

Visalia Friends Meeting
17208 Ave 296 Visalia, CA 93292

Newsletter

May, 2010



Visalia Friends Meetinghouse

harmony with creation

It would go a long way to caution and direct people in their use of the world, that they were better studied and knowing in the Creation of it. For how could [they] find the confidence to abuse it, while they should see the Great Creator stare them in the face, in all and every part thereof?

william penn, *some fruits of solitude*, 1693

God is revealed in all Creation. We humans belong to the whole interdependent community of life on earth. Rejoice in the beauty, complexity, and mystery of creation, with gratitude to be part of its unfolding. Take time to learn how this community of life is organized and how it interacts. Live according to principles of right relationship and right action within this larger whole.

Be aware of the influence humans have on the health and viability of life on earth. Call attention to what fosters or harms earth's exquisite beauty, balances and interdependencies. Guided by Spirit, work to translate this understanding into ways of living that reflect our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

- In what ways do I express gratitude for the wondrous expressions of life on Earth?

- Do I consider the damage I might do to the Earth's vulnerable systems in choices I make of what I do, what I buy, and how I spend my time?
- *In our witness for the global environment, are we careful to consider justice and the well-being of the world's poorest people?*
- *Does our way of life threaten the viability of life on Earth?*

Visalia Friends Meeting

Meeting for Business

May 9, 2010

Members and Attenders Present: Greg Seastrom, Bill Lovett, Beth Lovett, David O Connell (sp?), David Roberts, Graciela Martinez, Ginger Curtis, Bob Marshall, Joy Marshall, Jalene Vincent Welch, Olga McAllister(sp?)

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

The Meeting Clerk, Greg Seastrom first read the agenda. He read a passage by Rufus Jones. Also read was Faith and Practice Advice and Queries on *Harmony with Creation*.

The Meeting began in silence.

Newsletters and Organization Newsletters: Greg reviewed newsletters, opportunity to host traveling Improv. Music facilitator, Anand David Solest, letter of introduction from Paris Meeting for Gay Tischbireck. All this is available for review on the back counter.

Business:

- **Passing the torch, Planning for the Future:** topic raised by Dan O Connell concerning the intention of Bill and Beth Lovett to gift Quaker Oaks Farm property. Dan identified the core jobs as fire abatement/ tractor work mostly and a minimal watering schedule for the property. Dan discussed the capacity of the property to bring in income from rentals and events. He pointed out that the barn is well on its way to hosting weddings and other events. Dan emphasized the importance of moving forward towards a "Quaker Institute- beyond the Meeting- in association with Quaker Oaks Farm" now, with the wisdom of the elders still

available. He also suggested to the elders that they stand aside to allow the energy and leadership of the younger members to serve in greater capacity. Dan urged friends to review their feelings on the matter. Friends revisited previous concerns about the project: that it is a big task to take on, the overlap of non-profit with the Meeting and the potential to zap the Meeting. A request was made for a written description of the project. The clerk extended an invitation to all members and attenders to discuss any concerns or ideas about this potential project, and to be aware that a decision will need to be made.

Committee Reports:

- **Ministry and Oversight-** Issues of attendance / lack of, by various members and attenders is being addressed within the committee. Seeking solutions and insight into how to improve attendance. Publication “What Canst' Thou Say?” available on back counter. Updated directory passed out, contact Ginger Curtis with any corrections or additions. A condensed course of “Quakerism 101” is being considered if there is interest from new members and attenders. Next meeting scheduled for May 23 (re-scheduled from 18th) at the Meeting House- time to be announced.
- **Building and Grounds-** WORK DAY -SAT, May 15th, 8-12noon
- **Children and Youth-** no new business,
- **Unity with Nature-** no new business
- **Outreach-** Graciela reported that the billboard will not change as the message is still appropriate. I was brought to the Meeting's attention that the Zapalac sign is too close to the billboard and should be moved as to avoid intimation of support for Zapalac by the Meeting as a whole. Bob suggested that it could be moved on the work day. Also, it was proposed that VFM should open a YouTube account. David Chandler has volunteered to set it up if approved. Clerk advised that a specific proposal be brought to the Meeting.
- **Library-** Joy reported incorporating new books into the library from a donation by the Easts.

Other Reports:

Funeral Consumers Alliance of California (formerly Valley Memorial Society) :
Bob Marshall reported to the Meeting that end-of-life arrangement membership with this organization can be purchased for \$45. The organization's main purpose is to keep the costs of being dead reasonable and the business of disposal local. Pamphlet available on back counter. See Bob or Joy Marshall for additional info.

Crop Walk: took place on 3-13-10, total money collected by Visalia Friends Meeting was \$2,645.

