

JHYM Retreat Staff Notes

Outbursts of the Soul: The Annual Music Retreat
Jan. 10-12, 2020 @ Westport Meeting

We are Anne Anderson, Tom Antonik, Marion Athearn, Carol Baker (our Exalted Food Wizard), Buddy Baker-Smith, Jesse Ball, Dave Baxter, Mary DeSilva, Dug Lippincott, Adam Kohrman, Cynthia Rankin, and moi.

Joining us are 24 or so JH'ers, one of whom is coming to their very first retreat Woohoo!!

Timelines

Arrival on Friday:

I will be arriving by 3:30pm. Let me know your e.t.a. **Registration begins at 6:00 and I expect a lot of early arrivals.**

Supper on Friday:

Yes, we'll share one – at 7:00.

Wrap-up on Sunday:

Sunday Morning Worship is at 10:00.

I'm hoping we'll all be on the road by 1:30 at the very latest. **Please, please, please, please try to stay as much of cleanup as you can so that we all get out as early as possible.**

DIRECTIONS to Westport Meeting are on our website. The address is 938 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790.

NEEDED! We will need iPod docks, speakers and cords for smart phones and iPhones. If you can bring any of these items, please be in touch with me. Thank you!

The Theme: Outburst of the Soul

Composer Frederick Delius defined music as *outbursts of the soul*. When I found this quote a year ago, I jotted it down. I imaged loud finales, protest songs, fireworks. Then I researched Delius, whom I had never heard of. Lo' and behold, his compositions were not like Beethoven or Wagner -- his music paints scenes, often in nature -- in **not** "outburst-ish ways." They often start and end softly, so that the audience isn't even sure when it's over to clap. What's an "outburst" if it's not LOUD?

It all got me thinking about how loud the still small voice of God can be when it's trying to get my attention; how often social change starts with one person *feeling* a NOW shouting within themselves; how clear the actions of someone I respect and love resonate in me and inspire my own actions to shift in a particular moment. And I thought about how a welling up of emotions in me causes an "outburst" of tears that aren't always about sadness. An outburst can be a silent inner fireworks display of a lot of feelings or a graced moment of Truth or Spirit.

Then I started thinking about how combining any of these instances (and so many more) with music increases the power, impact, or volume of those messages and moments. How many times have I felt the Spirit rise in me while singing a song with beautiful lyrics? How many songs of protest and hope bring me to tears because of the emotions, the deep felt hope or longing rising from where that music touches me? How many beloved songs are connected to specific moments in my life, helping me to see clearer, hope more, love bigger?

I know that not everyone is moved by music, and for those Friends within our community for whom that is so, I want to open this theme to more than *just* music. If music isn't their mode of outbursts, doesn't move their heart, and doesn't say what they sometimes can't say – is there something that is? Perhaps it's art or drawing, dance, Silence, or feeling connected to nature. Perhaps it's touch. Let's find ways to weave these possibilities into our conversations this weekend, even as we immerse ourselves in music. Let's focus on what our souls' outbursts look like, and how we pay attention to them.

But, of course, let's also wallow and delight in so much music, and celebrate how much we learn about each other through sound, rhythm, and silence. As staff, let's especially *listen*. For many of our young people, music is the clearest form of communication between their hearts and other people.

I so love this retreat, every year. Thank you for being here and helping it to happen, yet again but always new.

SMALL GROUPS

JHYM "Traditional" Small Groups will meet Friday evening and Saturday morning. (Saturday evening we'll offer 4 **Choose your Conversation** groups.) The Friday evening small groups are key – they build a cocoon of trust within which everyone can share their soul music on Saturday morning.

Friday night small group: ***Trust and Listening***

- Do a round of check-ins (explaining what this is) after first ensuring everyone is clear on confidentiality, safety, acceptance, etc. I expect this may be extensive. If your group needs to simply stay with this for the entire small group, that is just fine. I trust that you will follow the Spirit and your hearts here.
- The activity at the end of these staff notes worked really well at another Music Retreat, so I think we can do it again without it feeling repetitive.
- Before ending, check in with everyone re: their soul music. What medium is it on? What do they need to play it? Does anyone need the piano? Please relay this information to Dave, Jesse or Dug, our tech crew.

