

STAFF REPORTS

CAMP ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

This has been, by far, one of the smoothest years ever for the camping programs. All four programs were blessed with good (enough) weather, competent experienced directors and staff, and enthusiastic campers, all of whom were brimming with energy, curiosity and Light. I am particularly grateful for the ease because this summer is my last as the Camp Administrative Secretary for BYM. At the end of 2004, I will be moving on and taking a break from twenty-two years of involvement with the camping programs.

I have felt very blessed during my years as a camper, counselor, assistant director, and for the last six years, as the Camp Administrative Secretary. Each experience brought new challenges and amazing new people into my life—many of whom remain friends. Working with the BYM staff over these years has been deeply enriching as well. I am especially grateful to Frank Massey for his gentle leadership, spiritual nurture, and loving support. He is a dedicated and (perhaps too) modest leader of a diverse group of curious, independent seekers—not an easy task. We are blessed to have his leadership.

Here are some highlights of the work that I, the Camping Program Committee, and others have done this year on behalf of the camping program.

Database & Online Applications

In the fall we purchased a new database for the camping programs. In addition to more flexible accounting, more powerful statistical reporting, and better integration with other software in the office, the new database offered parents the convenience of applying for camp online. I am delighted to report that in the first year of offering it, 66% of families took advantage of the online application feature. I was spared many hours of tedious data entry as a result of their willingness to use the technology! I have a great relationship with the database creators (a company called CampBrain based in Toronto) and they are very responsive to our needs for customization and special reporting. The database we retired was created specifically for our camping programs more than a decade ago by former camp secretary, Rex Riley. I'm grateful to that database for many years of faithful service.

Enrollment

I'm still working on the enrollment statistics and the financials from this summer. I can say generally that overall camp enrollment was lower than usual. Catocin, Shiloh and Opequon each had approximately twenty fewer campers this year as compared to last year. However, the total camper weeks were only down a little

(1,348 total weeks for 2004, versus 1,366 in 2003). This indicates that although there were fewer campers overall, those who came to camp stayed longer. I'm not yet sure what effect the decline in enrollment will have on the finances. I will give a more thorough report of this at Interim Meeting in October. One more important note about enrollment: although campers at Catoctin, Shiloh, and Opequon are virtually guaranteed a spot at camp if they want to return the next year, this is no longer true at Teen Adventure because the applicant pool has grown beyond the capacity of the program. Campers who have been in the program for a long time will not necessarily get into Teen Adventure. We must do a better job letting families know this up front.

Camp Fees

We will be increasing the fees for camp for the summer of 2005. This increase reflects our continuing commitment to maintain the safety of our facilities and the quality of the camping programs. The new rates also reflect our effort to keep camp affordable and accessible to Baltimore Yearly Meeting Quakers. Even with the increase we find that we remain very competitively priced compared to other camps in the region, and extremely competitively priced when compared to other camps of similar size offering similar programs. We promise to continue to provide a lot of Quaker bang for your Friendly buck.

Policies and Procedures

I spent time this spring working with our insurance company to secure new coverage for some of the higher risk activities we do at camp, primarily rock climbing and canoeing. This work prompted the creation of more written camp policies and procedures than we have ever had before. Another benefit of having begun this documentation is that we standardized more of our instruction and safety protocols across the four programs. The camp directors and I will continue to document what we do, and how we do it. We are also working on a standard personnel handbook for all the camping programs.

Alumni

We held the second bi-annual alumni gathering over Labor Day weekend at Shiloh Quaker Camp this fall. Approximately fifty people attended and there was enthusiasm for another weekend gathering—tentatively scheduled for Columbus Day weekend, 2006. We also agreed to continue having a holiday get-together around Christmas or New Year's every year. I hope that our network of camp alumni will continue to grow and become a greater resource for the programs.

Committee Work

The Long Range Property Planning committee, comprised of members of Trustees, Stewardship and Finance, Camping Program Committee, and the Camp Property Management Committee wrapped up its work this year as well. I enjoyed the opportunity to serve, along with David Hunter, as staff support for this group. The report appears elsewhere in the Yearbook so I will not dwell on it here. I hope the reporting, surveys and recommendations of this group will serve as a framework for future long-range planning for all the properties within BYM.

Working with the Camping Program Committee is always fruitful. I feel very supported by this wonderful group of deeply committed individuals who gather monthly for most of the year to do business and hold the programs in the Light. The role of the committee is always evolving and each year we set new goals and find new (and old) things to talk about. The committee has, for the past several years, distributed surveys to campers and parents. The thoughtful suggestions and loving feedback we get help us make the program stronger. The report from the Camping Program Committee, which appears elsewhere in this Yearbook, gives a wonderful description of the role and work of the committee.

