequon is a different kind of camp. The arts-focused in-camp approach and the rich diversity in the campers and staff makes it one of the most dynamic communities I've ever been a part of. I had a wonderful time cooking for a week at Opequon this summer. Witnessing the hard and spirited work of the counselors and staff was inspirational.

2002 was another successful summer for the program. Opequon is five years old and continues to evolve. We expanded the program by one more week bringing the summer to a full six weeks. This change allowed us to accommodate about 50 more campers.

Camp was just about full in every session. We offered two two-week sessions and two one-week sessions.

We continued to offer a primarily in-

camp experience with a single overnight adventure, either at camp or away on the trail, depending on the abilities and interests of the campers. The single overnight is



a great way to build community and offers campers a manageable and intentioned challenge.

Spiritual life at camp was rich--full of singing, deeply centered worship and worship sharing. The walk from the main part of camp to the firecircle remains one of my favorite meditations.

The property still offers challenges. We rely on volunteer labor to get camp ready each year. I hope many will participate in the camp work days (listed on page 6)

*Excerpts from Elaine Brigham's Director's Report, 2002*

"Workshops continue to be an integral, central part of Opequon. This summer's workshops included: Inside/Outside the Box, Multimedia Self Portrait, Pirates, Web, Quilting, Ropes Course, Games, Dance, Italian Dinner, Painting the Woods, Photography, Trail

*~ continued on page 5*

## Enrollment, Finances, Fees, Property, Alumni, and the Future

*by Josh Riley*

I have witnessed another successful summer for the BYM Camping Programs. The articles and excerpts in this newsletter offer a glimpse of the vibrant spiritual and physical life at the four camps. The year-round administration tends the fire when the camps are not in session. Here's some information related to the more subtle aspects of operating the camps.

### Camper Enrollment

There were 566 campers at camp this summer. This constitutes an increase of 46 from last summer due to expanded sessions at Opequon and an additional trip at Teen Adventure. Of this group, 322 were BYM Quakers representing 26 Monthly Meetings. There were 56 Quakers from outside the region and 188 non-Quakers.

We had a 90% acceptance rate. Some Baltimore Yearly Meeting Quakers did not get into camp this summer. Some of this was due to our inability to accept sibling pairs at the same camp at the same time. Over half of the total applicants to Catoctin and Shiloh wanted to come to the first session. This caught us off guard.

I believe some of this demand was due to the ease of e-mail and online communication among campers. While I'm happy that campers stay in touch throughout the year, if they all decide that they must come to camp

at the same time, it is a logistical impossibility.

We need to get the word out now: the more flexible you can be in 2003, the better your chances of getting into camp.

### Finances

The camping program has an operating budget of almost \$500,000. Approximately 85% of this is covered by camper fees. Another 4% is covered by contributions from individuals and Monthly Meetings. 3% is income generated by the Barry Morley Camper Financial Aid Endowment and designated for camp scholarships. The remaining 8% is allotted for workgrants.

There are other expenses related to the operation of the camps that are not reflected in the numbers above. They can be roughly estimated at \$100,000. These expenses are supported by Baltimore Yearly Meeting through Monthly Meeting apportionment. Among these expenses are administrative support (telephone, copying, office staff salaries and benefits, etc.), caretaker salaries and benefits, and property operating expenses. This translates into about \$180 per camper covered by BYM. The BYM support also

accounts for the fee scale favoring BYM Quakers.

### Camp Properties

We manage nearly 900 acres of land. We rely on the properties to provide wilderness facilities for our programs. Only 55% of the property operating expense is covered by the camping program's summer rental. The remaining amount is supported by BYM as expressed above. Even with an operating budget of \$63,000 the camp properties are barely being maintained. We need to think seriously about how to pay for necessary additions and improvements.

This year we will be hiring a property manager to help with the stewardship of our properties and facilities. The property manager will help guide the work of the caretakers, facilitate outside contractors, conduct facilities inventories, assist with marketing of off-season camp rental, provide staff support to the Camp Property Management Committee, and much more.

To keep up with these growing property needs the camping program will be increasing its financial support of the properties.

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	<i>Catoctin</i>	<i>Shiloh</i>	<i>TA</i>	<i>Opequon</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<b>BYM Quakers</b>	118 / 67%	73 / 46%	42 / 58%	89 / 55%	322 / 57%
<b>Other Quakers</b>	12 / 7%	16 / 10%	9 / 13%	19 / 12%	56 / 10%
<b>Non-Quakers</b>	45 / 26%	69 / 44%	21 / 29%	53 / 33%	188 / 33%
<b>TOTALS</b>	175 / 31%	158 / 28%	72 / 13%	161 / 28%	566 / 100%

# Is the Camping Program for Everyone?

by Steve Gilbert, CPC member

Why do I serve on the Camping Program Committee? Because I'm allowed to.

