



Seth Sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com>

Re: Internal Conflicts in the AAC

1 message

Seth Sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com>

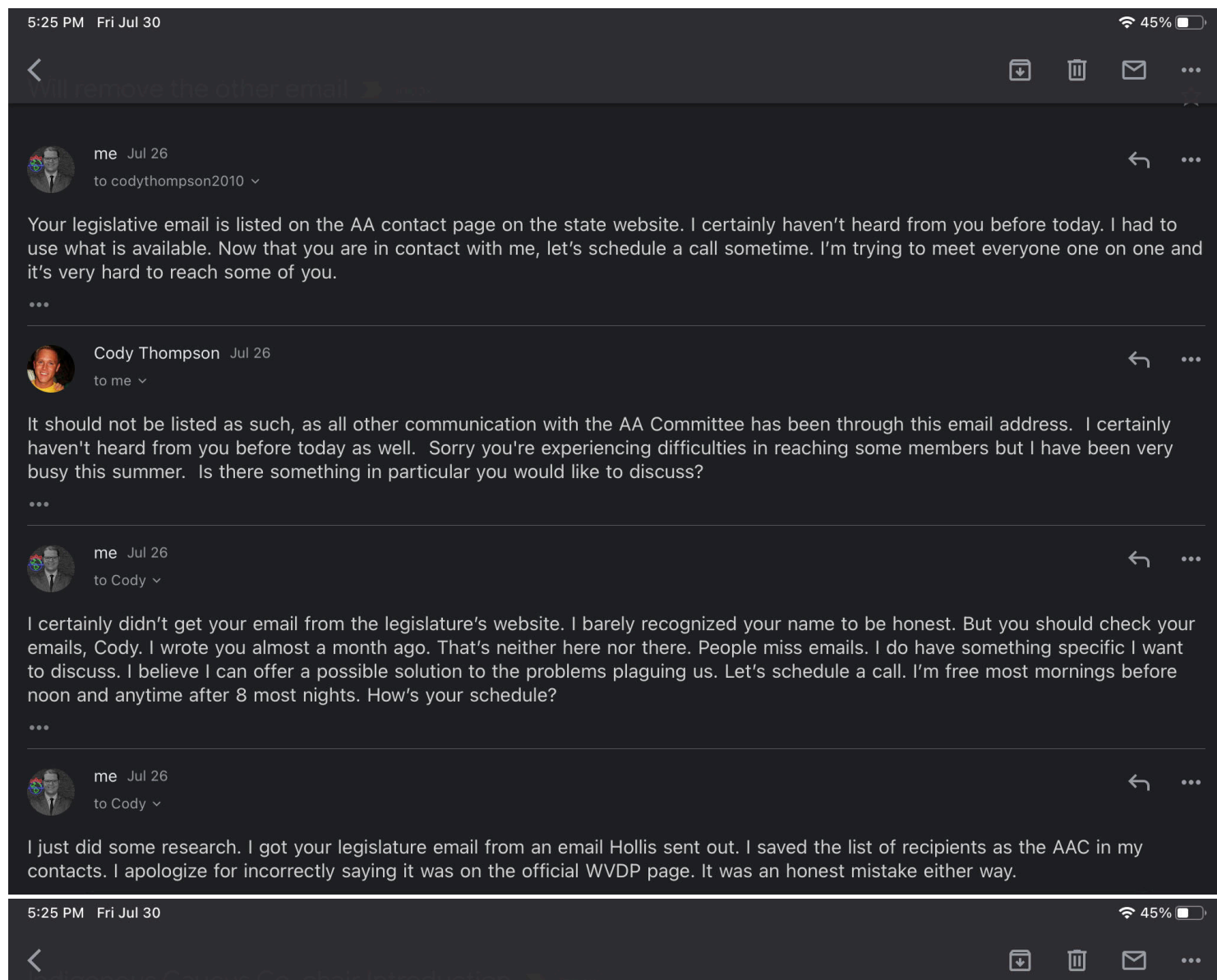
Fri, Jul 30, 2021 at 6:05 PM

To: Cody Thompson <codythompson2010@gmail.com>

Cc: Affirmative Action Committee <affirmative.action.wv@gmail.com>, Aryanna Islam <aryannaislam@outlook.com>, Charlie Mullins <charlie@wvfree.org>, Dady Dadyburjor <loudady@juno.com>, Emily Clifford <emilyyuqin96@gmail.com>, Kelly Elkins <Kelly.j.elkins@gmail.com>, Marilyn Monahan <monahancan@gmail.com>, Marlene Midget <mmidget2015@gmail.com>, Mary Claytor <maryannclaytor@gmail.com>, Mary Thorp <thorpdesign@gmail.com>, Robert Baker <rbaker1018@gmail.com>, Rosemary Ketchum <ketchumcommunity@gmail.com>, hollistLewis@gmail.com, jarrydpowell@outlook.com, kfelix24@gmail.com, rustywilliamsww@gmail.com

I'm well aware that many of you don't like me. You likely never will. And that's OK because my focus is on the IC. Now, with my reputation as an uncivilized savage established by Bob, Selina, Cody, and Mary T, let me share the emails that Cody and I referenced. I was on the defensive because of the micro aggressions directed at me. Am I to ignore the hostility from a white member? Am I to know my place?

SS





me Jul 11

to codythompson2010@gmail.com ▾



Hello, my name is Seth Sturm. I am the newly elected male co-chair of the Indigenous Caucus. If anything ever comes up that you would like to discuss, I am always available for my fellow AAC members. If you would be so kind as to send me your contact information, I will add you to my AAC contact list. I can't wait to see what we can accomplish together.

Sincerely,

Seth Sturm
Co-chair Indigenous Caucus

Cell: 681-867-8420



me Jul 26

to Cody ▾



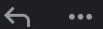
Here's the email from July 11th. I sent to the right email.

...



Cody Thompson Jul 27

to me ▾



Hello Seth, your last email said you wrote me a month ago... July 11 was roughly two weeks ago. I was at a legislative conference at that time, and while I believe it's my own personal business and owe no one an explanation... I have had some medical issues that have required my attention following. I have some time this evening between 5-6PM if you would like to call between then.

-Cody

Sent from my iPhone

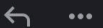
On Jul 26, 2021, at 7:11 PM, Seth Sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com> wrote:

...



me Jul 27

to Cody ▾



You said I didn't write you, and that's just not true. Whatever your reason, you didn't respond to my email. I didn't ask why you ignored it. The hostility in your email only serves to highlight your supercilious attitude towards those you don't consider worthy of your time.

I wish those of you willing to criticize me for bringing up disenfranchisement, would take time to stand up for the rights of your fellow members. I am the co-chair of the indigenous caucus. If I sit by and let you all run roughshod over us, then the indigenous people I represent will lose their voice. I won't let that happen.

Anyway, I will make time for you tonight around 5. Call me when you're free. 681-867~8420.

...

Reply

Forward



On Fri, Jul 30, 2021 at 11:34 AM Cody Thompson <codythompson2010@gmail.com> wrote:

I'd just like to set the record straight here for everyone. I was fully willing to speak to Mr. Sturm before the last offensive and highly rude email he sent me (There were prior hostile emails and for the other members of the group I'd be happy to share those with you). He has repeatedly called me names, been condescending to me ("I barely recognized your name", has insinuated that I'm elitist because I wouldn't give him my time after his offensive emails. Mr. Sturm, I don't know why you think you can bully and intimidate people into doing what you want or expect, but Mr. Sturm that doesn't work with me, I'm NOT the one. I do not have to subject myself to that treatment.

-Cody

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 30, 2021, at 11:07 AM, Seth Sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com> wrote:

Cody, it's hard to tell from all these emails who has attached your legislative email. I have already removed it from my contact list. This is a great example of why we need a group chat or chat server. We need to keep our emails clear.

It's frustrating to see you able to respond to issues that affect you personally, but staying silent on issues that the new caucuses of color are facing. What is your position on inclusion for new members? Do you support a workshop meeting? Are you going to make yourself available to answer our questions about the subcommittee you chair?

SS

On Fri, Jul 30, 2021 at 10:57 AM Cody Thompson <Cody.Thompson@wvhouse.gov> wrote:

I have multiple times asked you to stop responding on this thread, that this thread is attached to my legislative email. Stop!