Reflection

I am delighted that Jane Megginson will be moving into the role of Camp Administrative Secretary. I've also felt very grateful for David Hunter's work as the Camp Property Manager. I am awestruck by the work David does, and by how much there is to do. I'm not sure how we got along so long without him. Finally, the five gifted directors who lead the individual programs are all returning to direct next year: Linda Garrettson at Catocin, Dana Foster at Shiloh, Elaine Brigham at Opequon, and Whitney Thompson and Melissa Poole at Teen Adventure. Working with all of them has been by far the greatest benefit of being the camp secretary. I am very grateful to each of these magnificent women for her friendship and mentoring.

Here is a favorite quote from a past director's report: "Each summer I leave camp knowing that the people around me, young or old, are engaged in active spiritual search and that the Light can be seen working in them. I leave knowing that all creatures tend toward grace and honesty when approached with trust. I leave knowing that the Spirit leads us towards tenderness and towards each other, and I know that Way Opens. This community affects me so."

I am filled with gratitude for having had the opportunity to serve the Yearly Meeting as the Camp Administrative Secretary for the past six years. The camping programs touch the lives of so many in truly remarkable ways. To witness the unfolding of the divine within a child who is pushed to the edge of her ignorance and then lovingly challenged to believe in herself is humbling, and awesome. To

love children for exactly who they are, and to trust them with the power to know themselves, is nothing short of a miracle. Children and adults alike are never as whole as when they are at camp.

Josh Riley

CAMP PROPERTY MANAGER

My first year as Camp Property Manager at Baltimore Yearly Meeting has been a wonderful and exciting one. It is always challenging to be the first in a newly created position and I have enjoyed meeting the challenge of finding balance among the many tasks that call for my attention. It is a rare privilege to be a part of a Yearly Meeting that is committed to providing a place for its young people to grow in the Light. The Yearly Meeting has made a significant investment of time, energy and resources in its camping programs and it is a joy to see the dividends, things like membership, leadership and the richness and vibrancy of our Meetings, coming to fruition. Every day I am grateful for the individuals who had the foresight to invest their time, sweat and money in our properties.

It can be challenging to find direction and goals in a new job, especially when it is a new position all together. I am grateful for the many hours Friends spent discussing how best to assist in the improved management of the camp properties. I am in debt to those who gave their time to create the position's job description and the time the staff has spent getting me acquainted with the office, the Yearly Meeting and helping me discern how best to use my time. Out of all of these efforts I distilled three goals that I hope guided me this year: using our resources as responsibly as possible, seeking out more resources, and seeking to be the kind of stewards who can maintain our properties for the future.

Using our resources responsibly

Our properties represent a significant investment, and their use, maintenance, and improvement require a significant amount of resources. We are committed to all that they enable us (e.g. our Camping Programs, Meeting retreats, Friends Schools camping trips etc.) to do but it is important for us to ensure that the money we spend is spent carefully. It is my hope that with careful planning, record keeping and purchasing we will be able to get more out of the money that we spend maintaining and improving our properties.

Bulk buying, shopping for the best price, making use of warranties and insurance are a few of the things that we have done to move us toward this goal. We are also experimenting with purchasing equipment that the programs have leased or rented in the past. Two Suburbans and one mini-van were purchased for the 2003 camping season and two pick-up trucks were purchased for the 2004 season. Careful records are being kept of all of the costs associated with owning these vehicles so that we will be able to see just how much money we are saving

by owning rather than leasing. Other groups within and related to the Yearly Meeting have also utilized these vehicles. This is the first year in a long time that we have not had to rent any canoes for our summer programs. Thanks to the kindness of Friends during the 2003 Annual Sessions we were able to purchase 16 new canoes for our programs! At the same time we have learned a great deal about repairing and maintaining our fleets of canoes and the canoes that we purchased for the 2004 camping season can look forward to long and productive lives.

One of the areas that has offered me lots of opportunities for learning was the process of creating a budget for 2005 last winter. I am looking forward to working our way through that fiscal year and seeing how well we can stick to it. It will also be rewarding to begin work on the 2006 budget, making adjustments for what we have learned this year. In writing the budgets we have worked hard to be sure that we have been realistic about what it takes to maintain our properties and to be sure that all of the cost and revenue the properties produce are included. It is hard to be responsible with what is available to us unless we are clear about what we have and how it is getting used.

Increasing our resources

As we began the budgeting process for 2005 it became quite clear, quite quickly that we were going to have to find more revenue to create a balanced budget that allowed us to maintain and improve our properties responsibly. As we looked around for more income we noticed two things. First, Friends and others that were renting our properties in the off-season were paying very little to do so. Second, our camping programs are all well established and have been in good financial positions for a number of years now.

We tried to compare our camp facilities to other similar conference center and retreat facilities in the region. The few places that offered similar facilities and services were, for the most part, significantly more expensive than are our facilities. The Camp Property Management Committee approved increasing our rental rates by 25 percent, and recommended other adjustments as well.