Those of us who have been touched by the BYM camping program are grateful for almost any opportunity to maintain a connection with the most spiritually nurturing community I've found – anywhere. Just as the evening firecircle is the spiritual heart of the camp; for many of us, the camping program is the spiritual heart of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

David Hunter explained recently that “the purpose of the Camping Program Committee is to hold the camping program in the Light.” Since this statement encompasses all of us who try to help with the camps, I think he has captured the essence of the whole program. The Camping Program Committee tries hard to support the camp directors and guide the development of the program “in the Light.” We don't always succeed in doing so, but more often we do succeed.

It is very difficult to explain the BYM Camping Program to those who haven't spent some time within it, or to those who haven't lived with a young person who is transformed by the camping program over several summers.

Each summer I serve as a cook for a week, which lets me live on the edge of – and just within – the camp community. This is the week I set aside each year for my spiritual renewal – to let myself be reminded of how well a group of human beings can live and grow together. It pre-

pares me to re-enter the “real world” and try to do my little bit to build more “nurturing communities” — a little more like the BYM camps.

Unfortunately, I am sometimes dissatisfied with the apparently shallower experience of most local meetings for worship when I compare them with the intensity and bright spirit of the camp firecircles and even some of the Camping Program Committee meetings. I keep hoping to encounter worship and community with some of the camping program qualities elsewhere, and I'm very grateful whenever I do.

The BYM Camping Program really is for everyone who participates. The fundamental Quaker commitment to recognize and honor “that of God in every person,” makes it impossible to design and run an organization that only serves the needs and recognizes the gifts of *some* of the participants. The BYM camping program is NOT only for the young campers. When I had a brief opportunity to talk with Barry Morley, who did more than anyone to shape the camps, he explained that the camps were not really “for the campers.” He told me that the camps were really “for the young staff members.”

While campers learn how to create community as part of their “curriculum,” the counselors learn even more by accepting responsibility for running that community. The structure and process of the camping program creates a community that strives to recognize and support the needs and gifts of everyone. The program care-

fully provides challenges and opportunities that enable everyone to contribute often to the betterment of the whole community, even if only in small ways.

Finally, of course, the BYM camping program cannot really be for everyone. Thinking about the kind of child I was at age ten, I don't think I could have enjoyed or participated in the camping program. I was too self-absorbed and frightened. Some children are too fastidious or non-physical. The new evolving Opequon program is making it possible for some with physical differences and for others whose strongest interests are in the arts to participate in a camp that is striving to remain true to the BYM camping program's most fundamental spiritual elements while exploring new directions.

I hope we can continue to add more camps as we find that more young people hear about this wonderful program and want to participate. Perhaps most important, we're now producing too many highly qualified and eager young people who want to continue their connection by becoming counselors and staff members. We may soon have more of these potential leaders than we have staff openings, and I hope we can develop new camps or expand the program in other ways to accommodate all who would be able and willing to help. I know of no better way to prepare young leaders, who can contribute to the spiritual depth of any organization, help get things done, and have fun doing them!

# What's the BYM Camping Program Committee?

by Carol Ahlum, CPC member

Since 1990 when our youngest daughter at age nine began her first two weeks at Catoctin Quaker Camp, until last fall when I became a member of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camping Program Committee, I held in awe the BYM Camps. Who is responsible for all the wonders that our children find at the BYM camps?

From my two daughters attending 6 years of Catoctin and two years of Teen Adventure, I knew first-hand the hard work of the Camp Directors, staff, and counselors. After a year on Camping Program Committee, I now know first-hand the dedicated, consistent, year-round support

of the Camp Administrator (Josh Riley), the BYM Camping Program Committee, and the Camp Property Management Committee.

The Camping Program Committee meets monthly from September through May; during the camping season, committee members visit and support the Camp Directors. The Program Committee works to ensure, based on the Directors' evaluations, that the camps have what they need for the next camp sessions.

We create the camp budget, do public relations with Monthly Meetings, organize the yearly alumni weekend, and work on envisioning and ensuring the future of the

camp programs. We struggle with issues such as how to ensure that any BYM child who applies is admitted to one of the BYM camps, and the desire not to raise current fees in spite of increased rent and the fact that camper fees sustain over 80% of the Camping Program budget, and how to plan for the future of more BYM children who will want to attend camp.

I now know that the Camp Property Management Committee meets as needed to facilitate the work on property development to prepare for the next camp season. This fall, the Property Committee (under the new clerkship of Patti Nesbitt) is

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## Who is on the Camping Program Committee?

Below is a listing of committee members listed alphabetically by meeting. Feel free to contact them if you have any thoughts or concerns about the camping programs or properties.

