



the Firecircle

Volume 20
2021

a newsletter for parents, alumni, and friends of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting camping program

Catoctin Quaker Camp · Opequon Quaker Camp
Shiloh Quaker Camp · Teen Adventure

Joyous and Collective Work

By Brian Massey, Program Manager

We did it, y'all.

Give yourselves a round of applause, give high fives all around. Celebrate yourselves, and celebrate each other. You deserve it. We deserve it.

Despite it all, despite everything that had happened and was happening, we re-opened BYM Camps in 2021, and we had an incredible, miraculous, restorative, joyous, and necessary summer. Catoctin and Opequon and Shiloh and Teen Adventure were once again full with campers and counselors, with songs and laughter, with friendship and challenge and transformation. The summer of 2021 was an unqualified success, something that was very much not preordained. We all should be proud of that momentous accomplishment.

And I do mean "we". Since stepping into the role of Program Manager in January, I have been overwhelmed by the sense of
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Highlighted in this Issue

Improving Imperfect Institutions

"Our campers missed camp. They missed the camping community, the outdoor educational experiences, and the sweet potato biscuits."

"STRIDE is committed to advocating for these steps [outlined in the article] to be acted upon fully, carefully, and lovingly, with the input from those most affected."



Give to BYM Camps

Use this QR code to go directly to the donation page for BYM Camps!



2022 is the 100th Anniversary of BYM Camps!

Look inside to find out more about how you can be a part of the celebration!

2022 Camp Dates

Catoctin, Shiloh, and Opequon

July 2 - August 14

Teen Adventure

July 2 - July 24

Staff Report of the Camp Property Manager to Baltimore Yearly Meeting October 2021

By David Hunter

Opening the camps in 2021

After 18 months of slumber, the Camp Property Management Committee and a host of volunteers began the work of waking the camp properties up and getting them ready for the summer camping season of 2021. There was a lot to be done after lying dormant for over a year but these friends of the BYM camping program were up to the challenge. There were 3 workdays planned for each of the residential camps and the kitchens, dining halls, cabins, bath-houses and other shared spaces received a deep cleaning and a lot of repairs. As spring grew warmer more and more volunteers came to the camps to build picnic tables, erect tents and prepare the camps for the summer to come. By the time we were ready for skills week and pre-camp to begin most of the necessary cleaning and repairs were done and we were ready to hand the camp properties off to the camp directors and staff so that they could begin working their summer magic!

Lots of careful thought went into considering how we could open the camps safely in the face of a pandemic and several projects were undertaken to keep participants safe and curtail the spread of COVID 19 at camp.

Spread um out

One of our goals was to make it possible for there to be as much social distancing as possible during gatherings at camp. Extra

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Camp Stories

By Lizzie Fetter Kellett

Though I haven't worked for the camping program since leading a Teen Adventure trip in 1988 (Southbound Pesto Express, anybody?), I've stayed connected to the camps in different ways over the years. Most recently, I returned to the Camping Program Committee. It is a joyous, though sometimes challenging way to be involved and support the staff and directors as they do they hard, behind the scenes work that makes each summer so special for so many.

Last fall, we learned that the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camping Program will celebrate it's 100th anniversary in 2022. I attended Catoctin's 50th anniversary in 2008, and nine years later (but who's counting), the 60th, so I was surprised to hear about an 100th so soon. But indeed, it was in 1922 that BYM started Camp Keewadin near Annapolis. We have a few pictures of Keewadin on the camp website, and I'm sure there are stories out there. I found myself on the Alumni subcommittee, and tasked with coming up with a plan to mark the occasion.

While it is still a work in progress, some of us have been thinking about ways to celebrate. Anniversaries are often times to remember the past and celebrate the present. We also want to envision the future. What will the next 100 years of the camping program look like? How can our programs become better, more inclusive and more

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Let's Go GREEN with our trucks at BYM Quaker Camps!!!

With a climate- friendly vehicle,
we can better fulfill our value of environmental stewardship.

BYM's Camp Property Management Committee proposes a replacement plan to phase in hybrid and electric trucks for use at camps. We've compared the costs of used pick-ups to buying new trucks and found that the decreased maintenance and repair cost and the longer life of new trucks makes them more cost effective over the life of the vehicle. Starting with one of the oldest trucks that travels 20,000 miles each year, the savings on fuel and the environment are measureable. Compare with us the annual impact:

Existing 2003 Toyota Tundra Truck



New 2021 Hybrid Ford F-150 Truck



- * Pounds of CO2 equivalent = 9.91 metric tons
- * Number of trees required to offset tons of CO2 = 62
- * Average annual barrels of fuel consumed = 20.6

- * Pounds of CO2 equivalent = 7.98 metric tons
- * Number of trees required to offset tons of CO2 = 50
- * Average annual barrels of fuel consumed = 13.2
- * Fuel economy is increased by 20%
- * 750 gallons of gas to be saved each year



If you wish to make a gift from a donor-advised fund or a gift of appreciated assets, please contact:
Development@BYM-rsf.org

Car & Driver, 11/2020 rates the new Ford F150 hybrid truck as proven to be an "electrifying workhorse."

Sales Price is \$47,350

Savings to the environment - *priceless*

A Take on Stewardship

By David Hunter

One of the things I love most about my work as Camp Property Manager here at Baltimore Yearly Meeting is the variety of tasks and projects that I get to take on. One day I might be driving to an auction to pick up a piece of restaurant equipment, some mattress another non-profit would like us to have, or a canoe a Friend has donated to the camps; the next day I might be in the office researching the best variety of seeds to plant on a given piece of bare ground, the most cost-effective type of party tent to purchase, or why the ponds at the camps are growing so much algae this year. Later that week I might find myself building a couple of picnic tables, cutting up a tree that has fallen across the driveway, or talking with a contractor about the best way to solve a particularly thorny plumbing problem. There are a broad variety of tasks to tackle in this position and my professional life is never boring.

The reason many of these jobs are necessary is often quite evident. The camps need certain materials and equipment to operate, the driveways need to be passable, it is helpful to have hot and cold running water, and some campers may hesitate to go swimming if they think they might come out of the pond with algae in their hair.

