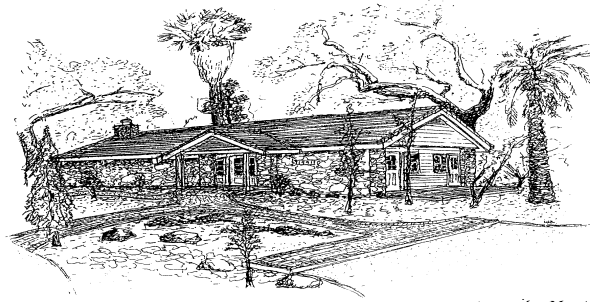


Visalia Friends Meeting
17208 Ave 296 Visalia, CA 93292

Newsletter

June, 2009



Visalia Friends Meetinghouse

social and civic responsibility

In the words of William Penn, “*True godliness don’t draw men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavors to mend it.*” Elsewhere he commented: “*It is a reproach to religion and government to suffer so much poverty and excess.*”

Poverty within a wealthy society is unjust, cruel, and often linked to skin color, gender, and language. We must examine our own privilege and role in the economic order that deepens this disparity. Friends should be alert to oppression and injustice, and persistent in working against them.

We value our part in shaping the laws of our country. Our task is to see that laws serve God’s purposes and build a just social order. Our first allegiance should be to God, and if this conflicts with any compulsion of the state, we serve our country best by remaining true to our higher loyalty.

If, by divine leading, our attention is focused on a law that is contrary to God’s law, we must proceed with care. Before acting, Friends should pray for further guidance and speak with the Meeting, family members, and all those who might be affected by the decision. If a decision involves disobedience to the law, we should make the grounds of our action clear to all concerned and be prepared to suffer any penalties without evasion. As a community, we must care for those who suffer for conscience’s sake.

What am I doing to carry my share of responsibility for the government of our community, nation, and world?

Am I persistent in my efforts to promote constructive change?

How do we attend to the suffering of others in our local community, in our state and nation, and in the world community?

Do we try to understand the causes of suffering, and do we address them as a Meeting?

How do we, individually and as a Meeting, support the organizations that work to bring the testimonies of Friends into reality in our society?

Visalia Friends Meeting

Meeting for Business

June 14, 2009

Members and Attenders Present: Bill Lovett, Beth Lovett, Graciela Martinez, David & Klara East, Greg Seastrom, Alexandra Von Werde, Heather Howard, Cayman Howard, Joy Marshall, Bob Marshall, Patti Howard, Olga McCallister . Joanne & David Dudley, John & Shirley Dackawich, Ginger Curtis, Linn Mclane

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The Meeting Clerk Greg Seastrom first read the agenda. He read from the Daily Readings from Quaker Spirituality on Freedom and God's Purpose. Also read was Faith and Practice Advice and Queries on Social and Civic Responsibility.

The clerk reviewed the agenda to be covered for the meeting.

The Meeting began in silence.

Newsletters and Organization Newsletters: Greg reviewed other Meeting Newsletters, Opportunities, and Friends Organizational News. All these are available on the back counter. These items have been place in folders on the back counter.

Agenda Items and Announcements:

Graduations: Congratulations to Melissa Alberti-Araujo for her graduation from Chapman University with a Bachelors degree and Erin Marshal from Mt. Whitney High School and Cayman Howard from 8th grade.

Membership:

Friends heartily welcomed Graciela Martinez as a member of Visalia Friends Meeting.

- **Request:** Patti Howard submitted a request for membership. Also, Cayman Howard submitted a request for membership. Friends were enthusiastic. These requests will be submitted to Ministry and Membership.

Quarterly Meeting Report: Klara East and Ginger Curtis attended Quarterly Meeting at Ben Lommond. Klara and Ginger reported on the activities of the weekend that was focused on youth. She reviewed some of the workshops, plenaries and activities during the weekend. Ginger talked about the discussion of PYM hiring a youth coordinator and the variety of concerns that arose. Klara encouraged all Friends to attend quarterly meetings.

Selecting PYM Rep: Several representatives will be attending PYM. Klara East, Bill Lovett and Greg Seastrom will attend. Klara East will represent the Meeting.

El Salvador Student Project: Greg read a letter from Palo Alto Monthly Meeting requesting communication with our new student Gloria Figuero-Leyva. He read letters from her and proposed that all write a brief note and send a photograph to our sponsored student. Greg will collect these items and forward them to Palo-Alto Meeting.

PYM Youth Coordinator: Greg read a letter from PYM regarding the employment of a Youth Coordinator. There was a request for input on the proposed position. Bill Lovett spoke on the issue and let Friends know that the PYM assessment will nearly double as PYM has no paid staff currently. There are other issues related to the employment process that must be considered as well. Bill spoke of the need for the position in order to foster more youth participation among Friends. There was a suggestion that we season the item for July's meeting for business.

Fund to Assist Monthly Meetings: Greg read a letter from the Pacific Yearly Meeting Holding Cooperation regarding using funds from the sale of the San Fernando Meeting House. The letter stated that the PCMHC is considering requests for funds from Meetings in order to acquire Meeting Houses. This does not apply to our Meeting.

Quaker Center Retreat – There is a request to know if we would support a retreat on the topic of small meetings.

Committee Reports:

- Ministry and Oversight – They have met
- Library – Joy has ordered the subscription from Pendle Hill
- Unity with Nature – (Below are minutes from UWN Meeting 5/13/09)

Members present: Klara East, Joanne Dudley, Bill Lovett, Olga McCallester

What is our committee's mission?

- We need to do something on a regular basis to help each other stay on track
- Assist the meeting members to care for nature
- Help discern PYM's emerging testimony on unity with nature
- Explore ethical eating
- Promote social activities that cultivate non-consumerism; "simple pleasure"
- Readings that we can discuss that inspire us
- Explore the issue of coal use/ climate change
- Transitions project
- Network with other organizations pursuing a common purpose
- Advertise activities on Greg's announcement board

Our regular time to meet will be third Sunday after meeting. June 21, July 19...

After discussion we agreed that we would read the information on the Unitarian Universalist website on the transition project (<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/19/magazine/19town-t.html>).

Retreat: The committee has met and needs to change the weekend of the retreat to the 9 – 11 of October. The theme for consideration; “a sense of place, looking at historical and cultural aspects of Tulare County.” There was a suggestion for inviting the Unitarians. This theme will be seasoned for consideration.

Quaker Oaks Farm Project:

Quaker Oaks Farm met last Thursday. There was a tour of the Farm. There will be a meeting July 14 at the Meeting House from 6 – 8pm there will be a potluck.

Crop Walk: The Visalia Friends Meeting raised \$3302 for the project. Six churches participated and VFM were the top fundraisers.

Donating Frequent Flier miles: Alexandra read a letter that requested donation of frequent flier miles for injured military service people. She will be providing more information via email.

Cluster Bomb Presentation: Olga had a concern for eliminating cluster bombs and placing international pressure (including our own government) to eliminate these weapons. She suggested that the Meeting sponsor a letter. More information at www.banminesusa.org. We will season this for the future.

Calendar: The Curtis-Ruehling family will be holding an Independence Day potluck at their house from 1-4. Fun and fellowship will be had along the Kaweah River in Three Rivers.

The Meeting ended in silence.

Respectfully submitted,

David East

Recording Clerk