

Latest News on the SAYMA Anti-Racism Front:

Minutes Finance Committee 8/19/20

Present: Carol Lamm, treasurer, Jackson Napier, Assistant Treasurer, Karen Morris, Kendall Ivie, Geeta McGahey, finance Clerk, Bob McGahey, SAYMA clerk, Angela Hopkins, FCRJ, Judy Meikle, FCRJ

SAYMA finance thanks a former member of URJ, Tanya Rodriguez, for sharing her concerns about URJ finances.

Financial reports generated by the treasurer explain the use of URJ funds including grants. Retroactively requiring additional reporting by grantees seems inappropriate and impractical.

If the Yearly Meeting is concerned about receipts or financial reports from grantees we need to set a policy which is forward looking.

Finance will meet in August to hear from (name withheld) re the financial review and in September to hear Financial reports and finalize the budget preparations.

Geeta Jyothi McGahey,  
Clerk Finance

Dear Friends,

I am re-posting this, hoping Friends will read it, understand its meaning, and STOP wasting their time and their Monthly Meeting's time for Business by continuing to interrogate URJ's finances and issuing Minutes concerning URJ. That case is closed. So now, only those who wish to reveal themselves to be hard headed racists who cannot accept that fact, will continue looking for evidence of URJ's alleged financial malfeasance. After reading the above minute, which you can easily verify with any member of the finance committee, it is evident that the finance committee has already

investigated whatever spurious claims and found no basis in them.

If you still feel like you need to investigate something, why not investigate where the call for monthly meetings to season unfounded claims against URJ and its members came from. Did this idea come from the finance committee, or elsewhere? Because I guarantee, as clerk of URJ, that the concerns being raised about URJ's finances, structure and spiritual discernment process, are absolutely racially motivated.

I say this because no other committee in the history of SAYMA has been the focus of such over scrutinizing as URJ has been. Due entirely to the fact that SAYMA-URJ was approved as a standing committee of SAYMA, which ONLY people of color can serve as members.

There has been an unprecedented amount and level of conflict concerning the new committee since the very beginning, when the proposal to form an anti-racism committee at the yearly meeting came forward, in 2016. Everything about URJ has been relentlessly questioned and everyone associated with it has been expected to meet unusual standards. These are facts. Because URJ is a racial justice committee whose members were carefully chosen because they are all veteran anti-racist Friends of color, this extra layer of oversight looks like racial profiling to us. Because URJ has been held to standards of Quaker practice and process which never existed before URJ was approved, those extra standards, applied only to URJ, look like criminalization to us.

All things considered, here's my advice, as clerk of URJ: **When Friends discuss, discern, make decisions or issue minutes about other Friends without representation from the Friends in question being included in the process, it is not rightly ordered.** The basic principle is, "Nothing about me without me." Which is fair and equitable. However, when white people or mostly white people, in known predominantly white organizations and institutions, make decisions concerning people of color, without their involvement, that is defined as systemic racism. You do not have to agree with me; you can look it

up. That is just as bad as a room full of men making policy decisions which will only impact women. It is just not a good practice."

That being said, if you continue to discuss SAYMA-Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) and its operations, in small groups or in your monthly meetings for business without URJ's involvement in the your process, whatever you decide will, in fact, be a racist, not an anti-racist policy decision. I hope you understand.

"It is not the light that we need, but fire;  
it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.  
We need the storm, the whirlwind,  
and the earthquake." (1852)

"If there is no struggle, then there is no progress.  
Those who profess to favor freedom,  
and yet depreciate agitation,  
are like men who want crops  
without plowing up the ground.  
They want the rain  
without thunder and lightning.  
They want the ocean  
without the awful roar of its many waters." (1857)

--Frederick Douglass

In the Light of Racial Justice,  
Sharon "Star" Smith,  
Clerk of SAYMA-URJ