The reason we take on some other jobs is not always as clear: Why are we pulling up all of these non-

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*Camp Property Manager Report
Continued from page 2*

benches were added to the fire circles, and many new gathering places were created. This was accomplished by building 8 to 12 large picnic tables at each of the camps, building several picnic table sized pavilions at each of the camps to shelter campers from rain and provide protection from the sun. In addition tents were purchased and set up at each of the camps. All told we were able to provide an additional 1220 square feet of sheltered space at each of the residential camps and around 900 square feet of space at Common Ground where the Teen Adventure program begins and ends.

Clean um up

We installed hand sanitizer stations at each of the buildings at camp and improved hand washing stations at Opequon and Shiloh.

Give um fresh air to breath

New ventilation fans were installed at each of the dining halls

to facilitate the evacuation of hot air from the building rather than moving air around (which spreads germs) as we have when it got hot in previous years. We also provided air purifiers in buildings like the infirmaries where it was necessary to have campers and staff in enclosed spaces.

Camp Rentals - The Catoctin Quaker Campground

As friends probably know we were forced to suspend offseason rentals at the camps due to the pandemic in 2020. Unfortunately, we have not been able to resume offseason rentals at the camps due to reductions in the BYM office staff. We look forward to being able to offer offseason rentals again as staff time becomes available.

In the meantime we have been able to offer a few other alternatives at Catoctin. In the spring and again this fall we have been offering campsites for rental on hipcamp.com. This effort is just

now beginning to take off. We have had several groups rent campsites and we are looking forward to having several more in the weeks to come. Anyone interested in renting a campsite should visit hipcamp.com, search for campsites in Thurmont MD and look for rentals with Catoctin in the name. They will be listed as cabins like "Elizabeth's cabin at Catoctin" or "Elias' cabin at Catoctin" Hipcamp renters get a cabin to sleep in, a fire pit, a picnic table, ropes that are set up to keep food away from animals, access to the bathhouse, firewood, freshwater and the opportunity to explore one of the most beautiful places on earth.

We have also been able to offer sites for rental on Airbnb. It is listed as the Studio at Catoctin but you may know it as the Catoctin Infirmary. Last winter several dedicated volunteers and members of the Camp Property Management Committee worked tirelessly to improve and beautify the infirmary, getting it ready to list on AirBnB. Again, after camp was over it was

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Snapshots of a Spectacular Summer

By Brian Massey, Program Manager

I've been a 9 year-old camper at Shiloh, a 15 year-old camper at Teen Adventure. I've been a counselor at Shiloh, a 23 year-old Trip Leader at TA. I've been a 21 year-old Staff-Staff at Shiloh, and a 28 year-old Trip Manager at TA. I spent 19 summers in the beautiful Appalachian ecosystems on and surrounding the BYM Camp properties, all of them incredible, enmeshed in the celebratory and raucous and liberating communities created by the BYM Camps staff.

So, let me say, as Program Manager, I missed a lot. If you're not there -- living in a cabin, sleeping in the woods, swimming in the pond, laughing in the dining hall, singing around the fire circle -- you're just not privy to so many of the magical and transformative moments that together make these camps what they are. There was so much I didn't see, that I didn't feel, and I missed it.

That said, as Program Manager, I get to see the big picture, I get to see little snapshots of the whole in a way I never did before, in a way I don't think anyone quite does. I get to peek in and catch glimpses of the sparks of joy and revelation that are flying everywhere at



our camps. It's a privilege and an honor to be witness to and participate in so much of the magic, and I wanted to share a bit of those reflections, those snapshots from the spectacular summer of 2021, with you.

Catoctin

This might be obvious to most, but Catoctin Quaker Camp is nestled into one of the most unique and beautiful ecosystems I've ever seen. I visited the staff during pre-camp on their "mountain day," where they run a mini-trip up the mountainside, testing out packout systems and trail recipes and wilderness protocols. I joined them for the afternoon and evening, walking through the ferns and fog of Catoctin's highland swamp. It's a world that immedi-

ately feels both precious and singular, a one-of-a-kind place that engenders affection and appreciation. Walking through the Catoctin property, over everpresent roots and rocks, over bridges that span creeks and bogs, through fields of wetland plants, I found myself in awe of the spaces we get to inhabit, that our campers get to experience. Spaces that feel mysterious and intriguing, that reveal their depth and intricacy slowly, that reward attention and patience. It was a lovely hike.

Then I got to see the staff go to work! They set up camp and assembled supplies and started to cook dinner. It was fun and focused, and I could feel the skills solidifying and the community forming. I could see the webs of

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Investing In What We Love

By Brian Massey

Before stepping into the role of Program Manager for BYM Camps in January 2021, it had been nearly a decade since I last worked at a camp. And yet, camp stayed alive in me, in ways big and small. As the father of young kids, I developed the habit of singing camp songs to help them calm down and rest. I still sing "Abide" to my three-year-old before tucking him in, and I'll now catch him and his older brother singing camp songs quietly to themselves. These songs kept me connected to an institution I cared about, one that meant so much to me. They helped me stay rooted in what came before, and what is yet to come.

It goes without saying, but 2020 was a hard year for just about everyone. For the campers, staff, parents, and for the broader community of BYM Camps, it was all the more challenging to go through such a year without the joy and love and camaraderie of Catoctin or Opequon or Shiloh or Teen Adventure. We needed it, and we missed it.

So, we kept singing. Maybe on our own, maybe to our kids, maybe with our parents, maybe with our siblings. We kept singing "Abide" and "Darling Won't You Wait" and "Barrett's Privateers" and "Pink Station Wagon" and all the different camp phone number songs. We kept camp alive in our hearts, in our minds, and in our actions.

