



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

TASK FORCE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION 11-20-25

LWVM Observer: Shari Pressman

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Helaine Hazlett, Diane Gora, Chief Dennis King, Deacon Joe Whipple, Chris Buell, Reece Dahlberg, Jean Guasterri, Louis Meyi, Jay Morrison

UPDATE ON MARBLEHEAD POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS: Chief King had no new incidents to report. The Marblehead Police Department earned State accreditation requiring 257 strict requirements to be met and verified by State evaluators. Fewer than half of Massachusetts municipalities (112/258) met the requirements. MPD will be re-evaluated in three years.

The chief also mentioned three December events: 12/5: Tree Lighting; 12/6: Christmas Walk and Parade; 12/18: Menorah Lighting at 5:30 in National Grand Bank's parking lot.

Helaine noted that the State Special Commission Report on Antisemitism K-12 passed unanimously. According to the report the Commission published, on page 11, section V, "(The Commission) is committed to a data-driven approach in its efforts to combat antisemitism. To this end, the Commission has conducted an extensive review of multiple data sources that both individually and collectively indicate a clear and troubling rise in antisemitic incidents, crimes, and attitudes. The data reviewed by the Commission aligns closely with the anecdotal evidence and personal testimony shared by numerous speakers who appeared before it. As the Commission has witnessed in its meetings, behind each data point is a lived experience: a student unsafe on campus, a family afraid to attend synagogue, a neighbor targeted online. Our response must match not only the scale of the numbers but the depth of their human impact. Key sources informing the Commission's analysis include the FBI Hate Crime Statistics Report, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) Hate Crimes Report, and the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2024—all of which document a sharp increase in antisemitic crimes and incidents following October 7, 2023."

The report concluded with twenty-five suggestions to decrease antisemitism in Grades K-5. The Commission included DA Paul Tucker, and co-chairs State Representative Simon Cataldo and State Senator John Velis.

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE was observed on November 20 with a moment of silence.

IMPACT AWARD GIVEN TO REV. DR. ANNE MARIE HUNTER, former co-chair of TFAD and founder of Safe Haven, a thirty-five-year-old interfaith partnership against domestic violence and abuse. There are now 24 partnerships around the country. Helaine and Diane attended the tribute at Old West Church in Boston.

DISCUSSION re: BOOK READ: 7th and 8th graders at Veterans and, via Zoom, 6th graders at Village heard Alice Hoffman, author of “When We Flew Away”, discuss her Young Adult book based on Anne Frank’s life before her family was forced to hide in an attic in Amsterdam to escape Nazi capture. Students were very interested in the book and asked Ms Hoffman many excellent questions.

UPDATE ON MARBLEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS: TFAD would like to continue its tradition of distributing books for students to read honoring Black History Month in February. Members will reach out to check if teachers are planning their own books; Reece will contact the president of the PTO at the Charter School. One book suggested for high school students was “The Nickel Boys” by Colson Whitehead. The book has been made into a movie as well. Several other books were suggested. Members of TFAD will decide next month.

Superintendent Robidoux spoke with METCO students on November 19.

In an intergenerational meeting, members of the COA Book Club, teachers, students, and community members will join at the Abbot Library large meeting room on Tuesday, November 25 from 11:30 until 12:30 to discuss “When We Flew Away”. Pizza will be provided by the Veterans School PTO.

UPDATE FROM MARBLEHEAD RACIAL JUSTICE TEAM-The 2nd Annual Martin Luther King Day Breakfast will be held on January 19 at Old North Church. Food donations are requested from attendees. A Day of Service will be held after the breakfast. More information to follow.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: The Marblehead Ministerial Association’s annual Thanksgiving Covenant Transfer is planned for November 25. This year the Covenant is being transferred from the Unitarian Universalist Church to Temple Emanuel, where the ceremony is scheduled for 6:30.

January 30, 2026 is Holocaust Remembrance Day. Ceremonies will be held at Noon at Abbot Hall and at 6:30 at Temple Sinai.

NEXT MEETING: Glover School on Thursday, December 18 at 7:00pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.