Saturday morning small group: ***Sharing Our Soul Music***

For many, the kind of music we like is a statement of who we are. This is especially true for young people. What we are trying to do in this small group is ask JH'ers to hear beyond the identity, and to try to experience the music as a tool into a deeper place -- precisely because the chosen music has been exactly that for someone else. Thus, it is essential that each person feel safe and honored to share in a way that is heard via hearts rather than opinions or critique.

- Make sure you have read the "Homework" sheet that I sent out ahead of this retreat.
- Start this small group with a round of check-ins, not only to see how each person is, but to also make sure you don't have stumbling blocks to worshipping together. Take whatever time you need.
- Explain the format: Each person (JH'er and staffer) has about 7 minutes to play their piece of music and to share something about why they chose the selection they did – why it qualifies as their "soul music." This is an extended worship sharing, with everyone in the group working together to maintain a centered space. Begin with some Silence and use the Silence between for savoring and re-centering. Allow and/or encourage time for reflections and/or questions between pieces of music, though make sure it never turns towards a critique in any way. It may be helpful for a staffer to serve as timekeeper. I will provide clay for tactile listeners.
- Please make sure that everyone writes down (legibly) the info on their soul music on the form in your staff notebook. I will turn this into a retreat wide "Play List" that is posted on-line for everyone's reference. I keep that list next to my laptop for the rest of the winter and listen to everyone's soul music. 😊
- At the end share a bit of Silence in gratitude, affirming the group's presence one to another.
- NOTE! This small group always runs long, and that's okay. You'll have snacks to share within your group, and it seems to work to let that be a nice informal beginning to the group. (You'll have to come to agreement on the noise/format, etc for this – good Quaker group process)! Do try not to have this take more than 15 or 20 minutes of your time, though, or your small group will really run late – and you'll be late for lunch. ☺

Saturday Afternoon Workshops

JH'ers will have the opportunity to attend two workshops on Saturday afternoon. Over the years there has been a wide variety of topics including round singing, songwriting, improvisation, painting to music, dance, folk, jazz, hip-hop, heavy metal, Bob Dylan, Orianthi, guitar, ukulele and Stomp. Here is a first draft of this year's line-up. I DO need volunteers to

fill in the blank spaces below. If you aren't assigned to one each session, you are encouraged to attend whichever one you would like, help Carol in the kitchen.... or snag a nap *if all the above is taken care of*. (No, you can't ALL take naps.) Thanks to all of you for your gifts and leadings.

Workshops I

Walk Outside	Mary & _____	Out!
Jam Session	Dug & Gretchen	Meeting House
Under the Covers (a look at cover songs)	Buddy & Jesse	FDS Classroom
Extra Quiet Hour	Dave	CH Hall

Workshops II

Painting & Writing to Music	Anne & Tom	CH Hall
<i>Other Music I Might Have Shared</i>	Jesse & Dave	FDS Room
<i>Round Singing</i>	Marion & Gretchen	Committee Room
Spiritual Journey through Heavy Metal	Adam & _____?	Book Shed

Saturday Evening Choose Your Conversations

Feedback after the December Retreat was so positive for offering a range of topics for JH'ers to choose from. Those who wanted to dive deep chose ones where they could do that. Those who were more interested in sharing information could do that. Those who mostly wanted to tolerate the time until it was over seemed more able to even do that. The range of tolerance and interest in having a meaningful conversation about the same topic on Saturday night is always so unpredictable. I loved giving this choice back to the JH'ers, and I loved how most of them really did choose based on what they wanted to get out of it. Like last time, I've come up with 4 possibilities. If something else pops into your head/heart that you'd like to offer that somehow or other connects with the theme (and we know that's broad), please be in touch with me. Otherwise, please be in touch with your first and second choices for leadership.

- *Keeping the Plumber Away: Responding to Injustice in 2020 without Blowing a Gasket*
- *Listening to Others who Have Other Opinions*
- *If I Were a Flower: Reflections on Today in the Manner of Friends Camp (Rose, Thorn, Bud, Root)*
- *Inner Sounds: Silent Reflection via Writing and Drawing in the Meeting House*

Coffeehouse Saturday Night

After our Saturday evening conversations, we'll hold a Coffeehouse in the Community House and share music, stories, skits, dance routines and more! *It is fabulous, and a time for staffers to share their talents, too. (So, ponder what you might share!)* Marion & I will creatively take care of the ambiance. Dug will be our stage manager. PLEASE ask how you can help before, during and after. It is always a magical and spectacular evening.