For the 2005 budget, the amounts that each of our programs contribute towards maintaining the properties was also increased by 25 percent. They were adjusted to reflect how many campers could be at each site. In other words, Catoctin is able to support about 110 people in the summertime; Shiloh supports about 95 and Opequon about 85. The rates were adjusted so that Catoctin pays a little more than Shiloh, which pays a little more than Opequon. We realized there was a significant amount of camp rental revenue that was not being collected because of poor billing procedures. These have been corrected with the purchase of a new reservation and billing database.

We have also found that we possess some assets that we do not foresee using. There is a small section of Shiloh, removed from the main part of the campus that has been little used. The Camp Property Management Committee and Trustees have hoped to sell this parcel for a number of years. We have found an interested buyer and are in the midst of sorting out the details. If this transaction goes through it will provide some income for the Trustees will and free we from the costs of maintaining a little used section of camp.

Fund raising is quickly becoming a significant part of my position as well. I mentioned that, during Annual Session 2003, we were able to raise enough money to purchase 16 new canoes for our programs. This year during Annual Session, we received enough donations and pledges to build a new cabin in the spring of 2005. In addition, over 40 camp families made contributions to the Camp Property Capital Fund and five Monthly Meetings have made additional donations and pledges to the operating budget and the Capital Fund. As we move forward it will be necessary to continue to build up contributions to the Capital Fund and operating budget. Our needs in catching up with deferred maintenance and improvements are just too great to pass on to the adults and children who use camp. I will continue to work to build our fund raising base. It is my hope that Friends are getting used to supporting our camp properties through contributions.

Being stewards to what has been entrusted to us

We have enjoyed the benefits of owning camp properties for well over 50 years but we have not taken full advantage of the opportunities we have to spend time together maintaining and improving them. There have been lots of projects undertaken on our camp properties over the years and I am sure that those who took them on reaped the spiritual benefits of fellowship and satisfaction that this kind of work provides. There are still lots of opportunities for enjoying the fruits of stewardship. To be sure, we are a little behind in the maintenance and improvement projects at our camps.

This spring we had eight different work weekends and were able to build two new cabins, re-roof two cabins, make significant structural repairs to three cabins and accomplish scores of other important maintenance tasks. These weekends were among the most rewarding hours I worked this year and I hope that many, many more Friends will take the opportunity to join us in the months and years to come. It is difficult to plan all aspects (food, projects, materials etc.) for all the work weekends, and it is difficult to spend so much time away from my family. I look forward to sharing some of the preparation for work weekends with others in the future. We will be gathering at Catoctin this fall to build another cabin and will have a weekend at each of the camps to help ready the camps for winter. Opportunities continue for those who enjoy fellowship and straightforward, meaningful work.

Using volunteers to help build and maintain our properties represents a significant way for us to save money at our properties. The volunteers who have helped to build the new cabins over the last several years have helped us save between 20 percent and 30 percent of the cost of the structure. This is only one of the benefits the Yearly Meeting reaps by having more people physically involved with the maintenance of its properties. Baltimore Yearly Meeting Friends have been entrusted with a few corners of the created world. When we take the opportunity to visit and help maintain these places, we come to know them intimately. Through this “knowing” we come to know that which created these bits of heaven in the beginning, as well as those who have co-created the haven for our youth that these places have become. Who among us could not benefit from a more intimate relationship with our creator or with the heritage of Friends who have gone before us, making Baltimore Yearly Meeting what it is today?

I know it is not always physically possible for Friends to be at camp when the opportunity presents itself. Friends at camp often remember those who support camp in other ways. We know that those who come out to do the work are entirely dependent on those who help buy the tools and materials. All of our contributions are necessary in maintaining our properties. Friends are welcome to make contributions to the operating budget and to capital improvements at any time.

Working with the Long Range Property Planning Committee has been a real pleasure and has helped me to focus on what we will want our properties to be in five, ten or fifteen years. I feel the committee’s report is something that we can be proud of and I look forward to seeing its recommendations executed.

Finally

In 2001 a number of changes took place in the budget of the Yearly Meeting with regard to the Camping Program and the Camp properties. As I began to ask about the changes and why the changes had come about I began to hear some Friends referring the camp properties and a liability and a drain on the Yearly Meetings resources. Hearing these places referred to as liabilities wounded me. I, like so many others love these places and have experiential knowledge of how important a role our properties and our camping programs play in the Yearly Meeting. It was difficult for me to hear those words applied to the places that I loved so much.

