

League of Women Voters of Thurston County
October 14, 2020: 1:30-3:30 pm, via Zoom
Board Meeting Minutes

Present: President Karen Tvedt, Carol Goss, Laurie Craig, Leslie Williamson, Patricia Harrigan, Peggy Smith, Julie Frick. Fran Beard, Tony Wilson, Nathaniel Jones, Shelley Kneip

Absent: Shari Silverman

Guests: Loretta Seppanen

Call to Order and Check-In: Karen called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm. Check in centered on Letters to the Editor of the Olympian that had been written by LWVTC member about Be A Voter.

Review of Agenda: The agenda, as emailed, was reviewed and no changes were requested.

Consent Agenda: The three items on the consent agenda were accepted.

- Board Minutes (9/9/2020), from Secretary Peggy Smith
- Financial Report (Sep 20, 2020), from Treasurer Leslie Williamson
- Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan Review Committee Report to Board (see Appendix 1), submitted by Sandra Herndon.

Committee/Activity Updates

Membership Committee – Carol reported that we currently have about 40 2019-2020 members who have not renewed. There is a desire to stay in touch with such lapsed members, at least by sending them the Voter.

Ad Hoc Finance Committee/Fundraising – Vice-President Julie Frick will be writing a Voter article to inform people that they will be able to provide an Education Fund Donation in lieu of our annual luncheon. There will be the ability to donate online or by mail. The other two fundraising initiatives will be presented to members later this year.

Julie reported that an application for a Nisqually Tribe Grant to support the Water Study has been submitted. Tony suggested that it would be good to pursue other grants.

Special Edition of Voter on Suffrage Celebrations – Sandra Herndon, after consultation with others, proposed that a special edition, between the November and December ones, be published. This would allow recognition of all the work done by Sue Lean and others. It would also serve to present information about and a wrap up of this significant time in League history. The theme of the December issue is still being developed. It was generally agreed that this special issue is a good idea.

Forum Technical Support – Karen noted that the Nov 10, 2020 Water Forum will be held via Zoom, using the LWVWA Zoom license, to be able to accommodate well over 100 people. Ralph Cumberland has been contacted about providing technical assistance for this forum. Karen also mentioned that we had received excellent support from TC Media for our Candidate Forums. She suggested that we acknowledge these cases of technical support with financial acknowledgement. The board agreed and decided upon \$100 for the Water Forum (to Ralph) and \$250 for the Candidate Forums (to TC Media).

Process for Activity Adoption: Karen introduced this item because as our membership has grown there has been interest in a wider range of activities than we have been able to entertain in the past. She invited a discussion of why we might want a process to designate something as an official LWVTC activity, as opposed to an individual, non-League-sponsored effort. And if we wanted such a process, what might it be.

A lively discussion followed. A primary consideration seemed to be the ability of the board to have an opportunity and relevant information to consider a variety of aspects of an activity. These would help decide whether to approve or commit resources to a proposed activity or cause. Several recent proposals (Voter Suppression, TCMP Review, and Thurston County Agricultural Review) that have been presented to the board seem to serve as helpful models. It was agreed that the board would continue to entertain proposals for approval.

Thurston County Agricultural Review: Loretta Seppanen presented a proposal to request that LWVTC officially follow a Thurston County study of agriculture in the county (see Appendix 2). She talked about County Staff desire to engage the whole community in looking at possible methods to protect agricultural land. They are setting up a steering committee, with the possibility of LWVTC being a member. This study is most likely going to take up to 18 months to complete and will give us an opportunity to see how it meshes with our current Growth Management and Land Use positions. Loretta is willing to take the lead for the LWVTC.

Peggy m/s/p that LWVTC create an ad hoc work group to provide input about the scope of the *Community Driven Review of Thurston County Agriculture Policies and Programs* and all aspects of the 18-month review.

Homelessness Issues: Although there was not sufficient time to do a follow-up from the 9/24 membership meeting, Peggy requested that a point person for this Program Issue be found as soon as possible. It was suggested that a “Help Wanted” item be put in the next Voter. There was also a suggestion that board members might want to listen to the KNKX Public Radio “Outsiders” podcast that focuses on homelessness in Olympia.

Meetings in November and December: Karen shared and asked for opinions about the September general membership meeting. She also asked for suggestions about how we might approach another general membership meeting in November or December, as well as the possibility of a virtual holiday party. A few people said that having more opportunity to interact and visit with others, and possibly less structure, would be good. There was general agreement that we would go for an early December meeting with a festive feel and meeting and greeting time. Karen, Julie, Shelley Kneip and Fran Beard agreed to help plan the December meeting.

Talking about Race: Carol reported that the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI)/Justice Committee is still in the formation stage. She had put an announcement about it in the September Voter. She and others have been contacting individuals and organizations about their interest, and they welcome suggestions about others to reach out to. Carol will be presenting a Purpose Statement to the Membership Committee when the meet next.

Peggy had distributed a reflection on race-related language and changes over time (Appendix 3). The take home message that one is always likely to say the wrong thing seemed to resonate with several members. Discomfort and awkwardness should be expected.

