

Letter in Response to InterTown Record Opinions/Letters to the Editor “Objecting to quote and related activity”

Appeared in Tuesday, July 27, 2021 edition

We are deeply saddened to have read the letter to the Editor in the Tuesday July 20<sup>th</sup> edition, p. 7. The signatories of the letter objected to a workshop co-sponsored by the Wilmot Public Library and the First Congregational Church of Wilmot on May 28<sup>th</sup> citing a quote from a flier that was designed to advertise it. The workshop, titled “But I Don’t Feel White,” was based on a new book *Let’s Talk Race: A Guide for White People* by New England authors Drs. Fern Johnson and Marlene Fine. As the authors explain, they wrote this book from a place of love as white mothers of two adopted African American boys, who saw the need to make it easier for all of us to have conversations about race. A major premise of the book is that it is important for us to be aware of our own racial identity to understand ones different from ourselves. The book is not about labeling any race or making anyone feel guilty about historic privilege and the workshop was likewise not about assigning blame or guilt. The workshop focused on our need to have conversations about race to move forward toward a common good for people of all races. Specifically, we designed the workshop to facilitate active listening during conversations about one’s own racial identity and to help participants explore what experiences during their formative years helped create their own identity. Overwhelmingly positive feedback from workshop participants indicated that this was good work, that folks appreciated the opportunity to discuss their own differences, and that practicing these types of conversations was empowering. Unfortunately, the critics expressing their objections did not attend the workshop.

We were thrilled to have partnered with the Morgan Hill Bookstore and the Wilmot Public Library to highlight this new book that provides a guide primarily, but not exclusively, for white people who want to learn to talk about race with increased ease and expertise so that together we can all work toward inclusion, justice, and equity.

The Racial Justice Committee of The First Congregational Church of Wilmot

Bonita Betters-Reed, Ph.D., Chair

Paul Currier

Nancy Allenby

Rev. Dr. Dawn C. Berry, Sabbatical Minister and Member of the NHCUCC Racial Justice Mission Group