



Minutes from the January 21, 2015 FDTC meeting

Megan Braga, Chair, started the meeting by wishing Happy Birthday to **Lou Turner**. **Yang Conley** gave the Treasurer's report based on information from vacationing **Lloyd Beckett**. The FDTC has spent no money in January and the total in our account is \$1865.24 with all bills paid for the office and campaign of the fall. **Megan** urged all members to pay their annual dues. She then introduced the speakers for the evening's "A Community Dialogue on Race" and mentioned she hoped this would be the start to an ongoing conversation on race for the town Democrats.

Dr. Dan Gilbarg, Sociology Professor from Bristol Community College, was the first presenter. He noted that racial inequality continues in our society with large gaps between blacks and Hispanics and whites in certain areas such as incarceration rates, income rates, and educational achievement levels. There are differing explanations for the gaps. Some blame the victim and ignore the systemic problems which create these gaps, such as different treatment by teachers and other authorities, poverty levels which kill any positive views of the future for people, and higher percentages of arrests, convictions and incarcerations in minority groups.

Dr. Steven James, Interim Academic Dean of Goddard College, spoke next. He noted that is hard to confront racism in oneself and others. When confronted with unfamiliar people, one can revert to certain stereotypical views. Citizens need cultural



Panel for Community Dialogue on Race



Dr. Dan Gilbarg



Dr. Steven James

competency. He urged us to ask questions about others, and if one makes mistakes to apologize and go on.

Rev. Kristen Harper of the Unitarian Church of Barnstable was the last speaker. She described instances in her life when she faced racial discrimination. She urged us to recognize and face the truth about racism on the Cape, acknowledging that it exists. She recommended that people develop relationships with black friends, listen without interrupting and look at ones' own experiences of exclusion for reference points. She recommended that we all read the piece by Petty McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack," which is on the internet and very compelling. She recommended working in groups where you are not in control and can support and share.



Rev. Kristen Harper

Those present then made comments and observations. **Dan Gilbarg** facilitated. Many sobering comments were made by those in the audience. We were told that we might want to find our own area of interest and work to make relationships across racial divisions in that area. The emphasis should be on areas where humans have more in common than they have differences. **Hugh Gregory** added that, sadly, fear of someone or thing can turn into hatred and that we should be aware of that. In speaking with others, **Dr. James** commented, we should speak from our internal values since facts sometimes fail to persuade. In general, as **Sandy Faiman- Silva** commented, we should have the courage to connect with others in our personal lives.

Submitted by Kirstin Moritz,

FDTC Newsletter Editor



Dr. Gilbarg makes a point