Karen and Peggy mentioned the likelihood of Peggy drafting a letter to Olympia City Council to commend the work they have been doing related to racial justice. The letter might also include a recommendation that they, or their representatives, review the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan from the perspective of the equity of proposals. A draft will be sent to board members for review prior to finalization.

Good of the Order: Fran asked about the status of the Immigration Forum. Karen noted it will likely build on the foundation of planning that had been done last winter. Shelley remembered that she and Shari Silverman will begin work on this after the first of the year.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:35 pm.

Submitted by Peggy Smith, Secretary

Board Approved 11/11/2020

Appendix 1

Climate Mitigation Review Committee Report to the LWV Board, September 21, 2020

Members: Peggy Smith, Jody Disney, Katherine Ransom, Joel Carlson, Annie Cubberly, Karen Tvedt, and Sandra Herndon

The Committee met via Zoom on Friday, September 18, to review and complete its official tasks.

- 1) The major tasks of getting broad adoption of a position in favor of the draft Thurston Climate Mitigation plan has been accomplished (Sept. 9, 2020).
- 2) This position will be shared with the four jurisdictions (Thurston County and the three cities of Olympia, Tumwater, and Lacey), other interested groups, and the LWVTC membership as appropriate.
- 3) Members of the Committee will be taking steps to inform members of ways they can participate in efforts related to climate mitigation in Thurston County.
- 4) League members are encouraged to go to <https://www.trpc.org/civicalerts.aspx?AID=52> to view the draft plan, check out the Open House, and/or register for a community meeting.
- 5) Everyone is encouraged to check the website for updates, by clicking below Our Work, Local Advocacy, then on Climate Mitigation in Thurston County.
- 6) Individuals agreed to take specific actions as follows:
 - a. Karen agreed to send an eblast to members (Sandra and Peggy will provide draft ideas) to encourage individual actions.
 - b. Jody agreed to get this on the agenda for CWTL immediately also to encourage individual actions.
 - c. Peggy will communicate with TCAT.
 - d. Annie will update Sierra Club, encouraging collaboration with LWVTC members.
 - e. Press release—TBD.
 - f. Letters to editor—TBD.
 - g. Testifying at public meetings—TBD, as appropriate.

Submitted by Sandra Herndon

Appendix 2

Proposal: Create an Ad Hoc Committee to Represent the LWVTC in the Community Driven Review of Thurston County Agriculture Policies and Programs – October 14, 2020

Relevant LWVTC Positions: Our local positions that relate to Urban Growth Management speak to concentrating "urban development within the planned urban area" and "Programs should encourage protection of agricultural, aqua cultural, and environmentally sensitive areas and should address citizen needs for open space and recreation."

Summary of 18-Month Review: Loretta Seppanen provided the following information based on her conversation with Thurston Community Planning Manager, Jennifer Davis. Jennifer stressed to Loretta that county staff want this to be a community-driven process with significant community engagement.

In August 2019, based on discussions at the Thurston County Planning Commission (PC) and many community comments related to concerns about agriculture, the PC requested that the 2020-21 Comprehensive Plan Docket include a review of agricultural lands, including policies, prime farmland soils, and conservation programs such as transfer and purchase of development rights to ensure support for agriculture. The project is called Community Driven Review of Ag Policies and Programs (CDRAgP&P).

In spring of 2020, the PC request was approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

The Project started on September 17th at a Thurston Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting. The Ag Advisory Committee heard a presentation of a study by the American Farmland Trust, *Farm Under Threat: State of the States*. This study provides newly mapped county level information about agricultural lands. The Ag Advisory Committee also gave county planning staff input on parties to involve in the Project.

This fall, county staff will work with the Ag Advisory Committee, various stakeholders, and the broader community to "scope" the project. Steps will include:

- Looking for a limited set of policies, regulatory, and incentive-based programs to better serve agriculture.
- Considering the possibility of building a matrix of potential actions and doing a community survey/outreach to get feedback on these actions.
- Presenting the highest priority items to the Planning Commission.
- Amending the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the highest priority items.
- Submitting the Comprehensive Plan amendments to the Board of County Commissioner after Planning Commission action.

Proposal: Creation of a LWVTC ad hoc work group to provide input about the scope of the *Community Driven Review of Thurston County Agriculture Policies and Programs* and all aspects of the 18-month review.

Lead: Loretta Seppanen, 360.786.9775, Laurel.Lodge@Comcast.net.

Appendix 3

DEI Language Written by R Peggy Smith, October 12, 2020

Having a common language helps in any conversation. As steps are taken to increase the diversity of an organizations, it often becomes clear that terminology and word usage can cause misunderstandings. What may have been common usage at one time may be problematic for some today.

To get a feeling for this evolution of terminology, I reviewed several books from my library to see how persons who were transported from Africa to "the new world" were referred to over time.

Frederick Douglas wrote during the 1840s and 1850s. He was well educated and was a well-known author and orator. As indicated in the following quotes, he used language of that time. "Everybody has asked the question, and they learned to ask it early of the abolitionists, 'What shall we do with the Negro?' I have had but one answer from the beginning. Do nothing with us! Your doing with us has already played the mischief with us." "The white man's happiness cannot be purchased by the black man's misery." He often talked about slaves, as a major focus of much of his work.

