

Baseline census referendum leaves question unanswered

by Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

This month the 1980 Baseline Census referendum made at least two things clear: Voter turnout itself is key for tribal referendums; and the automatic enrollment question remains a pending question before the tribes.

There are three kinds of tribal questions the membership is called upon to decide: The Tribal Council elections, referendums conducted by the Confederated Tribes, and referendums held by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Tribal Council elections and BIA referendums have no minimum voter participation requirement, while a one-third turnout is required for a valid tribal referendum.

Were the one-third requirement to apply, the popular Council elections would no doubt exceed the minimum. The same could probably be said of the rare

BIA referendums—such as the one a few years ago suggesting major changes to the tribal Constitution and By-Laws.

On the other hand, more often than not, tribal referendums usually fail for lack of one-third voter participation. In recent years the cannabis referendum of late 2015 is the exception, generating well over the one-third minimum.

More common are the last two adoption elections, the ill-fated Nascar racetrack referendum, and the recent vote on the 1980 Baseline Census: Fewer than one-third of eligible voters cast a ballot. A real question—one that is hard to quantify—is how many members do not vote as a way of saying ‘No.’

This month the 1980 Baseline Census referendum is a great example: Of those who cast a ballot the large majority were in favor: Overall numbers were 537 in favor, and 180 against.

The Baseline question, and therefore the standard for automatic enrollment, are fundamental matters for the tribes, establishing who qualifies for membership.

The 717 total ballots were quite a bit short of the 1,555 votes needed to meet the one-third of the eligible.

Tribal Council last week approved the results, as presented by the tribal Election and the Counting boards. This led to discussion of the future of the 1980 Baseline Census question.

The overwhelming majority of those who voted were in favor of the proposal, said Kahseuss Jackson, Councilman on the previous Tribal Council. The Twenty-Sixth Tribal Council, Mr. Jackson said,

approved the 1980 Baseline Census adjustment.

Previous Councils had taken similar actions, he said: Tribal Council in 1975 established the 1940 tribal census as the baseline; and Council in 2008 adjusted the Baseline Census to 1960.

In 2016 the Twenty-Sixth Tribal Council by resolution 12,157 adjusted the Census Baseline to 1980. A short time later, three Council members called for a referendum on the question, as provided in the tribal Constitution.

Councilwoman Carina Miller said the Tribal Council should review the procedure by which resolution 12,157 was put to referendum.

Council Chairman Austin Greene Jr. said he would like a full quorum for this discussion. Election of the Twenty-Eighth is imminent, Chairman Greene said; and a full quorum of the Twenty-Seventh Council

should be present for discussion of any action of such significance.

The Baseline question, and therefore the standard for automatic enrollment, are fundamental matters for the tribes, establishing who qualifies for membership. The matter, of some controversy, can be summarized:

The 1938 constitution states that a person could be automatically enrolled in the Confederated Tribes if the person had one-quarter Indian blood.

The tribes in 1966 amended this provision to say that a person could be automatically enrolled if the person had one-quarter blood of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

By resolution in 1975 the Tribal Council established the baseline for determining blood quantum. The baseline was the 1940 tribal census.

This meant that the quantum of Indian blood, regard-

less of tribal ancestry, of a person on the 1940 census is considered Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs blood.

A descendant of a person whose name is on the census can then count all of that ancestor's Indian blood as Confederated Tribes blood, for purposes of determining automatic enrollment of the descendant.

By resolution in 2008 Tribal Council updated the baseline to the 1960 census, with the same effect: The quantum of Indian blood of a person on the 1960 census is considered Confederated Tribes blood. And descendants look to that to determine their own quantum of Confederated Tribes blood.

On April 25, 2016 the Twenty-Sixth Tribal Council by resolution again voted to update the baseline, to the 1980 census. Four days later this resolution was subject to a referendum challenge by three Council members.

Miss Warm Springs ~ My Reign in Review

By Thyreicia
Simtustus

My Indian name is Mystun-peyo-yayaahn. That translates to ‘Eagle Plume Woman’ in my maternal grandmother's tribal language.

I'm an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, where Warm Springs and Wasco make up my bloodlines.

I'm a direct descendant of Chief Tommy Thompson of the Wy-ampum at Celilo. My mother is Joie Simtustus. Her mother is Marcia Simtustus, who is from atwai Amos and Dorothy (Thompson) Simtustus. My father is atwai Daniel Chavez. His mother is Earlyne Squiemphen, who is from atwai Earl and Rita (Smith) Squiemphen.

