
Quaking Post

Baltimore Yearly Meeting RE Newsletter – Fall 2003

Goose Creek Friends Bring Their Quaker History to Life

In an age of ever-larger public schools, pricey private schools and growing anxiety about the state of American education, Goose Creek Monthly Meeting in Lincoln, Virginia, has been introducing children and their teachers to the simple joys and excellent education provided to many of our forebears in the one-room schoolhouse.

Beginning in the fall of 2001, Goose Creek has opened its Oakdale School for several weeks each year to fourth grade students, homeschooling groups and its own First Day School.

The children, each assigned the identity of a real Quaker child who attended the school in 1818, spend the morning living and learning as children of that era did. They arrive, lunch buckets and baskets in hand, dressed in period garments and carrying homemade copybooks. At the door of Oakdale they are greeted by their teacher, one of Goose Creek's members, who inspects their fingernails and ushers them backwards in time.

For the next two to three hours, the "scholars" learn penmanship, grammar, ciphering, the geography of the United States under President Monroe and participate in a spelling bee.

In presenting the Oakdale of 185 years ago, Goose Creek owes a large debt of gratitude to John Jay Janney, who as a 6-year-old attended Oakdale in 1818, and who, at the age of 90, meticulously recorded everything he remembered about the

Go to P. 2 >>>

FDS Scholarships Launched!

The BYM RE Committee awarded seven First Day School Scholarships to Friends attending BYM sessions in Harrisonburg.

These grants are designed to recognize the work of Friends who have been teaching FDS classes, encourage more Friends to teach, and help them manage the cost of YM fees.

The Committee plans to offer FDS scholarships again for 2004. Watch for details in the spring, but make a note now about their availability!

BYM 2003 Reflections:

For the second year, the BYM RE Committee sponsored numerous activities at YM sessions, all designed to support local religious education work. This program included showing videos, conducting workshops, and delivering another of our now-famous "Teach First Day School" cakes. But the centerpiece of our work was the second set of RE Visitors/consultants.

This year we welcomed Pauletter Meier, a musician and conflict resolution trainer from Community Friends Meeting of Cincinnati, and Robin Wells, RE Coordinator for Asheville Meeting in North Carolina. Robin and Paulette visited classes, led workshops, played games with kids, and consulted with many individual Friends about RE concerns. Paulette and her colleague Jamie Fota also led informal concerts and singalongs.

For adults, a workshop considered a set of excerpts from BYM minutes during the Civil War, as a means of reflecting on living the Peace testimony in the midst of war. This "conversation" with our

Quaker forebears moved the discussion from theory to practice, with its highs and lows.

The RE Committee is already discussing plans for BYM 2004, and welcomes suggestions for workshop topics, leaders, and RE Visitors/

Consultants. Send ideas to: qpr@quaker.org



Pauletter Meier, one of our 2003 RE Visitors, says farewell to two young fans, Amber Fager and Elsie Buchanan-Wollaston.

Oakdale/Goose Creek, cont.

furniture, farm tools, food, fashions, customs, ceremonies, schooling, and superstitions of the era.

He was motivated by the realization that most of the surviving records of the era were of the large Virginia plantations that surrounded the Quaker enclaves in Loudoun County.

Building on John Jay's memories, Goose Creek's Oakdale Committee has used census data and other records to research just who attended the school in 1818, who their families were and how their fathers provided a living for the family. Participating students are asked to memorize the identities of these children to help make their experience at Oakdale more authentic.

The schoolroom has been furnished and equipped with everything from school benches to slates to the books that were used in the year 1818.

Oakdale was built in 1815 by the Quakers of Goose Creek and was operated as a public school until 1880. While most of the children who attended Oakdale were Quakers, a substantial number were not, including the children of slaves and other African American children, who would otherwise have been shut out of education. As such, it was possibly the first integrated school in Virginia.

In 1818, more than 70 pupils ranging in age from 6 to 16, were educated at Oakdale by teacher, Jonathan Taylor. Over the 65 years it was in operation, more than 700 students attended the school.

Reviews:

Spirit Games: 300 Fun Activities That Bring Children Comfort and Joy

by Barbara Sher, John Wiley & Sons, NY, 2002.