A Bondwoman's Narrative, is a novel by Hanna Crafts, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. It is believed the novel was written in the 1850s. Hanna Crafts, while writing her narrative, tended to be descriptive, mentioning a person's physical characteristics and moral value. Her primary reference was to whether a person was a slave or not a slave. She did describe herself as an "illiterate slave girl to keeper of 'a school for colored children.'

In a literary publication in 1948, this work is described as "A fictionalized biography written in an effusive style, purportedly to be the story of the early life and escape of one Hanna Crafts, a mulatto, born in Virginia, who lived there, in Washington, D.C., and Wilmington, North Carolina. From internal evidence it is apparent that the work is that of a Negro who had a narrative gift. Interesting for its content and implications. Believed to be unpublished."

Moving ahead a century, the works of James Baldwin provide materials reflective of the mid-20th century. Baldwin refer to white people and black people when describing individuals. But he uses the term Negro when talking about people in the context of their group identity.

As mentioned earlier, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. was the editor Hanna Crafts novel, which was published in 2002. Throughout the notes Gates wrote in the editor's introduction, he consistently used the word black to refer to persons of color, be they writers, historical figures, or characters in stories. He did, however, refer to Hanna Crafts as the first female African-American novelist.

Another book written around 2002, Return to Glory, by Alan Grant, is like Gates', in that black is used in reference to a person's color, and African-American has a broader group connotation.

Between the World and Me, by Ta-Nehisi Coates, published in 2015, brings us closer to present day. Coates' work has many parallels to James Baldwin's, you will not find him using the word Negro. Typically, Coates uses the term black. He uses it to describe a person's color, their family or group connection, and larger concepts of population. He also uses the term African American, but often with an implicit connection to slavery's impact.

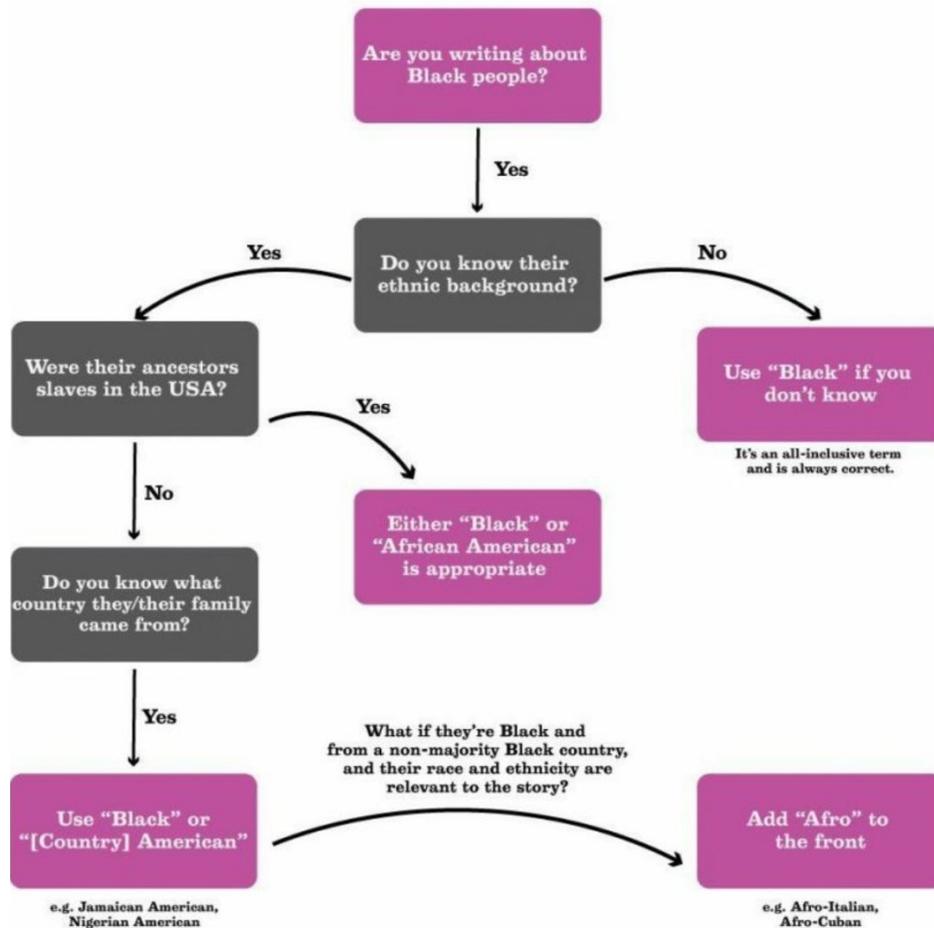
Now, here we are. I recently became aware of the use of the word Black as a replacement for black. This would be a way to indicate there is a cultural cohesion related to family, group, or larger population being referenced. And here is something I came across just today, as a League guide to forum questions -- wish it had a date, but you will see the word Black. The take home message from this blog is: "Be prepared to be wrong."

Should you use Black or African American?

A guide for journalists

Created by Erin B. Logan

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