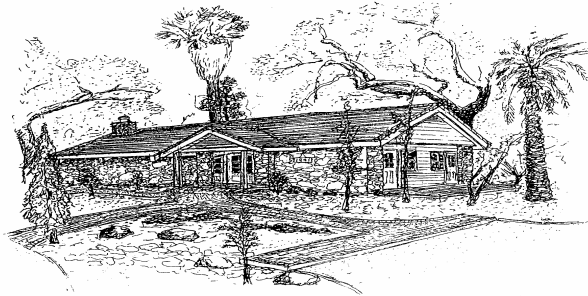


Visalia Friends Meeting

17208 Ave 296
Visalia, CA 93291

Newsletter

January 8, 2006



Visalia Friends Meetinghouse

Advice:

Friends oppose all war as inconsistent with God's will. As every person is a child of God, we recognize God's Light also in our adversaries. Violence and injustice deny this reality and violate the teachings of Jesus and other prophets.

Friends challenge their governments and take personal risks in the cause of peace. We urge one another to refuse to participate in war as soldiers, or as arms manufacturers. We seek ways to support those who refrain from paying taxes that support war. We work to end violence within our own borders, our homes, our streets, and our communities. We support international order, justice, and understanding.

Become an instrument of peace. At every opportunity, be peacemakers in your homes, workplaces and communities. Steep yourself in the power of the universal Spirit. Examine your actions for the seeds of violence, degradation and destructiveness. Overcome the emotions that lie at the root of violence and nurture instead a spirit of reconciliation and love. Come to know the oneness of all creation and oppose the destruction of the natural world.

Queries:

- Do I live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars?
- How do I nourish peace within myself as I work for peace in the world?
- Do I confront violence wherever it occurs, even when my personal relationships are involved?
- Where there is a distrust, injustice, or hatred, how am I an instrument of reconciliation and love?
- What are we doing to remove the causes of war and destruction of the planet, and to bring about lasting peace?
- Do we reach out to all parties in a conflict with courage and love?

MEETING FOR BUSINESS

Present: Clerk David Chandler, Billie Chandler, Joy and Bob Marshall, Olga McCallister, David and Klara East, Joanne Dudley, Greg Seastrom, Sharlene Roberts-Caudle, Bill and Beth Lovett, Patti Howard, Heather Howard, Mallory Marshall, Graciela Martinez, Jerry Jaspar, John and Shirley Dackowich, Mark Koenig

Clerk David Chandler called the meeting to order with a moment of silent worship.

1. An announcement was made that there will be a visitation by Chinese students from UC Berkley and Los Angeles to the Visalia Friends Meeting. The students will be staying at the meeting house and participating in a variety of projects for the following week. Graciela Martinez reported that the students will participate in a Self-Help Housing project in Earlimart as well as other agricultural related workshops in the area. The students will be hosting a dinner for Friends who recently traveled to China on Tuesday January 11th at 645. A general meeting will be held after dinner at 730 at the meeting house.
2. Klara East proposed that the meeting consider donating use of meeting house property for local immigrants from Oaxaca, Mexico to use as a medicinal garden. She was inspired by a newspaper article about a church in Madera that allows gardening of medicinal herbs and plants by local Oaxaceño immigrants. Bob Marshall expressed concern about limited space for suitable gardening areas on meeting house property, but expressed general support of the idea. Klara said that possible neighbors to the north of the Meeting House might get involved with the project. Patti Howard voiced support of promoting natural medicines. Olga McCallister cautioned against possibly introducing invasive non-native species into the area. Klara will pursue more information and bring back the topic to the Meeting.
3. Joanne Dudley reported that the Outreach Committee had met and compiled a list of possible slogans for the billboard. She presented the list to the meeting. After much discussion, the slogan "Got Milk?" with the word "Milk" crossed out and the word "Peace" written above it would be used? Buildings and Grounds committee members will assist in securing materials and placing panels. Jerry Jaspar offered to assist with the design. The list will be kept on file for future billboard changes.
4. David Chandler reported on the military's Delayed Enlistment Program (DEP). Bob Marshall's daughter had approached him about a young woman concerned about the DEP and her change of mind about enlisting in the military. Bob referred the woman to David who provided her with a lot of information regarding strategies for avoiding enlistment. David said that all Friends could instruct young people in the DEP to opt out by simply refusing to show up for enlistment. The contracts that young people have signed are not binding due to their minor status. More information can be found at www.objectors.org.

5. Committee Reports: Greg Seastrom will be convening a M&O meeting. No other committee meeting reports were available; except that the Children's committee had raised \$1829.50 for the Heifer Project. These were proceeds from Bill Warner's Toy Auction and the wreath sales from the Christmas Tree Farm.
6. David Chandler brought to discussion the formation of a regular religious education program to be held on a weekly basis. He proposed that the schedule for meeting change to accommodate the program. The proposed religious education meeting would be held from 10:00 - 11:00 and the meeting for worship held from 11:00 – 12:00. There was much discussion on the issue. John Dackowich said there was already in place a time for ad-hoc religious education meetings the first Sunday of the month at 9:30. Sharlene Roberts-Caudle had just finished a multi-week series on the study of Peace Pilgrim. Greg Seastrom shared that many were concerned that a programmed religious education meeting would conflict with the un-programmed nature of Meeting worship. David Chandler would like to let the issue season, but would like to revisit this issue in the future.
7. Mark Koenig has received information about a new gun law passed in Florida that would protect people who use firearms if they perceive a threat. This law has been lobbied by the NRA and is currently being promoted in California. Mark would like to start a letter writing campaign to actively lobby against this legislation.
8. Greg Seastrom gave an update on the Pankey family incident in Visalia. Greg met with Irvin Pankey and had a fruitful discussion. The outcome of the meeting led to the following actions: 1) a delegation visit by Friends to the Pankey family was not necessary, 2) letters would be welcome, 3) the Meeting should become active in fighting racism in Tulare County. Mark Koenig will write a personal letter to the Pankey family. David Chandler will write a letter to the editor for the Meeting.
9. Mallory Marshall reported on the "Woolman Semester" she had just finished at the Woolman School in Grass Valley. She expressed her appreciation in the Meeting's support for her attendance. She said the experience was incredible. They spent time on service projects in Mexico. Mallory took classes on Peace Studies, Environmental studies and World issues. The courses are transferable to her high school in Visalia. She read many excellent books, shared a cabin with roommates, worked at shared chores at the school and attended the Grass Valley Friends Meeting for worship. The meeting applauded her report.

Upcoming Events

- Winter Quarterly Meeting Teen Program – 1/14/06 – Berkely (see Klara East for registration info)
- Friends General Conference – Puget Sound, WA – 7/1/06 –7/7/06 (info at www.fgcquaker.org)
- Fifth Sunday Meeting with Fresno's Meeting at the Lohan's home in Reedley. 1/29/06 at 10:30