Recording Clerk: Greg informed the Meeting that David East is changing jobs and will not have access to the printing capacities that he has had previously. The clerk suggests that there

may be a future need in that area.

The Meeting ended in silence

Respectfully submitted,

Jalene Vincent Welch

Visalia Friends Meeting
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Newsletter

June, 2010



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 13, 2010

Members and Attenders Present: Greg Seastrom, Bill Lovett, Beth Lovett, , David Roberts, Graciella Martinez, Dina Restivo, Jessi Snyder, Bob Marshall, Joy Marshall, Jalene Vincent Welch, John Dackowich, Shirley Dackowich, Andrew Glazier, Patty Howard, Heather Howard,

Joanne Dudley, David Dudley, Luis Araujo, Melissa Alberti-Araujo, Amy Glazier, Angela Reyna

After reviewing the agenda, Meeting Clerk Greg Seastrom read a passage by Rufus Jones, "God, our refuge" and Advices and Queries on Community from Faith and Practice.

The Meeting began in silence.

Mail: Greg reviewed newsletters and announcements, which are available for review on the back counter in a blue folder marked "TODAY."

Reading of Minutes: Minutes from last month's business meeting were read by the clerk.

Business:

- **Pacific Yearly Meeting** is the last week of July at Claremont-McKenna College in Claremont, California. A number of Friends are planning to attend, and they agreed to represent our meeting as a group. For registration information and materials visit PYM's website. David Dudley reported that funding is available to support attendance to PYM.
- **Status of Recording Clerk Position:** The meeting discussed possible adjustments when on July 1 David East takes his new position and loses the ability to print the newsletter. A number of Friends suggested we take advantage of the problem to institute a paper-less newsletter on e-mail. Graciella Martinez reported that her former office had the resources to print hard copies and to send e-mail newsletters to those who prefer. Recognizing that David will be busy and under stress assuming management of a school district, Friends instructed the Clerk to ask David if he would welcome a release from the position.
- **YOU TUBE:** the proposal made by Outreach Committee last month was affirmed by the Meeting. Concerns about content and follow-through were met with assurances from the Outreach Committee that postings will be cleared by the Meeting. This free service will be set up by David Chandler. To view some other Quaker You Tube sites, search "What is a Quaker?" on You Tube. To find You Tube use a Google search.
- **Equal Marriage Rights:** The clerk read a letter from the Claremont Meeting asking us to join them in revisiting the PYM and our own minutes on gay marriage. Stating their desire to stand with those couples who cannot be legally joined in marriage, their meeting will not perform any "marriage under the care of the Meeting" until all couples will be free to marry legally. Friends expressed support for equality in the right to marry but also pointed out that a heterosexual couple who might want to be married during this time would be punished. The Clerk noted that health care and property rights are involved. Friends stated that Prop 8 will be ruled on in a few days. The clerk reminded us that a past minute had already been made affirming all couples' right to be married under the care of the meeting. The Meeting decided to let the Claremont request season, but restated that the sense of the meeting is committed to the rights of all couples of any gender to marry.

- **Friends in Need:** Heather Howard and her family are in need of support after a grass fire partially burned their home, destroying or damaging belongings which were not covered by insurance. Andrew Glazier and Angela Reyna are organizing a yard sale and cleanup. Heather reported that she needs some boxes for packing and running water at the house (which involves replacing some water pipes). Friends who would like to make a donation can do so by writing a check to the Visalia Friends Meeting (which will be deductible) or directly to Heather. Heather will call on those to help as she needs it, and David Dudley respond by agreeing to advise on smoke cleanup. The meeting is grateful for the family's health and safety. Graciella Martinez recommended that some of the money raised be applied to the purchase of an AC unit for the mobile home occupied by the Araujos. Friend Olga McAllister, who is confined to "Sierra Village" at the corner of Roeben and Tulare, would love to have visitors. A yard cleanup effort at her home is being organized, and David and Joanne Dudley agreed to keep track of her needs.

Committee Reports:

- **Ministry and Oversight-**The Committee will meet at 9:30 AM next Sunday.
- **Building and Grounds-** No report
- **Children and Youth-** Jalene Vincent-Welch reported that a canoe trip at Lake Kaweah is being organized. A suggested date is June 24th. Afternoon to evening. Bring a picnic dinner and water gear: life jacket, floaties, etc. Upon confirmation of this trip (if there is interest) we will meet at the Slick Rock Recreation area. Please call Ginger or Jalene if you are interested
- **Unity with Nature-**No report
- **Outreach-**See above.
- **Library-** No report

The Meeting ended in silence

Respectfully submitted,

Jalene Vincent Welch