Over the ensuing years I have come to hear the truth in those words. I have realized that truth speaking requires us to be honest about the expenditures as well as the dividends — fiscal and spiritual — associated with our camp properties. We have been entrusted with some corners of creation that speak to us of the Creators love and wisdom. We are blessed be able to enjoy that love and wisdom. We love these places as they are and we are often hesitant to make

changes. However, time does take its toll on them, and if we do not maintain and improve them, they will become a liability to us and the dividends they offer begin to diminish. It is great that Friends have recognized the need for responsible care of our properties and I feel privileged to be a part of that process. Thanks for that opportunity and don't forget to take advantage of the opportunities our properties present.

Accomplishments

- Vehicles
- Canoes
- Cabins at Shiloh and Opequon
- Roofs at Catoctin
- Fundraising
- Assisted with Caretaker hiring
- Well winterization at Opequon
- SQC bridge repair
- Fund raising presentations
- Visiting Meetings
- Eight spring work weekends

Anticipations

- Building at Catoctin
- The pond at Catoctin
- Fundraising
- Shiloh Walnut cabin #2
- Timber sale
- Property sale
- Catoctin pond grant
- Five fall work weekends
- Visiting Meetings
- Increased communication with camping programs during the summer and clearer delineations of tasks

David Hunter

GENERAL SECRETARY

Administration

All staff members seek to keep the Yearly Meeting informed of the work of the Yearly Meeting and those organizations to which we belong. As we do this we try to control office cost. Much of our work (sending out minutes, announcements, etc.) we send out electronically—saving on time, postage, and copying charges. Another way we are seeking to save in by encouraging all to receive the *Interchange* electronically to save on postage and printing costs.

Staff

Baltimore Yearly Meeting is served by a hard working and dedicated staff. As with most organizations, there are staff changes from time to time. Jerry and Becky Coates began their responsibilities as Catoctin Caretakers in January 2004. Laurie Wilner, of Langley Hill Meeting, started as Yearly Meeting bookkeeper at the end of 2003. She is in the office one or two days per week. With the departure of Michele Levasseur as Youth Secretary after last year's Annual

Session, Tom Fox stepped forward to serve as an Interim, until I found a replacement. Hope Braveheart (Sandy Spring Meeting) began serving in March 2004 as the Youth Secretary on a part-time basis. In July 2004, she will become full-time working with Young Friends and Junior Young Friends, helping them and the Youth Programs Committee to build programs and projects that will deepen the spiritual life of our young people. These new staff members join David Hunter, Camp Property Manager; Jane Megginson, Office Manager; and Josh Riley, Camp Administrator to form a great team that serves you.

Josh Riley will leave his position of Camp Administrative Secretary December 31, 2004. Josh is working towards a master's degree in Pastoral Counseling and will begin full-time studies in 2005. Josh has worked to grow the camping programs, putting in many hours and miles visiting camps, Monthly Meetings, and committee meetings to help parents, campers, camp directors, and staff to understand the "Fire at the Center."

I have asked Jane Megginson to step forward and serve as the Camp Administrative Secretary, beginning January 2005. This transition will benefit the programs, as Jane is dedicated to the camps, having served as staff for a number of years. She brings many of the gifts and skills that will build on the foundation that Josh built. I look forward to working with Jane Megginson as she moves into the role of Camp Administrative Secretary; however, I will miss Josh Riley for his dedication, commitment to the camping programs, and for his listening ear,

Travel and Visitation

I try to stay in touch with the larger world of Friends through participation in or communication with different organizations. I visited with members FGC Central Committee members and staff and FUM General Board and staff. I have spoken with staff at FWCC-Section of the Americas, FCNL, and AFSC.

My travels have taken me outside Baltimore Yearly Meeting. During this year I attended Western Yearly Meeting annual session in Plainfield, Indiana; lead a weekend on angels at Powell House; co-lead a weekend at Powell House with Louise Wilson; lead a retreat for pastors and spouses of Wilmington Yearly Meeting; lead a healing weekend at Earlham College and Earlham School of Religion; participated in the Virginia Council of Churches Executives Retreat; participated in Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington; and attended the annual Superintendents and Secretaries Gathering.

I continue to visit Monthly and Quarterly Meetings providing programs and serving as a resource when asked.

I give thanks for this opportunity to serve Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Frank Massey

YOUTH SECRETARY

In March of 2004, I began working as Youth Secretary for BYM and then full-time in July 2004. One of the cards I received from a co-worker reads “Celebrate This New Beginning” and inside are the handwritten words “Welcome Home.” I do feel as though I have come home and I am so grateful.

I have begun the daunting task of putting policies and procedures for the health and well being of our youth in written form. This document is only a printed expression of the value placed on our youth. Through it may we understand the needs of our youth better and aid in the ministry of BYM youth workers.

Although my participation in this job officially started prior to Annual Session, it was at Annual Session where many concepts and issues dealt with by JYF and YF came together spiritually and experientially for me. I am excited and eager to work. However, most of my work in the coming year will be to listen, with my ears and my heart. Only by understanding our youth community will I be able to serve it well.

Hope Braveheart