The summer of 2021 at BYM Camps was an incredible and unqualified success, a necessary miracle that resulted not from some unseen force but from the love and dedication and hard work of the entire BYM Camp community. Our Directors and our staff led the way, and are due an infinite amount of praise and celebration. But more than anything else, it was the campers and their

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Snapshots Continued from page 5
trust and intention between counselors that were going to hold the campers soon to come, that were going to hold each other through a long and challenging and uncertain summer. And I got to eat some fancy mac & cheese, a shepherd's pie that tasted better than it looked, chili that had a perfect kick, the cheesiest spaghetti I've ever seen, and falafel that had me desperate for seconds.

After a staff meeting and songs by the fire, I made my way back down the mountain, under a full moon, through the ferns and bog. It felt like a dreamland, and I can only imagine how it felt for so many campers about to arrive for the first time, or for the first time in a long time. All summer, I heard stories from Catoctin of Candle Boats and Cafroodgin and Camp Olympics, of fun and adventure and play and growth. And I imagined all of that happening on this magical mountain, surrounded by a world that feels special to everyone, even if they can't yet say why.

Opequon

When I went to visit Opequon at the end of Session One, I was running late, and feeling the residual stress of modern life and modern parenting. As I pulled onto the property and drove up to the hilltop, I knew that the Candle Ceremony had already started. I parked and walked quietly to the



fire circle, trying (and failing) to sneak in unnoticed. As the late day sun filtered through the Opequon forest, a gloriously dappled light framed a sacred scene. Graduating campers were huddled together, sharing messages of what the place has meant to them. Younger campers were saying how much they'll miss the graduates, and what it felt like to be back at Opequon after all that had happened. Staff shared how impressed they were by the courage and maturity of the graduates. I couldn't help but agree.

The ceremony then moves into a period of silence, followed by the graduates lighting their candles and inviting all the other community members to share the flame and put their smaller candles on a structure at the center of the fire circle. Bit by bit, the light grows. While this is happening, the humans are generally quiet. But one of many beautiful things about the natural spaces in which we hold these camps is that as we go silent, the life around us begins to express and reveal itself. Sitting together at that fire circle, watching the candlelight flicker and dance, two wood thrushes started to sing back and forth from opposite sides of the circle. If you don't know what a wood thrush sounds like, I recommend looking it up. It's indescribable, and stunning. We listened to the wood thrush duet for what felt like an eternity, collectively transported to a different plane, as darkness slowly settled around us.

Jared Wood, Opequon's Director, closed the ceremony by inviting everyone to greet and celebrate the graduating campers on the path back to the main camp, and then to gather in the dining hall for a last-night-of-the-session dance party. Before you knew it, the glorious voices of campers singing and laughing were filling up the night woods once again.

Shiloh

Shiloh Quaker Camp was a formative place for me, and that piece of land does and always will feel

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collective ownership that permeates through this program. These camps mean a lot to so many of us, and I can feel that meaning, every day. The summer of 2021 was made possible by the joyous and collective work of an almost unknowable number of people. As we pause to reflect and look back on 2021, before turning our focus to the exciting challenges of 2022 and beyond, I want to take the moment to celebrate as many of those incredible humans as possible. I believe that joyous and collective work to be what makes these camps of ours unique and vital institutions, and I believe that joyous and collective work to be the key to their future. From the moment I started, it was clear that the task of reopening camp in 2021 was not going to be a solo venture. We launched the Reopening Task Force, and an incredible collection of dedicated and knowledgeable folks from all corners of the camp community came together to sort through policies and guidelines and ever evolving science to give our camps the foundation they needed to run safely and joyously in the middle of a pandemic. The Camping Program Committee was brimming with enthusiasm and wisdom, always ready to step up and volunteer their time, and to offer counsel whenever necessary. David Hunter, Property Manager for BYM Camps, worked harder than ever to get the gears of camp turning again after they had an unexpected year off, and to transform the physical spaces of camp to make them as safe as possible. When I learned that Opequon would need a new Director for 2021, the response from the broader community of folks that know and love that camp was awe-inspiring. I re-

ceived such incredible messages of knowledge and wisdom and hope for the future from so many people, and we were floored by the talent and vision of the many applicants for the position. When we announced that Jared Wood was hired as the new Opequon Director, he was celebrated and supported and rallied around in a way I'll never forget.

Speaking of Directors, they deserve all of our adulation, they deserve the longest standing ovation we can manage. Dyresha Harris (Catoclin), Jared Wood



(Opequon), Hope Swank (Shiloh), Rosie Eck (TA), and Jesse Austell (TA) are, individually and collectively, some of the most talented and dedicated educators and leaders I've ever met. They are superheroes, and these camps would not exist without them. BYM Camps certainly wouldn't have reopened and had such amazing summers in 2021 without their wisdom and guidance and countless hours of work. We are unbelievably lucky

to have them as Directors, and we are forever in their debt. I can't say enough about them, all that they mean, all of the lives that they have impacted, this year and for many years prior.

So instead of trying to adequately express my admiration and gratitude, I'll move on to the incredible staff that they hired. Throughout the winter and spring, Directors review staff applications, conduct interviews, contact references, and make hard decisions, all in the service of building a staff that can do both the miraculous and the mundane work of these summer camps. Every time that I visited a camp this summer, I was blown away by the charisma and the commitment and the compassion of our staff, working harder than ever, in conditions more challenging than ever, to give campers an experience that was more necessary than ever.

These past 18 months have been hard on everyone, campers and staff included, and to watch our staff pour everything they had into their campers, into their staff community, knowing how much they had also been through, was inspiring beyond measure. I personally believe that BYM Camps are defined by the staff, by their joy and wisdom and integrity and commitment to justice. The summer of 2021 wouldn't have happened and wouldn't have been a success without them. And if we are to continue growing and evolving to meet the needs of campers and families and communities, then listening to our staff, investing in our staff, celebrating our staff, and following their lead will be essential. I'm excited to do just that.

Finally, the most important role this summer was played by our

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Improving Imperfect Institutions

By STRIDE

This summer, STRIDE sent twenty-two campers to camp! We provided Covid-19 testing, tuition, gear, logistical support, and guidance during the orientation process for these campers. Campers expressed excitement about the return to camp! Our campers reiterated how camp is a unique and one-of-a-kind experience. Our campers missed camp. They missed the camping community, the outdoor educational experiences, and the sweet potato biscuits. The absence of camp during the 2020 season only made the return during the 2021 season much sweeter. One camper wants to return to camp for a month and become a counselor! One of our Opequon camper's fueled by the artsy environment at camp created a jewelry line! We were able to purchase the jewelry and gift it as prizes for our Trivia Night. STRIDE prides itself in aiding leadership opportunities for youth and young people.