Annie Storr - Adelphi  
 Ron Akins, Clerk - Bethesda  
 Rex Riley - Charlottesville  
 Carol Ahlum - Frederick  
 David Hunter - Frederick  
 Jane Megginson - Frederick  
 Greg Tobin - Frederick  
 Nancy Beiter - FMW  
 Steve Gilbert - FMW  
 Marie Stacy - Gunpowder  
 Jody Hopkins - Homewood  
 Patti Nesbitt - Hopewell Centre  
 Kevin Caughlan - Sandy Spring  
 Janey Pugsley - Sandy Spring  
 Peter Doo - Stony Run  
 Lizzie Fetter - Takoma Park

### Ex Officio:

Josh Riley, Camp Admin. Sec.  
 Linda Garrettson, Director, CQC  
 Dana Foster, Director, SQC  
 Elaine Brigham, Director, OQC  
 Whitney Thompson, Dir., TA

## Who is on the Camp Property Management Committee?

Mike Alemar, Adelphi  
 Frank Jannisson, Charlottesville  
 David Hunter, Frederick  
 Hank Rupperecht, Frederick  
 Brian Burgher, Goose Creek  
 Patti Nesbitt, Clerk, Hop. Ctr.  
 Alan DeSilva, Sandy Spring  
 Barbara Galloway, Sandy Spring  
 Tom Horne, Takoma Park Prep.

### Ex officio

Josh Riley, Camp Admin. Sec.  
 Arlene Rodenbeck, Stewardship & Finance  
 Ron Akins, Camping Program  
 Ted Hawkins, Trustees

## More Opequon Summer Report

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Blazing, The Band, Copper Journals, Sound Stories, Creative Hip Hop, Puppets, Hip Hop Dance Troop, Costumes, Navajo Weaving. Here are a couple descriptions:

**Creative Hip-Hop:** We had several hip-hop/spoken word/creative writing and dance workshops this summer. Hassan Delgado who joined us from TA for the last two weeks of camp, led two workshops involving rhythm, rhyme, free-writing, free-styling, poetry, spoken word, song, creative writing, group work, rehearsal, and performance. The first workshop culminated in an outstanding performance including recorded performances on loaned NPR equipment that Andrea Seabrook brought with her. Participants learned about the history of hip-hop, connections to jazz and blues as they listened to various pieces of music and were taken on a historical musical journey. They then wrote their own pieces, learned how to record music, sounds and rhythm, and performed for camp.

**Italian Dinner:** Maria, our beloved Kitchen Manager not only ran the kitchen but also led an overnight, offered afternoon activities and offered workshops, wowed us all with this creative, camper friendly,

cooking extravaganza. Campers learned about Italian cuisine. They made three kinds of sauce, marinara, alfredo, and pesto, three types of homemade pasta, Italian ice cream in a homemade edible cookie bowl, and more! Campers experienced the art of cooking and explored creativity and the joy of cooking with others, for others. They jarred the three sauces and got to take samples of their creations home to share with their families. What a delicious workshop!

**Copper Journals:** Lisa Tompkins, having spent the year taking metal work classes co-created this exciting workshop with Sara Angel, an art major at Appalachian State. A generous donation from a friend of camp supplied us with the beautiful copper. Using old inner tubes, spiral notebooks, and metal smith tools, participants created rubber bound copper-covered journals. The skills acquired as they learned to use tools and the incredible designs in the copper proved this to be a valuable and fun workshop for campers. They began each workshop session with a ceremonial opening, some journaling and sharing of poetry, etc. that would soon fill the pages of their copper journals.



Photo of Shiloh Director, Dana Foster and Opequon Director, Elaine Brigham hanging out in one of the outdoor living areas constructed at Opequon.

photo by Coleman Watts

## Committee Information

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meeting monthly. The continued need for renovations at Opequon, a kitchen expansion at Shiloh, and the need for at least one new cabin at Catoctin to meet changes in the Frederick County building code, will keep the Property Committee busy. The growth of our camp property needs led BYM Trustees to approve hiring a Camp Property Manager who will facilitate camp property projects, as directed by the Property Management Committee.

As parents of current campers, please know that the Camping Program Committee welcomes your feedback and involvement. We also hope you will mark your calendars now and join us for one of the Spring 2003 camp work days listed on the next page; and we hope you will consider making a financial contribution to the BYM Camping Programs. Your contribution will make a significant difference.

# Finding Catoctin Summers

by Ethan Birchard, CQC Staff

(Written at Catoctin in August 2000 and read aloud at Sing 'Em Up)

When I walk around camp, sometimes I'm preoccupied with daydreams, with thoughts of my own that rise through my mind and out just as suddenly, like air bubbles through water. Other times I'm swallowed by the present, by the song I'm singing or the person I'm talking to. And sometimes the places around camp float on memories, buoyed gently by the past and singing with its secret rhythms, tolling quietly and quietly singing, like nighttime signal bells on the distant waves.

