

Epistles -- Pacific Yearly Meeting 2002

Preschool

To Friends everywhere all over the world,

We are mostly preschoolers. We love you. You are great friends.

This week we played with clay and Legos. We found out about children in Guatemala. They have amazing sand drawings.

We ran outside. We went to a dance. We loved the dance. It was fun.

We know you live far away. We wish we could send you some presents. We hope we get to meet you sometime.

Your friends,

The PYM preschool group

(Silas, Henry, Max, Louie, Sam, Cole, Sydney, Dylan, Cooper, Miles, Rachel, Hannah, Alan, Eric, Samantha, Albee, Jonathan)

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Lower Elementary

To Friends everywhere --

In the lower elementary group, we did many things.

Rose M. enjoyed going to the pool and doing her first lap. Laura liked swimming in the pool. Jayden had fun with clay in the afternoon.

Robert enjoyed the whole morning program. Lee liked preparing snack and cleaning up, as well as physical games. Ariel liked hearing the chapter book, *The Family Under the Bridge*.

Claire enjoyed hearing the story, *The Quilt Maker's Gift*. Tynan had fun making clay figures. Rose H. liked *The Family Under the Bridge*.

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Pacific Yearly Meeting 2002

Upper Elementary

Dear Friends,

As the Upper Elementary we enjoyed this year's PYM at the University of San Diego. We would like to share the things we learned, enjoyed, and hope to do next year.

This year the Upper Elementary focused on having a Council of All Beings. We made masks, collages, and learned interesting facts about our animal beings, in preparation for the Council.

We were all different animals, and we learned to put ourselves in the place of our animals and to tell the other animals (students) how we are suffering and why we had to come to the Council of All Beings. We told the humans (adult parents and volunteers) what was happening to our natural habitats.

We also enjoyed the afternoon activities, such as beadmaking, creating notebooks, swimming, and singing.

In conclusion, this year's Upper Elementary program was a wonderful success.

Sincerely,
The Upper Elementary

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Junior YM Epistle 2002

To Friends everywhere,

Members of the community of Junior Yearly Meeting met at the University of San Diego during the 2002 summer session of Pacific Yearly Meeting. During this session, we found the focus to be unity in community and Quakers in service. We deepened our connections through business meetings and lightened our hearts through games like "capture the flag."

We benefited by sharing time with Young Friends at the beach and while playing "capture the flag." Part of our community experience was a visit to Chicano Park, where we were enlightened regarding the Mexican American struggle in San Diego. We honored the recently departed at the memorial and celebrated life at the dance.

Throughout the week, the community faced concerns and utilized Quaker process, and overcame them. When dealing with a disciplinary issue, the JYM community felt an inappropriate bypassing of due Quaker process occurred. Upon receiving knowledge of the situation, the JYM community, supported by Young Friends, immediately took action utilizing Quaker process to correct misconduct. Through the dynamic events of the gathering, the community grew tremendously.

Forever in the Light,

Junior Yearly Meeting of PYM
Forrest Parker, Ravahn Samati, and Joel Armin-Hoiland, clerks

Young Friends Epistle 2002

To Friends Everywhere,

Pacific Yearly Meeting (PYM) Young Friends gathered together on the campus of the University of San Diego (USD) from the 22nd through the 27th day of Seventh Month, 2002. Our community maintains a strong foundation of committed members, and we attracted over 30 Friends to our gathering this year, including some new ones.

We were inspired by the second Plenary when we listened to the personal stories of Friends who have been given leadings of the Spirit and have striven to follow them. Many said that they have felt inadequate to their callings, but that with the support of their Friends communities they have persevered. In an effort to foster such support for Quaker activism among Young Friends, we joined with Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) to clean up Chicano Park in a non-affluent Mexican-American neighborhood, assisting AFSC in this urban outreach program. Many of us also joined Friends from the greater PYM to hold a vigil at the US-Mexico border. With JYM we visited Ocean Beach, and we played a game of Capture the Flag on Astro-turf. Although we lost the game miserably (we were sorely outnumbered), all of these events brought us closer together as a community.

Yet, we crave to play a more active role in the nurturing of JYM. We are concerned about the apparent lack of recognition of the completeness of the Light that shines in all Friends, young and old. We feel privileged to have observed the ability of the members of JYM to follow Friends' process in response to difficulties in their community.

In worship-sharing groups, we explored the directions our lives and faith have taken over the past year in the wake of events both large and small, local and global. This and our reflections on our sense of unity in Business Meetings have led us to earnestly consider our need for closer interactions during the 51 weeks between Yearly Meetings. We concluded that we need both closer fellowship and the satisfaction of common goals. To that end, we explored myriad possibilities in a threshing session. We formed an ad hoc committee to address this and to plan our Fall 'Spirit and Light' gathering, which we hope will strengthen a tradition of service and fellowship gatherings. We look forward to future gatherings and eagerly anticipate coming together at USD once again in Eighth Month 2003.

In the Light,

Young Friends Gathering of Pacific Yearly Meeting
Stephen Myers and Darcy Stanley, Clerks

Pacific Yearly Meeting Epistle—2002

To Friends everywhere,

Greetings from Pacific Yearly Meeting's 56th annual gathering, July 22nd to 27th, 2002.

As we gathered in San Diego, California, we were comforted by our coming together even as we were reminded of the challenges we face, both individually and corporately. We were acutely aware of our many concerns for the world. The events of September 11th and its aftermath gave new significance to the question, "What canst thou say?" Reports from our Monthly Meetings told of our responses and our advocacy for alternatives to war.

The tone of our gathering was set by Friends who told of their healing ministries in Burundi, Kosovo, Pakistan, Colombia, and in the California prison system. Their stories moved many to tears. We were reminded that tears are a message from the Spirit, and that love is made visible through the Spirit. In one-to-one connection, Spirit calls to Spirit to evoke a different consciousness that enlarges the definition of family. One Friend prompted us to remember what we already knew—that we need community support to sustain our personal non-violence.

Finding and following our leadings was a recurrent theme throughout our gathering. We sensed the need to revive the tradition of the released Friend. The Spirit has transforming power in the lives both of those who are called to non-violent witness and the communities that nurture them. The personal ministry of Friends needs to become the work of the Meeting. Meetings were urged to offer financial and emotional support along with critical dialogue while providing a community in which to hold personal ministries accountable.

Our State of the Meeting Reports revealed a great willingness among Friends to be used in the service of the Spirit. But it also revealed our struggle to find our corporate witness. The question stays with us, "Who are we beyond a mutually caring faith community?" One Friend urged us to understand that social justice is inseparable from, and contained within, the context of Earth-justice.

We happily celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Friends Committee on Legislation and the significant role it plays as a Quaker presence in California's state capital.

A deep and loving concern was expressed for the American Friends Service Committee as a Spirit-led organization. There were questions about the structure of the organization and the relationship between the Regional and National offices. We hold AFSC in the Light and express our loving support for our Regional Office staff and for AFSC's work in the world, nationally and internationally.

We were grateful to our Finance Committee and a budget designed to give more opportunities for us to respond to the call of the Spirit, for the Spirit is moving strongly among us.

Tears came again at our memorial plenary with the clear message that we are of one another.

In the Divine Spirit that unites us all,

Shan Cretin, Clerk