This year sixteen of our twenty-two campers attended Opequon Quaker Camp. This included campers from Baltimore and Philadelphia. Four of our campers beamed with pride about their accomplishment of completing two Cabin Intensives. At Opequon, all campers participate in a multi-day camping trip called a Cabin Intensive or CI. While this is often cited as the most challenging part of the camp, it is also gratifying. Some CI trips happen within age groups from each cabin, and other CI trips mix different ages. Age-group trips allow campers to get to know other campers from their cabin on a deeper level, while multi-age trips allow for socializing with a range of Opequon campers. STRIDE campers went on one of each type of trip this past summer. During Cabin Intensives, counselors and campers from a particular cabin group go on an overnight adventure together. Sometimes groups leave the camp property by bus, and sometimes they venture out on their own. Either way, we are committed to being as accessible as we can for all campers. Campers participate in challenging outdoor activities like canoeing and rock climbing on their CI, often for first time.

During this pandemic, STRIDE has reflected on how we want to best serve the campers and the communities we serve. Part of this reflection involves how we examine our institution. How are we able to self-reflect? How do we critique institutional racism we are a part of? Working to disrupt patterns of institutional racism requires that we center the voices of those most impacted. Beyond our queries on racism, engagement with BIPOC

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The summer of 2021 at BYM Camps was an incredible and unqualified success, a necessary miracle that resulted not from some unseen force but from the love, dedication and hard work of the entire BYM Camps community.

The camps of BYM have the power to root us to something meaningful and long lasting. Camps give us a sense of connection and community in a world where those are all too rare. They are a model of what the world could look like, that is vital now more than ever. But most of all, they are ours, collectively.



Looking toward 2022 wherein we celebrate 100 years of BYM camps, with your help we will build and celebrate; we will work joyously; we will continue along the path that these camps have always been on toward something rooted and connected, but forever new and beautiful.

And we will continue to ask for and benefit from every bit of support that you're able to give. That support will help us invest in our campers, in our staff, in the land that we steward.

Please support BYM Quaker camps at www.bym-rsf.org/giving/give-to-bym-camps.html or write to: 17100 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, MD 20860 or call: 301-774-7663

We can do this together!





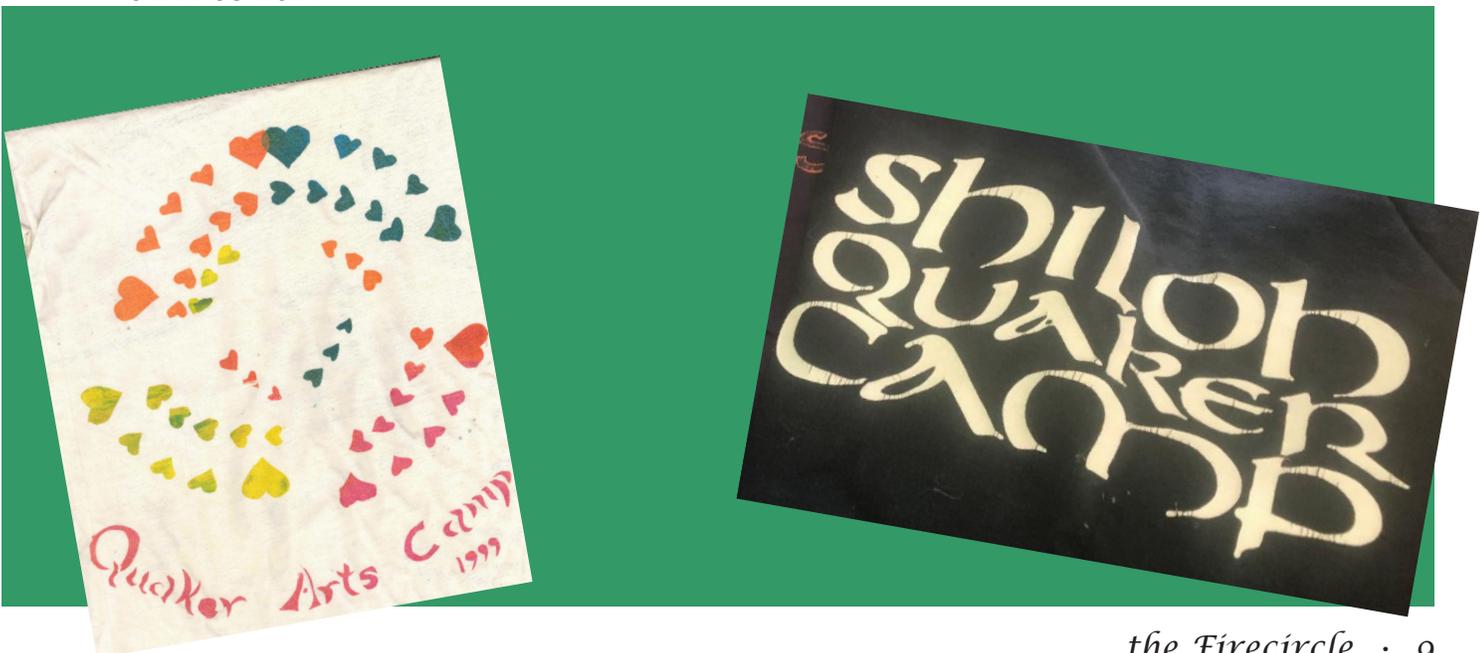
**Have you ever lost a camp shirt?
Or wondered what the design was for Shiloh in 2004?
Are you completely stoked for the 100th anniversary of
BYM Camps?
Are you asking how these questions are related?**

WELL! Sunshine Klein is taking on the project of creating an online store for those t-shirt designs! *And the crowd goes wild!* The thing is, Sunshine doesn't own all of the camp shirts ever designed for BYM. She needs your help with this project!

