



## OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

### **TASK FORCE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION 1-9-25**

In Person Meeting

LWV Observer: Shari Pressman

**Members in Attendance:** Helaine Hazlett (co-chair), Diane Gora (co-chair), Deacon Joe Whipple, Jean Guastaferrri, Maren Potter (MHS representative), Chief Dennis King (ex-officio), Louis Meyi and Jay Morrison, Marblehead Racial Justice Team representative

**Update from Marblehead Police Department:** Chief King reported on a New Year's Eve incident involving juveniles, which he described as not a hate crime. He also offered to speak to a student and their family about a bullying incident in the Marblehead schools that was dealt with within the school. He updated information about the Beverly Police Department, acting on information from the FBI, arrested and charged a Beverly man with numerous firearms charges and inciting others online to shoot people outside synagogues.

Chief King clarified the definition of a hate crime according to Massachusetts General Laws:

- 1) a crime against a protected class (defined in MGL)
- 2) a threat with an underlying crime
- 3) inciting violence against a protected class
- 4) applying only to those over the age of 12

**Holocaust Remembrance Day** is scheduled for Friday, January 31 at noon indoors at Abbot Hall and that evening at Temple Emanuel at 6:00pm. Last year's commemoration drew large audiences with a comment that more room was needed for the noon event.

**Menorah Lighting** Helaine thanked Jim Nye for the use of National Grand Bank's parking lot for a community sponsored menorah lighting on the evening of December 17. Select Board chair Erin Noonan gave the opening remarks, Cantor Sarah Freudenberger and Congregation Shirat Hayam chorus led the singing and Rabbis Michael Schwartz from Temple Sinai and Jenn Mangold, from Temple Emanu-El, spoke. Participants were treated to extra-large filled donuts (sufganyot) at the end of the program, donated by David Zion.

**Update on Marblehead Public Schools** Student Representative Maren Potter spoke about Team Harmony's Spring presentations at Brown and Glover Schools last year. The ADL trains students in their programs. The program is new this year, with TFAD members suggesting a presentation at Village School this year. Maren will post

information about the upcoming MLK and Holocaust programs. Diane Gora, first grade teacher at Glover, and Helaine hope to meet with the superintendent, who expressed interest in forming an antisemitism task force, presumably at the high school. They will speak with him about TFAD's role and history in Marblehead as a committee appointed thirty years ago by the Board of Selectmen. Diane spoke about a previous program which she thought was excellent called "Planning for Success".

**Discussion About Wonder Sequel:** White Bird was discussed as a sequel to Wonder, which students read last year and generated discussion. White Bird deals with subjects appropriate for 6<sup>th</sup> grade and older. Viewing "Wonder" as a movie could be an option. Maren suggested Punching in the Air by Yusef Salaam, appropriate for Grades 6 and older. No February vacation book has been recommended.

**Task Force Opening:** Maura Dartley- Rocco, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Health teacher, has shown interest in the opening on the task force.

**Hybrid Meetings** are not feasible currently.

**Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration:** Maren spoke about a program to be held at the high school. TFAD members decided to offer a donation and support the high school event rather than taking on organizing a celebration of their own.

**Update from Marblehead Racial Justice Team:** MRJT is sponsoring the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Community Breakfast on Monday, January 20 at Old North Church, 35 Washington St., 9:30-11:00am. The event features Amanda Gorman poetry readings and "The Last Song of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." by Dr. Cheryl Boots. Low-sodium canned meat or meaty soups for MHD Food Pantry or grocery store gift cards welcomed!

The late Edward Robinson, Marblehead physician, will be honored posthumously by the North Shore Juneteenth Committee in Lynn with their Black Excellence Award. The organizers sought nominations from entities beyond Lynn. Dr. Robinson's name was submitted by TFAD, which collaborates each year with the Juneteenth Flag Raising at Abbot Hall.

MRJT is helping to publicize "MBTA Marblehead: Just the Facts" sponsored by the Social Action Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church on Sunday, February 2 at 2pm. They will host speakers from the Marblehead Housing Coalition, which supports Town Meeting adoption of the State "MBTA Communities Act". The event is at the church, 28 Mugford St.

Next meeting: Thursday, February 13 at 7:00pm