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Seth Sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 29, 2021 6:42:23 PM
To: Mary Thorp <thorpdesign@gmail.com>
Cc: Affirmative Action Committee <affirmative.action.wv@gmail.com>; Aryanna Islam <aryannaislam@outlook.com>; Charlie Mullins <charlie@wvfree.org>; Cody Thompson <Cody.Thompson@wvhouse.gov>; Dady Dadyburjor <loudady@juno.com>; Emily Clifford <emilyyuqin96@gmail.com>; Kelly Elkins <Kelly.j.elkins@gmail.com>; Marilyn Monahan <monahancan@gmail.com>; Marlene Midget <mmidget2015@gmail.com>; Mary Claytor <maryannclaytor@gmail.com>; Robert Baker <rbaker1018@gmail.com>; Rosemary Ketchum <ketchumcommunity@gmail.com>; hollistLewis@gmail.com <hollistLewis@gmail.com>; jarrydpowell@outlook.com <jarrydpowell@outlook.com>; kfelix24@gmail.com <kfelix24@gmail.com>; rustywilliamsww@gmail.com <rustywilliamsww@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: Internal Conflicts in the AAC

Was this retreat organized in the Planning Committee? Regular meeting? Workshop? Bylaws committee? Who chose the date? Is it in person? You keep mentioning it, but some of us are completely in the dark.

Also, as I've said on multiple occasions, it's irresponsible to have an in person retreat at this time. We don't want to make the pandemic worse for the people of WV. The fact that most of us have been vaccinated doesn't absolve us of our duty to keep people safe.

all of my questions and concerns are worthy of having a workshop meeting on their own. But we are dealing with no less than three major issues. Why are the chairs not making this a priority? Surely, we shouldn't go into a public meeting without addressing all of this animosity.

Seth Sturm

Seth Sturm
 Co-Chair Indigenous Caucus

On Tue, Jul 27, 2021 at 2:39 PM Mary Thorp <thorpdesign@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Charlie,

I point directly to the comment you suggested about coming together for creating a structure for workability.

The retreat on Sun, Aug 22 is designed for just that. One of our caucus members, Betty Rivard, recommended very early on that we set this very important foundation. She followed through to enroll Leslie Stone, a professional with expertise in this to facilitate our group.

I know you are barely returning from your family trip at that time and now can see the value of this work on that date.

Thank you for your thoughtful offering. I love knowing you like comics & navigation. Anxious to know you more.

Mary

Mary Thorp
PO Box 352
Rock Cave, WV 26234
267.879.1192

On Jul 27, 2021, at 2:18 PM, Charlie Mullins <charlie@wvfree.org> wrote:

Hello all,

Firstly, I want to apologize Seth for not having reached out to you yet; work and life have been a bit hectic for me lately. I plan on reaching out soon.

Secondly, I want to uplift and praise Emily for her suggestion of the cultural competency workshop. I completely concur with her sentiment that such would not only help us understand and appreciate each other's backgrounds, but also to help facilitate our different forms of cultural communication for each other's benefit. I'm not sure when would be the best time to schedule this, but I support doing it as soon as we can manage.

Finally, in response to this thread, I want to say that I'm coming from the perspective of one who has only just recently joined the diversity caucuses/AAC. I know little of everything currently happening behind the scenes, and even less of everything that happened behind the scenes before I came on. With that, what I've been seeing is a conflict of two sides, both wanting to make real progress, but with one side wanting complete transparency and revision and the other not wanting to "throw the baby out with the bathwater". I think what needs to happen clear and concise conversation (in, I'm assuming, an ideal meeting setting) about how things should operate within the AAC – because it seems like both sides have their valid points, but both sides are also at odds with each for what (at least, I hope) are solvable issues. We can't chat a course when the map is crumpled, and so we need to smooth it out in order to see clearly; and that goes for both sides, as transparency is not a one-way street.

If you'll forgive the continued nautical metaphors – we are in uncharted waters, at least when it comes to doing this in West Virginia. No one person in this committee is an expert voice, and certainly not an authority over others. If we are to do business, we need to do what is perhaps the greatest consistent failing of the left-wing and the Democratic Party: we need to strive for unity. That unity can't come if we're constantly fighting with each other, but it also can't come if we're not conducting ourselves properly either. We are all in this because we believe it can do good, and because we believe despite the obstacles that this CAN work. Because we all believe this, we need to continue from here forward with the acknowledgment that we each of us have an accountability to uphold and decisiveness for improvement, to better both ourselves and this group; and I do mean each of us – those of us in position of power, those of us not, those of us who are accusing, and those who are accused.

