

Baltimore Yearly Meeting Young Adult Friends  
2008 Epistle  
Eighth Day of Eighth Month, 2008

Dear George Fox,

Greetings from the Young Adult Friends of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. We have decided to address our epistle to you in particular this year because even though we haven't hung out a lot lately on account of that whole you being dead thing, we feel like we have a lot in common with you. You, after all, were a Young Adult yourself when you founded the Religious Society of Friends. If our maths are right<sup>1</sup>, you were twenty-three when you first began sharing your ministry in public places, twenty-five when you first got thrown in the slammer for it, and twenty-eight when you decided to take that super-wicked mud-slide down the side of Pendle Hill<sup>2</sup>. Not that most of us have ever been jailed for ministry, or mud-slid down a small mountain, but we have worn leather trousers<sup>3</sup>. And perhaps more importantly, we find ourselves alive with the sort of energy that drives young people to look up at a big barren hill in the middle of a lightning storm and think "Yeah, God totally wants me to climb that<sup>4</sup>."

So in light of these similarities, we send you our greetings, along with greetings to all Friends everywhere<sup>5</sup>. It has been a joyful year for the Young Adult Friends of BYM, as we hope it has been a joyful year for you<sup>6</sup>. We are grateful for the opportunities we've had this year to strengthen our relationships with one another, other parts of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting community, and Friends in the wider Quaker world.

We had fewer opportunities to gather this year than we would have liked. We are a far-flung group, with members spanning three states and the District of Columbia<sup>7</sup>. The high price of gas this spring prevented us from gathering together for our usual spring conference. But our winter conference was a wild success: as we gathered for worship and fun at the beautiful Homewood Meeting in Baltimore<sup>8</sup>, we enjoyed delicious meals, an inspiring and enlightening workshop on Quaker Quest, and the fellowship of many new faces. We also employed some

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- 1 We use this more British form here because we know that you were British. Also, because the Epistle Committee's computer is British, and refused to assimilate upon immigration to the US.
  - 2 Which we give you mad props for, because climbing Pendle Hill takes like an hour even in broad daylight. Climbing it during a thunderstorm, and then climbing it again because you lost your footing and fell all the way down, is *totally* hard-core.
  - 3 Or the vegetarian equivalent.
  - 4 Not that we're saying other people who are too old for that noise aren't awesome, because we're sure you were still pretty awesome when you turned into an old guy and kicked the bucket.
  - 5 and *everywhen*, lest we discriminate against Friends experiencing the more advanced stages of death.
  - 6 This would be the general "you," as opposed to the George Fox "you," because we imagine that when you're dead, one year is as joyful as the next.
  - 7 Yes, that's Canadian Yearly Meeting you hear laughing at us as you read that.
  - 8 Where we totally did not break anything, including the elevator. Unlike those shifty Friendly Adult Presences that work with the Young Friends--you can't take them *anywhere* nice.

of those crazy new technologies the kids are using these days, like the internet, to help close the long miles between us<sup>9</sup>.

And of course, we gathered for Baltimore Yearly Meeting's annual sessions at Frostburg State University<sup>10</sup>. This gave us a chance to be present not only with one another, but with Baltimore Yearly Meeting as a whole. We delighted in the fellowship and friendship of BYM's Young Friends program<sup>11</sup>, with whom we shared events such as midnight swimming, afternoon Wink, and the annual Rising YAF Ice-Cream trip<sup>12</sup>. We also enjoyed an afternoon of learning and play with some of Baltimore Yearly Meeting's even younger members, who joined us for games related to the history of early Friends<sup>13</sup>.

It was also a treasure as always to be present with our friends, families, teachers, and mentors in the wider Yearly Meeting. We joined them throughout the week for workshops, interest groups, meals and special events, and appreciated their many invitations to make our presence in the Yearly Meeting felt through opportunities for inter-visitation and service on committees and boards<sup>14</sup>. They also warmly welcomed us into the Yearly Meeting's Meeting For Worship with a Concern for Business<sup>15</sup>.

We were also blessed with many opportunities for fellowship and friendship with Friends from outside our yearly meeting. We've had visitors from New York Yearly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and Northern California's Woolman Semester, and we gladly received the truly moving and inspired epistle sent to us by the Adult Young Friends of Illinois Yearly Meeting<sup>16</sup>. We have followed with great interest the growing efforts in the wider Quaker world to bring Young Adult Friends from far away places together to seek out those things that unite us as Friends in the modern world.

As we look forward to the coming year, we have several queries before us that we seek to address as we continue to grow and develop our community and find our place in BYM and the wider Society of Friends. What can we do to support each other in our spiritual journeys and encourage each others' leadings? What steps

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9 If you're seeking to enhance your own internet experience, we recommend a visit to [www.bymyaf.org](http://www.bymyaf.org)

10 Which is in that weird, skinny part of Maryland where no one really lives.

11 Those would High School and early college-aged Friends; and you should laugh at this footnote even though it's not funny.

12 The relevant minutes have been lost, but somewhere along the line, we decided we needed an actual *reason* to pile into a bunch of cars and go buy ice cream.

13 There was also a certain amount of water-throwing involved. It's all fun and games until somebody goes after the YAF yearly meeting planner (and then it's hilarious).

14 It's *funny* when nominating committee finds out they've got a whole pool of possible committee members they haven't called yet. You can just see the joyful glimmer of full committee rosters in their eyes. We say this with all kindness, because we know their job is like, *hard*. But we think they'll forgive us because a bunch of us totally agreed to be on stuff.

15 Where some of us may or may not have spent a lot of time making faces and falling asleep.

16 Their epistle totally reminded us how cool footnotes are, which is why we are totally COPYING THEM and sending out a footnotalicious epistle of our own.

can we take to prevent the dark forces of the world economy from conspiring against our totally awesome conferences<sup>17</sup>? And perhaps most importantly, if we were a fruit, what kind of fruit would we be and why<sup>18</sup>?

We hope that Friends will hold us in the light as we struggle with these challenging questions. We would ask you to do the same, George Fox, but we know that you already have. As you stood on the top of Pendle Hill after your wicked-awesome mud-slide, we know that you saw us: a great people gathered in the living light of the divine. As some of the many heirs of your totally awesome Young Adult Friend-ly adventures, we extend our thanks to you for your light and your truth. Also, for your wife, because let's face it: Margaret Fell was really rad.

In the light,  
The Young Adult Friends of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

PS: The answer is catsup.

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17 We've been informed that world domination is not our best option at this time. We are seeking others.

18 This is called a shoutout. We love you, Illinois Yearly Meeting Adult Young Friends!