I'm 20 years old, a second year student at Central Oregon Community College, where I'm majoring in Aviation. I plan on becoming a pilot for a major airline.

Swimming and ranching life activities are my passions, when I'm not working full time or attending college classes full time.

Travels

Here are some of the things I've done as Miss Warm Springs over the past year and few months, many of them on horseback:

January 2018

January 31: Miss Warm Springs Pageant.

February

Jefferson County Rodeo Court Coronation.

Lincoln's Powwow Round Dance at Simnasho, and the Lincoln's Powwow.

Tribal Government Legislative Day in Salem.

LaPine Rodeo Queen Coronation.

Eagle Watch at Round Butte Overlook Park near Culver.

March

Revisiting the Ghosts of



Miss Warm Springs 2018 Reicie Simtustus, with family Joie Simtustus and Lovie Colwash, address Tribal Council.

Celilo at the Columbia Gorge Museum in The Dalles.

Museum at Warm Springs Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Powwow.

Plateau Travel Plaza soft opening.

April

Travel Plaza Grand Opening.

Museum at Warm Springs Honor Dinner in Portland.

Lil' Miss Warm Springs Pageant.

Veterans Parade and Expo in Warm Springs.

May

Honor Seniors Day.

Miss Warm Springs Coronation and Fundraising Banquet.

June

Rose Festival Grand Floral Parade in Portland (on horseback, winning second place).

Delta Park Powwow in Portland.

Horse Parade at the Museum at Warm Springs.

Pi-Ume-Sha Powwow and Parade.

Crooked River Round Up Parade and Rodeo Grand Entry, accompanying the Grand Marshal, in Prineville.

Oregon Rescue Horse Challenge demonstration at Powell Butte.

July

Hot Summer Nights in

Simnasho.

Fourth of July Parade in Warm Springs.

Wildhorse Casino Powwow at Pendleton.

Jefferson County Fair and Rodeo.

August

Burns Northern Paiute Powwow.

Crow Fair Centennial Celebration, Crow Agency, Montana.

Airshow of the Cascades in Madras.

Kah-Nee-Ta Farewell Parade and last salmon bake.

September

Pendleton Round Up Dress Parade (second place).

Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians fall conference at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Ski Bowl Tribal Member Appreciation Day at Mount Hood.

Warm Springs Public Safety Community Barbecue.

October

Middle Oregon Treaty of 1855 display opening reception at the Museum at Warm Springs.

Oregon Historical Society photo shoot at Sidwalter.

Adam Beach meet and great at the Warm Springs Academy.

Bend Film Festival, meeting Native filmmakers.

Treaty of 1855 Confer-



Thyreicia with photos taken at some of the events she attended during her year plus as Miss Warm Springs. She shared these with the Tribal Council.

ence at the Museum at Warm Springs.

November

Veterans Day Parade.

Veterans Appreciation Dinner at Simnasho.

Native American Heritage Night at Central Oregon Community College in Bend.

Thanksgiving Powwow in Warm Springs.

December

Car Light Parade, Warm Springs Christmas Parade.

NDN Night Out.

New Year's Powwow.

January 2019

New Year's Powwow at Simnasho.

Deschutes County Rodeo Queen Coronation, Redmond.

Jefferson County Queen Coronation.

February

Lincoln's Powwow.

Simnasho Elders Lunch.

Isaiah Florendo and Siddalee Spino-Suppah Honor Dinner.

Tribal Government Legislative Day at Salem.

March

Miss Northwest Pro Rodeo Association Queen Coronation Bend.

Spilyay note: For nearly all of these events Thyreicia and family paid the travel expenses out of pocket.

They held fundraisers, such as the Coronation Dinner, and wish to thank all

those who have supported them, financially and otherwise.

Thyreicia, with her mother Joie Simtustus and aunt Lovie Colwash, met with Tribal Council on Monday, for a final review before the 2019 Miss Warm Springs Pageant.

Following the review, Tribal Council from their budget donated to the Farewell Dinner for Reicie, coming up at the Pageant this Wednesday evening, March 27 at the Agency Longhouse.

“It's been great seeing you at the events over the past year and couple of months,” said Tribal Council Chairman Austin Greene Jr.

“We're all very proud of you for how you're represented the tribes.”

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