I propose that, at some time, we as a group have a meeting ***specifically*** for the purpose of establishing how

this group conducts itself, what our expectations for each other are, and how we intend to both keep ourselves accountable as well as keep ourselves supportive of each other. I'm a big comic book fan, so I'll illustrate this final point with a Superman reference: "They can be a great people, Kal-El; they wish to be. They only lack the light to show the way." Establishing our mutual functionality and support is that light. In the meantime, I think any current grievances should be held "in the parking lot", to use a training term, so that they can be properly addressed and resolved with everyone together, so that there is not only full transparency, but also so that folks like myself - who have relatively little context to go off of from these emails - can understand what's going on.

<image002.png>

Charlie Mullins
Programs Coordinator

WV FREE & WV FREE Action Fund

He/him/they/them | wvfree.org: <https://linktr.ee/WVFREE>

p. 304.268.3527 (cell)

<image003.jpg> <image004.jpg> <image005.jpg>

[Learn why pronouns matter](#)

People under 18 deserve increased access to birth control, too.

Sign the petition today:

<http://bit.ly/ExpandOTC>

From: Emily Clifford <emilyyuqin96@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, July 26, 2021 2:15 PM

To: Seth Sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com>

Cc: Mary Thorp <thorpdesign@gmail.com>; Affirmative Action Committee <affirmative.action.wv@gmail.com>; Cody.thompson@wvhouse.gov; Dady Dadyburjor <loudady@juno.com>; Mary Claytor <Maryannclaytor@gmail.com>; Marilyn Monahan <MonahanCan@gmail.com>; Robert Baker <rbaker1018@gmail.com>; Rosemary Ketchum <ketchumcommunity@gmail.com>; Aryanna Islam <aryannaislam@outlook.com>; Charlie Mullins <charlie@wvfree.org>; hollistLewis@gmail.com; jarrydpowell@outlook.com; Kelly Elkins <kelly.j.elkins@gmail.com>; kfelix24@gmail.com; Marlene Midget <mmidget2015@gmail.com>; rustywilliamsww@gmail.com

Subject: Re: Internal Conflicts in the AAC

Hi all,

I am very confused about the email chain I am attached to, I will not speak for other parties but personally I would like to be removed from this chain (specifically). I believe we should all work together peacefully and un-passive aggressively, we all have the same goal in this committee to represent underrepresented communities and lift up voices from our communities and I respect each and every one of you! I just prefer to not be included in emails that seem to be personal emails that should be kept on a personal chain.

I hope we can all come together and respectfully communicate our frustrations and concerns. We are all new to this and are working with individuals from all different cultures, ethnicities, races and beliefs, let's put that into

perspective when we reach out because there will be miscommunications but we are brand new, something never done in the state of WV before so let's take these experiences and learn and grow from them.

I would also like to suggest a cultural competency workshop so we can learn about amazing different cultures and the best ways to communicate with a background of understanding each other's cultures and beliefs. (Also would just be neat to learn more about other cultures and beliefs as well)

Thank you and with all respect

Emily Clifford

Female Co-Chair of the AAPI caucus.

On Sun, Jul 25, 2021 at 11:23 PM Seth Sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com> wrote:

Seriously? You won't communicate with me, but you'll send passive aggressive memes?

On Sun, Jul 25, 2021 at 11:05 PM Mary Thorp <thorpdesign@gmail.com> wrote:

<image001.jpg>

Mary Thorp

PO Box 352

Rock Cave, WV 26234

267.879.1192

On Jul 25, 2021, at 10:54 PM, Mary Thorp <thorpdesign@gmail.com> wrote:

Great idea, Seth.

Thank you.

Mary Thorp

PO Box 352

Rock Cave, WV 26234

267.879.1192

On Jul 25, 2021, at 10:12 PM, Seth Sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com> wrote:

Recording mentioned in the thread.

On Sun, Jul 25, 2021 at 10:08 PM Seth Sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com> wrote:

Fellow Committee Members:

I am sharing this email with all of you because it is going to come out eventually. I have nothing to hide. I will bring all of this up before the Indigenous Caucus on August 4th at 630 if anyone wants to attend.