If you have camp shirts around, please send in photos of the designs to youthprograms@bym-rsf.org. You may also send in the shirt if you're willing to part with it.

Some clear directions for photos:

1. Lay out your shirt on a flat surface
2. Try your best to have it evenly lit and as flat as possible
3. Take a photo such that the design is parallel to the camera lens. So take the photo from directly above the design
4. Send the photo to youthprograms@bym-rsf.org with what camp it's from and what year you think it's from





Investing Continued from page 6

families, so many of them new to BYM Camps, who trusted us in a tumultuous time, took a leap of faith, and filled up our camps once again with all of their light, joy, and wisdom.

We gathered again, in a cabin and under a tarp, around a fire circle and on top of a mountain, at a picnic table or while washing dishes. And we sang. Together.

I was lucky enough to join the Teen Adventure camp community for their closing weekend, when campers and staff from all of the different trips gathered again to share stories and celebrate. After singing in small groups all summer, the collective voice of the camp was especially powerful with beautiful songs ringing through the night forest. Profound messages were spoken into the glowing light of the fire, reflecting on what this experience meant after all that we had been through. One staff member shared that camp reminded her of the Great Sequoia trees out west, which are able to grow so tall because they weave their roots together. By supporting each other, by building durable and meaningful connec-

tions, we are each able to grow taller than we ever could imagine.

But what stood out to me most that weekend was the creative and goofy joy on display at the talent show, the rowdy and costumed fun at the camp dance, the collective laughter and revelry by everyone -- campers and staff included. After a year of stress and fear and isolation and loss, we were able to feel just a bit of freedom and levity, to reconnect with our community, and to celebrate each other. And we did so not by going back, but by being present with who we are now, as people and as a program, after all that's happened.

Now we move forward, already thinking about next summer, committed to building off of the momentum created during this momentous summer. We will listen to our staff and our campers and our families as we seek to always develop and improve our program. We will reflect on our core testimonies of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, and Stewardship – our SPICES – as we work to further institutionalize our intentions, to make structural our values, to

take them seriously and make them central to everything we do.

And we will continue to ask for and benefit from every bit of support that you're able to give. That support will help us invest in our campers, in our staff, in the land that we steward.

The camps of BYM have the power to root us to something meaningful and long lasting, to give us a sense of connection and community in a world where those are all too rare. They are a model of what the world can look like, what the world should look like, that is vital now more than ever. But most of all, they are ours, collectively. Looking toward 2022 and beyond, with your help, we will build and celebrate; we will work joyously; we will continue along the path that these camps have always been on, toward something rooted and connected, but forever new and beautiful.

And we'll do it together.

Brian Massey (he/him)
Program Manager, BYM Camps
Catocin / Opequon / Shiloh /
Teen Adventure

Snapshot Continued from page 6
like a home. But when I visited in the middle of Session One, when I climbed the steps to the Upper Field, it felt new and different in beautiful ways. The "party tent" -- the temporary open-air shelter that we built as a COVID-mitigation strategy -- was clearly a hit, an accidental programmatic improvement, the new center of camp life. For the first time, I saw campers swimming in the pond -- I know, I'd been away for a minute -- and while at the fire circle I couldn't help but listen to the bullfrogs sing from the pond's marsh habitat. I loved it.

At the same time, so much was familiar, was rooted in what came before. I came back later in the summer with my two young kids, and the six-year-old pretended to be a camper right away. They had the time of their life playing in the Conway River and looking for crayfish, like so many campers (myself included!) before them. Hope Swank, Shiloh's Director, invited me to play Jugs, camper Brian's favorite game growing up. But I was introduced to "Fancy Jugs" -- an adaptation that originated at Opequon, which features some glorious costumes -- and "Quad Jugs" -- a Shiloh original that maximizes the silly and chaotic fun. And then we all sat down in the lower field, celebrated each other, ate ice cream, and sang as dusk slowly turned to darkness. It struck me that home doesn't necessarily stay the same, but it's always home.

Teen Adventure

There's something special about Common Ground, the collectively-owned property that serves as the base camp for Teen Adventure. Just about everyone who visits it feels it, right away. It's a sanctuary, protected and separate from so much, fed by a generous spring, cradled by mysterious and magical mountains. No place in my experience so viscerally creates the sense of once being lost but now being found. As you wind down the curvy gravel path called Snakefoot Lane, it's natural to ask "Where am I?" Then, when the pond and the pavilion and the gardens suddenly reveal themselves, your mind immediately answers, "Oh, here I am!" Right where you're supposed to be.

When I pulled up this summer, to join the TA campers and staff for their closing weekend, I walked into a camp community that felt right where it was supposed to be. I worked for eight summers at TA, and know that the closing weekend always has a mixture of joy and sadness, of revelry and reflection. But this year, there was an unmistakable feeling of gratitude, of appreciation. Watching, listening to, and talking with the campers, it was obvious that they knew what they'd lost over the previous 18 months. They were so glad to just be there, together, to have a little bit of it back.

The talent show on the last night was the perfect showcase not only for the community (and communities) that had been built, but

for the spirit that permeated the entire camp. There was laughter and celebration, there was ridiculousness and beauty, there was group camaraderie and individual brilliance. But most of all, there was a palpable sense of presence, of stillness, even underneath the raucous party that would follow. I'll always be a believer in the wisdom of teenagers, but it was obvious this group was special. They were painfully aware of what had been taken away, how precious and fragile it all was. And they were going to soak in every moment.

The next day, after all the campers and their families had left, I went for one last walk around the property. I stopped by the spring-fed Cold Pond and watched the red eft newts float as in suspended animation, the trout dart around with power and grace, and the cedar waxwings dance above while hunting for mosquitos and damselflies. I walked up the path toward the fire circle, and stopped in my tracks as I saw a black bear slowly and calmly making its way over the surrounding hills. It paused, looked at me, then kept on going.