The sound might make me quick and eager. I might reach out and swim for one of these bells of the past, grasping in the darkness. And softly, and then softer, its clangs fade further away before me.

But sometimes, if I wait, treading slowly the waters of my memory, the sound increases. Then, across the dark and lovely evening, sweetly, sweetly come the bells, sweetly ringing, echoes joining their ding and their dong, on and on, ding and dong. For a moment I worry that their sad flood of sound will submerge me. Instead I float, too, on my own memories of gone-away summers that I can never visit again. Their signal bells are clamoring loudly now within me, and like sweet fog above the water a memory descends, and carefully holds me.

I am in Unit 3/4 again, making bracelets in the craft shelter. I was about to cry — in 3/4 I think I was always about to cry, to spill my homesickness out in streaks of shiny wetness. Two other campers began screaming at each other, angrily. It was enough, and the homesickness shuddered

from me in sobs and tears. But a hand was on my back; Nancy, one of the only counselors who I thought ever noticed me, gave me a close, slow hug, and let me cry. I shook against her for a long time.

And now my memory crosses the fraz field to the dining hall, at the end of an evening activity in 2/3. I had a crush on a girl in my unit, and my friend Paul dared me to ask her out that night. I was scared, and I wanted to ask her. I found her by the dining hall doors, and tapped her on the shoulder; she turned around; I leaned forward, and because I felt like I was going to choke, asked, in a shivering whisper like a dying man: "Do you want to go out with me?" She nodded. For the rest of the night I smiled and didn't hear what anyone else said.

I am floating still, quietly, and I am in 1-2 again, sitting on a high bench above the fire circle. It is Sunday night and the query has risen like smoke and fallen again softly, like ashes, among all of us in the silence. Sometimes someone speaks. And then a feeling rises within me, the feeling that I know something so much that I have to share it. I am confident, more than I have ever been, sure and ready to tell the whole camp. I think about it more, and then I am euphoric with truth. When it comes, the sound of my own voice startles me, echoing inside my head, but I do not stop speaking. My message leaves me, and I am breathless and tired.

Breathless again; I am in Unit 1, one of the last to get my torch, and I walk down just above the first bend in the trail from the fire circle. I am crying before the first person comes to hug me, full and over-

flowing, over, over, and never so sad to be happy, or so happy to be sad. I still remember faces from that night framed in the flickering torchlight, and the slow tight hugs that followed the faces, and the whispers, whispers, whispers.

I emerge now from the shifting mist of memories; I am writing this in the lodge, listening for the phone to ring, while everyone else is at the fire circle. A thick mist is over camp; walking back from the fire circle I couldn't see the surface of the lagoon. The buildings, trees, and rocks and bridges are all floating on the mist, which is dense but not heavy, rising and rising in waves without disappearing. In the lodge where I am writing I can see mist in the air between my bench and the wagon-wheel of lights. The clean-smelling vapor slips through the room on ghostly, tiny breezes; its every trickle is beautiful, wafting by me like the silence of Meeting for Worship made visible. Now I can just hear voices from the fire circle: "O light abide with us" cascades over the "For it is now the evening," with "The day is passed and over" always trickling underneath, until the final harmony.

If I came here over the year, I wonder if I could still hear the voices, like the spirit of camp lingering through the winter. But the spirit of a place is not the spirit of a place; it is the spirit of yourself that you find there. Summers past are full of vanished people, but also full with the murmurs of your own feelings, secrets in yourself. And if you listen, you will hear them, like nighttime signal bells on distant waves, ding, dong, whispering, whispering, ding, dong, ding, dong.

## Camp Administrative Secretary's Report ~ continued from page 3

This will mean an increase in camper fees for 2003 (likely 8-10%). I believe it will be well worth it as we improve health and safety at the camps and can better support the camping program's goals.

### Camp Alumni Gathering

The first ever camp alumni gathering was held over Labor Day Weekend at Catoctin. 109 people attended throughout the weekend as we shared great meals, stories, a fabulous relay race, candle boats, a firecircle, and a ton of singing.

Plans are in the works for another gathering over Labor Day weekend 2003 at Shiloh. Mark your calendar now and keep your eyes on the website for more information.

I will be spending time this year working on a camp alumni database. The current records are incomplete. If you are in touch with friends from camp who would like to receive future newsletters and announcements about gatherings and volunteer work weekends, please send me their addresses.

## Spring Work Days

PLEASE COME!

Catoctin	May 17
Shiloh	May 31
Opequon	April 26
Opequon	June 7

Come for the day or the whole weekend. Bring a dish to share for lunch and we'll provide the rest. Got skills? Great! Don't? No problem.