Spirit games are tools for creating joy in our lives. Developed by Barbara Sher over the course of thirty years as a parent, teacher, and play-therapy specialist, this collection of wise and nurturing ideas fosters parent-child interaction and requires no special preparation or equipment. This collection of games can help children get past feelings of anger, get over self-doubt, and deal effectively with sadness. Games are suggested for young ones, middle ones, and older teens, as well as, for adults. Some are best for one on one interactions, and others are for groups to experience. Each game is well presented and features a description, directions, examples, and variations. Play these games with your family—or any children you cherish—to increase the level of joy in their lives.

Speaking Peace, Living Peace

As a resource for Adult RE discussion and study, the RE Committee has compiled and reprinted four little-known Quaker writings on the peace testimony in a booklet, *Speaking Peace, Living Peace*, which is now available.

Two of these case studies are historical documents, which are taken from our own Baltimore YM minutes. They include:

1. **A Quaker "Testimony" Against Slavery AND Against Abolitionism**, in the form of an Epistle to BYM Friends in 1842.
2. **Speaking Peace, Living Peace: Baltimore Yearly Meeting In the American Civil War**—Excerpts from BYM minutes, 1861-1865.

PLUS:

3. **The Memoir of William Rotch**, A Quaker of Nantucket, recounting his efforts to maintain a peaceful stance in the American and French Revolutions, published 1814.
4. **Divine Protection Through Extraordinary Dangers**, by Dinah Goff, the story of an unarmed Quaker family caught in the savage combat of the Irish Rebellion of 1798.

This booklet includes suggested questions for discussion. Copies are to be sent to each monthly meeting's RE Committee, and additional copies will be available for group study. The booklet is now available from the

Self-Esteem Games : 300 Fun Activities That Make Children Feel Good about Themselves

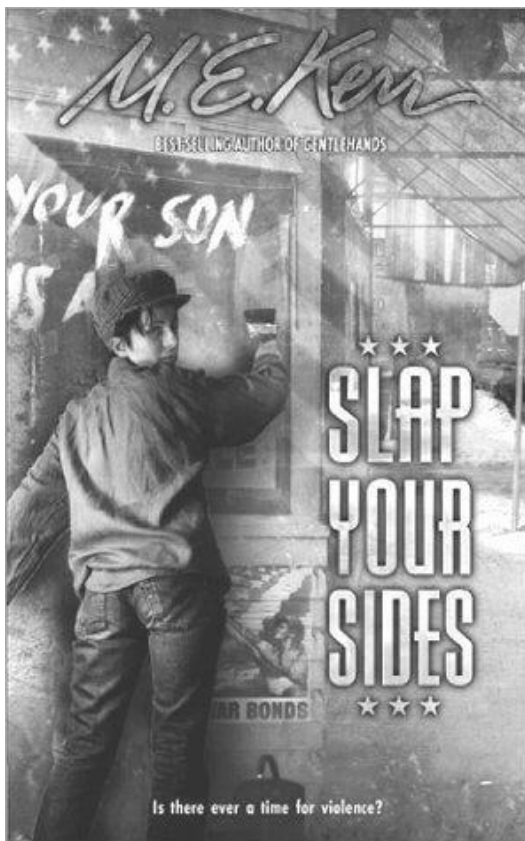
by Barbara Sher, John Wiley & Sons, NY, 1998.

Self-esteem games show children how wonderful it can be to be themselves – emotionally, socially, physically, and intellectually. By sharing the upbeat, thoughtful activities in Self-esteem Games, you can reinforce your child's positive feelings and provide a lasting foundation for learning. This collection of self-esteem-building ideas requires no special preparation or equipment. You and your family can play virtually anywhere, with any number of participants.

Slap Your Sides

by M.E. Kerr, HarperTrophy, 2003.

Jubal Shoemaker, the 13-year-old youngest son of a Pennsylvania Quaker family, admires his oldest brother, Bud, for adhering to his antiwar convictions and registering as a conscientious objector during World War II despite ever-increasing hostility from neighbors in Jubal's



small town, from residents near the facilities where Bud is sent to work, and even from some relatives. Kerr does not shy away from difficult questions, nor does she resolve them for readers.

In light of the recent world events and our reaction to the terror, this book asks some essential questions. Read *Slap Your Sides* with your older children. Talk about the issues of courage, pacifism and the options we have when our government acts in opposition to our conscience. Courage does not always mean going along with the crowd and patriotism comes in many forms and with many different visible outcomes. These issues are vital today more than ever. This morally challenging novel is memorable and appropriate for children 12 and older.