I doubt the bear and the other creatures missed us, missed our noise and our mess and our impact, try as we might to keep it low. The bear was certainly enjoying woods that were once again quiet and still. But there was also a feeling of permission granted, a sense of "y'all are okay, you can come back next year." Thankfully, gratefully, I think we will. ◇





A Take on Stewardship Continued from page 3

native plants? Some of them have thorns that hurt! We already have an awful lot of trees on the camp properties. Why do we spend so much time planting new ones each year? Do we really need to spend time and energy harvesting timber and concerning ourselves with the health of our forest? The forests seem to be doing ok without our help. Why inoculate piles of wood chips and logs with fungal mycelium so that we can grow mushrooms for the kitchen? They have plenty of mushrooms at the grocery store.

How does all this improve the experience the young people and adults that visit our visit our camp properties? These projects do not always relate directly camper's experiences on the properties each summer. Nevertheless, it is work that is close to my heart and feels essential to our mission as a Yearly Meeting, as a camping program and as people who long to be good stewards of the land with which they have been trusted.

Each year I find myself being drawn into these types of projects. They are stewardship projects. We think of stewardship when we think of taking care of the physical assets on our properties - the buildings and equipment we need to run our camps, but it seems the land upon which it all resides deserves our care and attention too. We can and do have an impact on the places we inhabit and these effects ripple out to the land and waterways around us.

In the early spring of 2021 boxes of bare rooted trees and shrubs began arriving at the Yearly Meeting office. Soon small groups of volunteers began to arrive at the camps to plant them. Throughout the winter we had been removing large patches of non-native plants which were taking over sections of the forests. The idea was to replace non-native species with



native species which would form a barrier between the road and the camp structures. We chose native shrubs and trees which produce nutritious food for people and wildlife to enjoy as well as creating habitat for wildlife.

Non-native or invasive species create problems because they have not evolved as part of our complex and delicate native ecosystems. They are plants which were brought to this continent from other parts of the world by mistake or intentionally which often have an unnatural advantage over native species. They tend to take over and push out the broad variety of native species we find in our native ecosystems. Furthermore they are often not utilized by native wildlife. When they are

eaten by wildlife they tend to provide little nutritional value. When migrating birds stop for a snack it needs to be a highly nutritious snack, packed with accessible energy for their arduous work.

We need to take the time to care for our forest because our impact on the forest is evident wherever we look. Europeans have been in North America for several centuries now and it is difficult to find any place on the continent that has not been profoundly impacted by our presence.

Even the most remote forests in Maryland in Virginia have been clear cut repeatedly in the last few centuries. Repeated clear cutting has radically reduced the diversity of species in our forests.

These practices have also created forests in which the trees are all the same age (even-aged forests).

Forest health depends on species diversity and younger and older trees need to share space on the land in order for a healthy forest to endure.

When forests are thinned (i.e. trees are carefully and thoughtfully removed) many opportunities for new growth arise as light begins to hit the forest floor. In years gone by massive trees would occasionally die and fall creating holes in the forest canopy that allowed light to reach the

forest floor. In an even-aged forest this has to be accomplished by intentionally thinning the trees. When this happens forest understory plants and shrubs leap from the ground and new varieties of trees begin to emerge. Many types of wildlife return to the area and thrive. We can also increase diversity and improve the quality and quantity of food for wildlife by planting new native varieties of shrubs and trees.

Forests are still among the best means of sequestering carbon and vibrant, growing forests are much better at it than even-aged forests. The more trees we plant the more forest will grow and the more carbon will be removed from the atmosphere - mitigating the changes to the climate we are witnessing.

Fungi are among the most fascinating and least understood organisms on our planet. We inoculate logs and wood chips to encourage understanding of and excitement for fungi. We also are able to grow delicious, healthy and healing food.

Does all this improve the experience that young people have at

the camps? I think it does and I would argue that it is as important for us to practice good stewardship of the land itself as it is for us take care of the assets on the land. We have inherited an incredible and beautiful gift in these properties. Every day I am grateful for the foresight of those Quakers who purchased the camp properties and for the opportunity to participate in their stewardship. The properties are gifts that enrich our lives and the lives of our

children. They have been there for us decade after decade and if we are caring stewards they will be there for decades to come. They change our lives, and the lives of our young people and help to make us who we are as a Yearly Meeting. Given the many gifts they have given, the many ways they have made us what we are, it seems that we must do what we can to give back to these places that means so much to us! ◇



Camp Stories Continued from page 13

As for celebrating the present, mark your calendars! We've already set a date for next August 26-27-28 to gather at Catoctin to celebrate all the camps. Help us spread the word to camp friends who perhaps have fallen out of touch.

To remember the past, we want to gather stories from different camp eras and different perspectives. We're looking to develop an updated interactive timeline of all the camping programs, and we want to make sure that events and milestones you believe are meaningful are included. I'm hoping we can link stories to the timeline and hear the perspectives of campers, counselors and staff over the decades. If you have a story you'd like to share, you can email it to 100storiesBYMCamps@bym-rsf.org

Since I started this project, it has been a great joy to reconnect with several old friends I haven't talked to in years. I set up a zoom conversation with camp doctors Lorne Garrettson and Audrey French, and heard from John Neff. I did an audio recording with three generations of my family as they shared impressions, and ways that camp has impacted their lives. My co-counselor Maureen Kline shared memories, as did Kevin Caughlin, rock climber/book keeper/packout planner extraordinaire. I know there are hundreds of stories to be gathered. I've been reflecting on the stories I want to tell- memories of coming to camp for the first time. Medieval Night, that had us Unit Sixers inside a giant dragon train, only to be slayed by Arthur's knights (Unit One, of course.) The feast, to which all the dogs at camp that summer (there were many) were invited into the Hall, raising the usual pandemonium several notches. I need to work on this one a little more, but if this reminds you of an experience that you want to share, please do.

And stay tuned! As the stories come in, we'll be working on how to share them over the course of the 100th Anniversary Year, 2022. See you next August at Catoctin. Come ready to share your vision of the next 100 years of BYM camping. ◇

transformed into a cozy get away on the mountain for people to rent and enjoy. Anyone interested in visiting can go to [airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) and search for places in Thurmont, MD. It is available all year long except during the time camp is in session. The Airbnb and HipCamp rentals have generated as much income in 2021 as all three camps have generated in offseason rentals during previous years.