Our main goal is to grow our individual diversity caucuses into a force within the party. This is my goal. The AAC is secondary to the Indigenous Caucus. This should be true for all of us. I am once again extending an invitation to all recipients of this email to text me or email me so we can schedule a phone/video call. 681-867-8420.

Humbly,

Seth Sturm

Co-Chair Indigenous Caucus

On Sun, Jul 25, 2021 at 9:35 PM Seth Sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com> wrote:

I'm not shocked, not one iota.

You won't engage because you're above me. Got it.

On Sun, Jul 25, 2021 at 9:34 PM Mary Thorp <thorpdesign@gmail.com> wrote:

Nope, I'm done.

Mary Thorp

PO Box 352

Rock Cave, WV 26234

267.879.1192

On Jul 25, 2021, at 8:59 PM, Seth Sturm
<sethsturm@gmail.com> wrote:

"I'm not clear what lie you're referring to. Please let me know."

I'm talking about you trying to lie by telling me there wasn't a vote about whether to contact Belinda. I've

attached an audio file of you trying to use double speak to minimize your lie. You can't feign ignorance everytime you act unethically.

"There is nothing hidden about the demands, just what Belinda avoided which was expected. "

When I say that you are obfuscating the truth, I am talking about not only the lie that business wasn't conducted in any workshops, but also about you keeping information from us. "You will see what the public sees" isn't what we should be hearing.

Who wrote the demands? Who decided to send the list of demands? Was there another nonvote? I wouldn't know because you're hiding the truth.

Understand, these demands put us in an adversarial position within the Democratic Party. Tell me how that's good for helping the marginalized communities we represent. I get that women and seniors have a lot more representation than we do. Maybe it isn't as important to you.

"I'm actually inviting every co-chair to this opportunity made available to us. And as part of our accountability as co-chrs, am asking all to invite their caucuses"

I am aware that you have invited the rest of the co chairs. Your email to us was personalized. That email was condescending in its tone. I will send an email to Sandy and the rest, but we have decided not to strictly adhere to Robert's Rules. We're going to be more Indigenous, less European.

"I don't feel you even know me or have given me a chance so how could you make such an accusation about me"

You're completely unwilling to hear what I am saying. I don't need to know you personally to see that you and Selina are as insensitive to the needs of POC as the WVDP. Your actions are making it more difficult to work within the party to accomplish goals specific to our diversity caucus. I need to have a strong relationship with party leaders to make sure I have their ear on Indigenous issues. Understand that you are hurting us. You're not speaking for us. You're trying to speak through us.

"I trust that's why you're here, too. Fighting among ourselves will not allow for this result. I will

not fight with anyone."

Translation: I will not address your valid concerns about me or my actions as they will make me look bad. Civility is a tool of the oppressor. I know you know that. I will not stay silent when you have a proven history of lying. You lied at the WVDPEC meeting when you said that, I think, Bob had been voted on when he wasn't. You told me there was no vote on sending a letter. Address this issue. Address Selina going to national media calling the party racist. Tell me how that helps us.

"I don't know about Paula a Jean & others. That's her business."

As for PJS, it was our business that she cited as her reason for leaving. She went on the Jimmy Dore show and proclaimed the WVDP to be racist. The video has over 100k views. You and I both know she had to be in talks with the People's Party well before that meeting. She's doing what I accuse Selina of doing. She's using POC to wage a war on the establishment. We don't have the privilege of being so hostile. We have immediate needs.

"I appreciate your passion. I'm intending that it support all those you represent. You & Mari are the access for their voice. Let's get to work!"

I meant what I said when I called this committee a "farce". This statement alone seems to fit the "comic dramatic work using buffoonery" definition of the word.

Finally, I would love to have a conversation with you and Selina. I know Selina didn't have time to speak with me before I became a co chair. She certainly hasn't had time for me since. But we really need to hash this out privately. This is getting out of control. I can only promise honesty in any conversation we have.

I look forward to hearing back from you, and I hope to hear from Selina as well.

SS

On Sun, Jul 25, 2021 at 8:12 PM Mary Thorp
<thorpdesign@gmail.com> wrote:

Wow, Seth, I'm always taken back by the communications we receive from you. And also never know how to respond so usually don't. It's yukky for me to be on the receiving end of this & no, I really don't understand it.