The Last Treasure

by Janet Anderson, Dutton Books, 2003

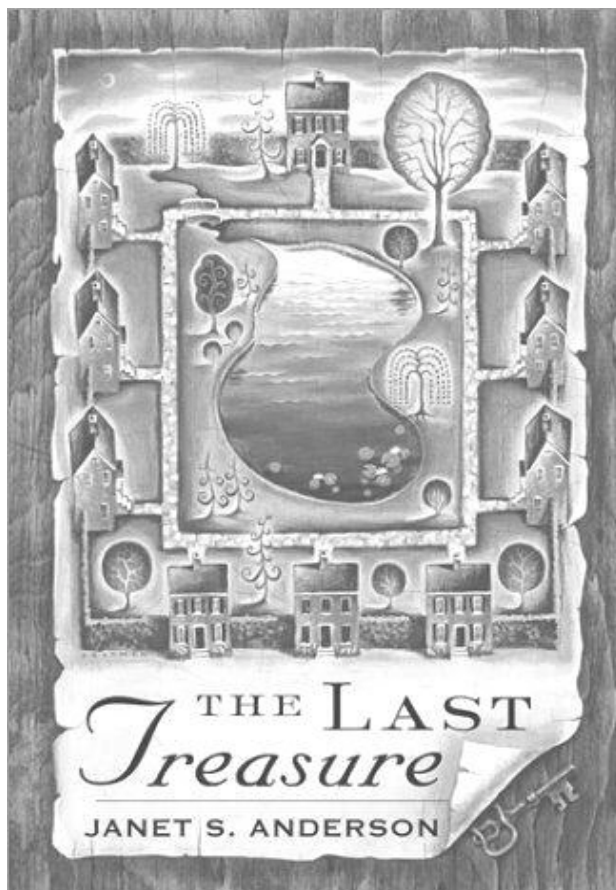
In answer to a pleading letter from a Quaker aunt he's never met, 13 year old Ellsworth Smith braves his father's displeasure to visit the rest of his clan

and see the 10 houses that a wealthy nineteenth-century ancestor, John Matthew Smith, built for his children.

Only seven of the houses were ever occupied; in the other three, John Matthew hid "treasures" intended to help future generations in hard times.

Two of the treasures have been found, and now, in the face of old tragedies and longstanding family disputes, it's time to find the third. Stirring in a dash of the supernatural and sometimes eerie parallels between present and past, Anderson sends mechanically minded Ellsworth and a troubled cousin Jess to join forces and figure out the family dynamics and the meaning of the treasure clues and finally, draws the quest to a suspenseful climax.

In the end, the entire family joins the hunt, and in working together they discover not only a tangible fortune, but also precious treasure in one another. The subtle Quaker messages Ellsworth discovers along the way give depth to this story about the importance of family ties. Good for ages 10 and older.



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INSIDE:

- *A New BYM RE Study Booklet*
- *Report from BYM 2003*
- *Book Reviews*
- *A Meeting's "Living History"*

Using the Web as a RE Resource – III

For Adult RE, here are three webpages assembled by BYM RE Clerk Chuck Fager for week-long workshops at the Friends General Conference Gathering in recent years.

<http://quaker.org/quest/FGC-2001.htm>

“FGC Theology: Past, Present, Future.” This page has links to numerous articles and documents from the early days of the main liberal Quaker association, and highlights some of the dominant religious ideas which shaped it, and moved it in very different directions than earlier Quaker bodies.

<http://www.quaker.org/quest/FGC-2003.htm>

“Lucretia Mott: Liberal Quaker Theologian.” Lucretia Mott’s work for women’s rights and against slavery is well-known. But her religious ideas, their

sources and her major influence on later liberal Quakerism are almost unknown. These documents bring her important role into the (day) Light.

<http://quaker.org/quest/Paz.htm>

“Confronting the Peace Testimony: Quakerism 9-11.” The “historic” Quaker peace testimony is actually not as clear-cut or strict as it is often presumed to be. Peace runs like a deep-flowing current through our history; but the testimony is a wandering stream, with many twists and turns. This webpage includes numerous documents which give voice to the debates over peace which, it turns out, are almost as old as the testimony itself.