This winter we are trying something new at Catoctin. We have found a company that is willing to lease deer hunting rights at Catoctin from BYM. They in turn leased the rights to hunt the property to other individuals and families. We have contracted with them to lease the property on the east side of Mink Farm and Tower roads at Catoctin which is helping us manage our over abundant deer herd on the property as well as to increase revenue generated on the property.

Other Work at Catoctin

After having to cancel the construction of a cabin in 2020 we were able get a cabin constructed in the spring of 2021. It was available for almost all of the summer camping season despite some new inspection requirements from Frederick County that came as a surprise to us. With the completion of this cabin 10 of the 12 cabins and Catoctin have been replaced. Only two more to go!

Last winter Harry "Scotty" Scott and a few other trusty volunteers cleared a great deal of ground around the caretaker's cabin which had been completely

taken over by multiflora rose and other invasive species. We were also able to clear invasive species away from part of the banks of the pond. As spring arrived we began busily planting shrubs and trees to take the place of all those menacing thorns. We planted white pine, elderberries, Ninebark, Gray Dogwood and lespedeza bicolor. We're eager to see which varieties will thrive at Catoctin. Many trees, mostly Papaws, were planted at Shiloh as well.



The year to come at Catoctin

Several smaller jobs will need to be undertaken at Catoctin this year. We have budgeted to replace the craft shelter roof in 2020 but since it was not leaking we put that work off. Now it is leaking and we need to give the structure a careful eye on the dining hall roof since we know it will need to be replaced soon.

The tile floor in the lodge and

kitchen have served us well for many, many years. However, the tiles are wearing thin and beginning to come up in several places. It is time for a new floor. We look forward to completing that work in the spring.

We also look forward to replacing the 11th of the 12 camper cabins in the spring of 2022. Peter Bugler will be our timber frame contractor again this year and we are grateful for all the time he has put into making beautiful camper cabins at Catoctin! We look forward to replacing the last of the camper cabins in 2023.

Opequon

Work on improving the bathhouses has continued over the last several years. Both bathhouses have received new coats of paint on the floors and walls. This summer the camp staff continued to make improvements by adding paper towel dispensers, cabinets for cleaning supplies, and racks to hang the floor mats on while cleaning. Several new sinks for hand washing have been installed as well.

Shiloh

We had planned to have a new camper cabin constructed at Shiloh for the summer of 2021. Unfortunately the fates had other plans. We had a great deal of trouble scheduling contractors for the project. We were finally able to contract with Miles Trails, a contractor, Teen Adventure trip manager, and enduring camp presence, to build the cabin. Unfortunately, we did not leave him enough time to complete the cabin before camp opened. We look forward to completing the cabin in the months to come.

Mike Reed, our caretaker at Shiloh, was able to build an awesome new hand washing station outside the dining hall in the spring. He also got ventilation fans installed in the dining hall well before camp began.

The year to come at Shiloh

We have been deeply grateful to have received two generous gifts for projects at Shiloh over the last two years. Thoughtful members of the camp community have donated funds to cover the construction of a new maintenance shed, help to purchase a new tractor, the construction of a second well at Shiloh, and to make some repairs to the pond. In addition, these generous donors have funded the construction of the rest of the camper cabins that need to be replaced at Shiloh. We look forward to completing as many of these projects as possible before the 2022 camping season.

Equipment and Vehicles

Over the course of the pandemic we have not attempted to replace any of the camps vehicles and only critically necessary new equipment has been purchased. While this enabled us to weather these difficult times, we now find ourselves living with some seriously aging equipment and vehicles. We are looking forward to replacing several vehicles, canoes and other equipment before the 2022 camping season. Fortunately we did receive a generous contribution that helped up purchase a new compact tractor at Shiloh

Over the last 18 months we have

taken a careful look at the cost of ownership for the pickup trucks that we use at camp. The used pickup trucks that we purchase for the camps are much less expensive to buy than new vehicles. However, keeping these vehicles repaired and running is often quite expensive. These vehicles are also not at all fuel-efficient, increasing our budget for fuel and negatively impacting our environment. After doing some research and analysis we have determined that it would be more cost-effective to purchase new vehicles and avoid costly repairs and high fuel costs. We have also found that new, high fuel efficiency and electric trucks are beginning to come onto the market. We are looking forward to purchasing a new hybrid pickup truck in the months to come. The development committee has put together a campaign to fund this investment and would love to have the support of all interested Friends. If all goes well, we look forward to purchasing additional hybrid and electric pickup trucks in the future.

Caretakers

We are profoundly blessed to have two great caretakers on our camp properties. Mike Reed continues to take meticulous care of our property at Shiloh. He rose to the particular challenges associated with opening camp during the pandemic with energy and grace. It is a wonderful to have such a competent, capable and diligent resource at Shiloh.

Dylan Phillips came to Catoctin to serve as caretaker in the spring of 2021. He has embraced the challenges of his new position and is well on his way to acquiring

the skills that job demands. He is doing a fabulous job hosting HipCampers at the Catoctin Campground as well as managing Airbnb rentals. We have never had a caretaker who has been as engaged with the summer camp community as Dylan was this summer. He is also did research on and facilitated the installation of a new internet service at Catoctin which is going to serve us well into the future.

Committee work

The Property Management Committee has grown into a formidable force for accomplishing tasks on the camp properties over the last couple of years. They have also continued to oversee the management of the properties in the broader sense. The committee has organized many work days in order to get the camps open for the summer of 2012 as well as exploring and implementing new opportunities for the generation of revenue at the camps such as opening the Catoctin Quaker Campground and getting buildings ready to post on Airbnb. I hope the Yearly Meeting is aware of all the CPMC has accomplished over the last year and takes the opportunity to say thank you when the opportunity arises

Conclusion

The Camp properties, as many wild places, carry on whether we are there to appreciate them or not. The quiet, the solace, the peace of the place and the resplendent beauty are always there. We all look forward to the time when more of us can come and enjoy these special places. We hope to see you at Camp soon.