Free Time

Junior Highers want free time, but most of them want it with structure so that they can be in community. This is my mantra: "Free Time is not *staff free time*. All of us on staff need to initiate group games (Apples to Apples, Awkward Moments, JYM Ball, card games, Kickball.....), inspire craft projects, encourage new Who's Who Book pages, and engage stragglers into the mix in any ways we feel led – or the young people themselves lead. With JH'ers, it can be especially important to gently, continually nurture *inclusivity*. Please consider your gifts and leadings – and go for it!

TLCs

Please look in your staff notebooks when you arrive for a blue TLC sheet, asking you to keep a special eye and ear out for one JH'er or one first time staffer over the weekend.

The JHYM Leadership Experiment

We will NOT have committees for this retreat, and we'll see how that goes. Some of the committees have felt "stale" (me creating focal points that aren't necessarily theirs) and others have not had enough time to really provide much leadership to the whole group (my fault scheduling). I do want to use this phrase "*Is there anything that we need to pay more attention to within our community?*" as an opportunity for quick reflections before each meal and see if that sparks anything. We'll check in afterwards and see how this goes.

We'll also be designating some tables at meals for specific conversations... So ponder whether you have an idea!

Other info on the rhythm of JHYM Retreats can be found in a separate note written especially for First-Time Staffers available in your staff notebooks and on our website.

Staff Assignments – I know you've all been waiting!

Exalted Food Wizard: Carol

Her Super Side Kick Assistant: Cynthia

Registrar: Dave

Retreat Nurse: Buddy

Name Tag Fairy Squad: Marion

Photographer: Buddy

Convener of Games: Dave, Mary, Adam

Tech Support: Jesse, Marion, Dug

Storyteller: Anne, as Way Opens

Sunday Morning Man of the Hour: Buddy

Sunday Morning Queen of Stuff: Anne

Keeper of the Coffee Pot: DUG

Coffee House Ambiance: Marion & Gretchen

Coffee House Stage Managers: Dug & Jesse

Final note

Do know, dear Friends, my gratitude and love for each of you. Get lots of sleep between now and then.♥

Gretchen Baker-Smith, JHYM Retreat leader, 508-997-0940 (h) * hellogretchen@gmail.com * 508-287-6441 (cell)

Friday Night Small Group 1.20

We did this last year, and it went well, so I thought I'd see what happens if we repeat it.

This a version of several games and conversation tools we've used over the years, including Point/Counterpoint.

- Lay out the “board” in the middle of the circle. (Basically, a line from 1 to 10, with a “safe” zone.)
- Invite everyone in the group to choose a token.
- Tell the group that you are going to read some statements. They are to place their piece on the line wherever it feels right for them. If they do not feel comfortable responding to any statement, they can put their token in the safe zone (the equivalent of “Just Listening” in our small groups).
- Leave space for anyone to share why they responded as they did
- Clear the board between questions.
- Do not feel you must do all – skip around or add your own. **DO** be sure to do the last bunch as a wrap up.

How comfortable are you

- saying hello to a bus/subway driver as you get on or off it?
- performing in front of an audience
- sharing your artwork or writing publicly
- starting a conversation with a stranger while waiting somewhere
- talking to your friends
- doing check-ins at JHYM?
- giving an oral report in front of your class at school?
- being with someone you know well when they are sad or scared
- being with someone you know well when they are happy or excited
- being with someone you don't know when they are angry
- listening to someone talk about something you have a different opinion about

How challenging do you find it

- to say what you really want to say when it really matters
- to talk about the meaning of life, why we are here, if God exists, what's it all about.....
- to trust people in JHYM
- to use as few words as possible to get your point across
- to share something honest about yourself that might be different from some others <in JHYM>
- when it feels you aren't being heard?
- when others “roll their eyes” at you, or otherwise dismiss your worth as a person
- to do this exercise 😊

How much do you

- connect to some kind of music
- feel nervous about sharing your soul music
- feel excited about hearing everyone else's soul music
- feel you learned something about someone else in this small group tonight
- feel you have something in common with someone else here that you didn't know before
- hope everyone can feel able to talk about their soul music on a deep level

Thank you! Let me know how this goes!