I'm not clear what lie you're referring to. Please let me know.

RE:

"demands that the AAC didn't approve.
And you are obfuscating the details
surrounding it."

I had to look up "obfuscate":

render obscure, unclear, or unintelligible.

There is nothing hidden about the demands, just what Belinda avoided which was expected.

Re:

You should also consider that you're telling an indigenous person to learn how to be civil under Anglo Saxons tradition. Colonization continues. You haven't even tried to learn how to communicate with POC. This is a running theme. White blindness.

I'm actually inviting every co-chair to this opportunity made available to us. And as part of our accountability as co-chrs, am asking all to invite their caucuses.

I don't feel you even know me or have given me a chance so how could you make such an accusation about me. I am certainly the first to say I don't have answers but am also the first to come to the table to talk & listen.

I'd actually love for you & Mari to bring your traditional gifts to share with us. I participate in several areas where native customs & honoring the stolen land have added hugely to my life. One of my favorite people is Arkan Lushwala, a Peruvian ceremonial leader & Navajo by tradition. I spent a week with him in 2014 at Arawaka in New Mexico.

I'm not a fighter & never will be. I stand for creating a world that works for everyone with no one left out. Said another way by Buckminster Fuller, "...a you AND me world, not a you OR me world." That requires all of us coming to the table with respect & honoring from every person.

I don't know about Paula a Jean & others. That's her business.

I'm working with those of us who have come together to fulfill the mandate of the WV Dem Bylaws to diversify & include people formally not represented. I trust that's why you're here, too. Fighting among ourselves will not allow for this result. I will not fight with anyone.

I appreciate your passion. I'm intending that it support all those you represent. You & Mari are the access for their voice.

Let's get to work!

Mary

Mary Thorp
PO Box 352
Rock Cave, WV 26234
267.879.1192

On Jul 25, 2021, at 7:30 PM, Seth Sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com> wrote:

I may participate if I'm free. But no amount of parliamentary procedure will make your lying to me OK. You haven't apologized. You haven't acknowledged any wrongdoing. You all sent a list of demands that the AAC didn't approve. And you are obfuscating the details surrounding it. It's impossible to fulfill our mandate with leadership that won't answer emails, but will contact us encouraging us to be better. It's nothing short of condescension.

You should also consider that you're telling an indigenous person to learn how to be civil under Anglo Saxons tradition. Colonization continues. You haven't even tried to learn how to communicate with POC. This is a running theme. White blindness.

You know Paula Jean is out there saying the reason she left the Dem party was because of a "racist implosion" at the WVDPEC meeting. Let me be clear, I don't share the sentiment that the WVDP's actions were racist. They have done more than a lot of other states. Only one caucus of color would have been involved drafting any plan. It was essentially an argument over which group of white democrats was going to write this plan. And Selina was in the press calling it racist. Now, because of Selina's racist rhetoric, the People's Party is recruiting folks in WV.

Do you see my problem? Do you understand? If you'd like to have a conversation, I'm open to it. Otherwise, thanks for the link. I'll be sure to check it out.

SS

On Sun, Jul 25, 2021 at 6:59 PM Mary Thorp <thorpdesign@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Seth & Mari,

I just spent the weekend in a parliamentary summit with PDPR & keep discovering that knowing parliamentary procedure is what has gotten us this far & what will support us fulfilling our mandate as part of the AACCommittee.

A quick reminder, if you're available, to join us in developing our skills.

Mary

Dear AAC,

Several members have asked for training on Parliamentary Procedure. There is free training that you may be interested in. You can share this information with your caucus members, as well.

Dr. Charles Brichford is offering
FREE basic training on Parliamentary
Procedure on July 26th from 6:30 PM
to 8:30 PM.

Dr. Brichford served as the
parliamentarian for the 2016 WV
Democratic State Convention and
taught parliamentary procedure at
Concord University for many years.

Anyone interested in learning new
skills or brushing up on some old
skills is welcome.

This training will be held via Zoom:
[https://us02web.zoom.us/
meeting/register/
tZcocyrsz4oGNaaQuJgoUqJZZs9l3
bBb_CH](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9tZcocyrsz4oGNaaQuJgoUqJZZs9l3bBb_CH)

Mary Thorp
267-879-1192



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