With gratitude,

David Hunter
Camp Property Manager
Baltimore Yearly Meeting ◇



campers, counselors, and staff about their experience is necessary. Authentic engagement means that their experiences are validated and that they have the opportunity to co-create solutions for improving camp.

This year, encouraged and led by STRIDE members, we were able to have a moment of transparency and accountability with community partners and our camper families. We shared previous racist events that occurred at camp. In response to these failures and shortcomings, we have committed to implementing the following by next camp season:

Enhanced EDI (Equity Diversity Inclusion) training, professional development, and support for staff to facilitate the creation of genuinely inclusive and welcoming spaces for all campers.

Increased opportunities for caucuses/affinity groups / safe spaces for staff of color and campers of color.

Precise and robust policies and protocols around responding to racist incidents and all threats to emotional and physical safety, both inside and outside our camps.



STRIDE is committed to advocating for these steps to be acted upon fully, carefully, and lovingly, with the input from those most affected. STRIDE also held brainstorming sessions with partner organizations around camp and healing spaces. This session aided STRIDE in conversations around organizing, mobilizing, and re-imagining. We look forward to collaborating with our community partners and creating community experiences that best serve our communities. Two of our campers expressed how quickly they bonded. One stated, "I have never gotten that attached to anyone in only two weeks." Camp bonds are community bonds. As one of our camper's said, "I am 100% coming back every year for the rest of my life!" It is pertinent to continue to do the work that makes a camp an accessible and inclusive place to be. That is what our campers and our camper families deserve. ◇





Joyous and Collective Work Continued

from page 7

campers and their families. We had the highest level of registration on record, with the majority of our sessions full to capacity. A big reason for that was the record number of new campers and families who joined the BYM Camps community this year. Through countless emails and phone calls, through virtual town halls and in-person visits to the camps, I had the pleasure of meeting and talking with so many of those families. I am unspeakably grateful for the trust they put in us, the leap of faith that they took in a year with so many other challenges and uncertainties. The energy and creativity of those campers gave life to all of us, and watching them transform made every bit of work worth it. Their insights and suggestions and feedback are driving us to improve the program,

to make sure that it is accessible to, and transformational for, everyone. I hope to see all of them return next year, and I can't wait to see where they help us go in the future.

With the summer of 2021 in the books, while bathing in the glow of our collective and joyous work to make it happen, we also turn toward the summer of 2022 and beyond. It is a core belief of mine that these camps are vital, now more than ever. But to help them thrive, to make sure their light shines in a tumultuous and ever-changing world, will require all of us. It will require change and growth and evolution. It will require asking hard questions and manifesting complicated answers. It will require stubborn love and fierce compassion.

This summer showed me that the

challenges that we all face now, the crises that our young people will face in the future, are too big to face on our own. We need to be rooted to something, we need to be connected to each other. We need to be stubbornly joyous in spite of it all, we need to put our heads down and link arms and get to work. And we need to sing raucous and ethereal songs while doing it.

For me, and for so many of you, we find all of that at Catoctin and Opequon and Shiloh and Teen Adventure, these camps that we love. I'm thankful for all that was done to make the summer of 2021 happen, and I can't wait to make the summer of 2022 even better. I'm confident in that future because I know so many of y'all will be right there with me, joyously working together. ♦





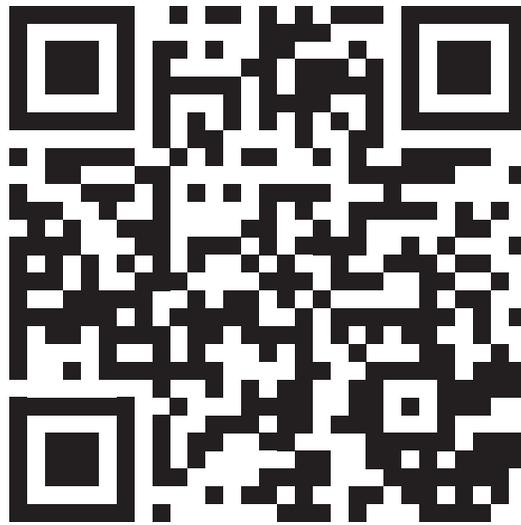
COME JOIN BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING'S YOUTH PROGRAMS!

Junior Young Friends

Who: Middle Schoolers
(age 11-14)

When: November,
January, March, May!

JYF Conferences are
Saturday morning
through Sunday around
noon and are full of
games, workshops, group
meals, and business!



Young Friends

Who: High Schoolers
(age 15-18)

When: September,
November, February,
April, May!

YF Conferences are
Friday Night through
Sunday around noon
and are full of games,
workshops, group meals,
and business!

**Scan me to get to our
webpage!**



Your BYM experience
doesn't have to be only
in the summer! Come
hang out with the camp
friends you already
know, and meet more
wicked cool folks at
BYM Youth Programs!



~Celebrate the Present~
**SAVE THE DATE FOR AN
ALL CAMPS GATHERING!**
August 26-27-28, 2022

We'll need your help to plan, organize and spread the word. Email Lizzie at e.fetter.kellett@gmail.com to help.

**Did you know the BYM
Camping Program is almost
100 years old?!?
In 2022, help us celebrate 100
years of our Quaker Camps**

~Remember the Past~

Share your stories and help us fill out the timeline of important events at Catoctin, Opequon, Shiloh and TA that you believe are meaningful
100storiesBYMCamps@bym-rsf.org

~Envision the Future~

How do we hope our camping programs will become better, more inclusive and more accessible over the next 100 years!

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If you'd like to submit an article or have a comment,
please direct it to BYM Camping Program 301-774-7663 ext. 108 or brianmassey@bym-rsf.org.

Get Ready for Summer 2022

**Camp registration will open
Saturday, January 15th at 12:00pm.**

***If you want to make
sure of your spot in a
particular session, please
register as soon as you
can. Enrollment is first
come, first served. This
will include registration
for Teen Adventure,
so if you want to make
sure you get in, please
register as close to
opening as possible.***

