Make Juneteenth a national legal holiday

Ann Vandeman

It is time to make Juneteenth a national holiday to celebrate the abolition of slavery in the United States. June 19, 1865 was the day General Granger ordered slaves into Galveston, Texas, and announced that enslaved people were now free. He read General Order #3 which states “The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and duties of property between former masters and slaves.”

It’s a Washington holiday already

Washington State has recognized Juneteenth as a day of remembrance since 2007. Last year a bill was introduced to make it a legal holiday in Washington, with the same level of observance as Presidents Day, Memorial Day and Independence Day. It didn’t make it to a vote, but it can’t end there.

The fight to end slavery and the fight for independence

The Civil War victory over slavery and for freedom and liberty as is fundamental to American identity and values as the struggle for American independence. A Juneteenth legal holiday would recognize that all those who fought to end slavery - soldiers, abolitionists, underground railroad conductors, and the slaves who joined the Union army and those who remained free to themselves. Theirs was a cause in common with the freedom fighters of the American revolutionary war. We as Americans need finally to say out loud that the Civil War is over. We need to acknowledge the bravery, sacrifice and dedication of those freedom fighters who brought us, through the abolition of slavery, one step closer to becoming a free people, with liberty and justice for all.

Fulfillment of the American promise

The current uprising led by Black Lives Matter is another step on the road to freedom and justice too for African Americans. Their long-denied for African American people; their movement is revealing the extent to which police from the greatest violence and imprisonment are integrated to the system of oppression and exploitation designed to prevent the fulfillment of the American promise. It is also bringing into sharp relief the need to seek and accept leader- ship from the Black community and this movement. Because they know what it means to be deprived of their individual liberty, and they know how to conduct this struggle.

We could not have become the beacon of freed- dom and democracy we have been in the world without the victory over slavery represented by Juneteenth. A legal holiday would be a powerful declaration of this fact. Slavery is a stain on our history, this is our opportunity to turn an anniversary of its end into a celebration across the land.

Ann Vandeman is an Olympia,晋州前国, sprinkles, alcoholic for equal rights and uncompromising equal rights for all.

Juneteenth 2020

You died under the knee.

Of white revenge warlords enforcing imaginary utopian hopes of a new day.

The reality of racial capitalism.

Carrot on a stick, the

White capitalist lure.

Consuming black.

And while working masses.

Selling the false narrative.

Commodifying black and brown

Dreams in endless slogans.

Promising utopia in unfulfilled.

Across the human spectrum.

But at the last minute,

Giving up the black.

The old switcheroo.

Siren songs sung by elites

That promise equality and justice for all.

That recording’s old saw gesture.

Round and round on the

Genre’s gritty turntable.

Candy and an ancient white fear

Black revenge with tall tales,

Including your liberal

Sanctimonious ideas.

Promoting calm and strategic.

Rage forward with unsettling fact,

Rebellion, negotiation,

Of white institutional racist capitalism’s Fall.

From page 7

And by any means necessary.

M Bean

June 2020

Law & order

From page 7

other cops because they are the only ones who are treated that special manner unique to cops. Even cops’ lives only hang out with other cops. One cop who had a girl- friend who had previously dated a cop, and she said that the cops’ lives only subjected her to a variety of liminal tests to make sure she was worthy of the badge. It could also be good to keep their humanity in mind as we do so.

Dan Walker is the producer of a weekly podcast, Learning and a lifelong Olympia resident.

A timeline history of Juneteenth

Cita Cook

April 16, 1862: Congress outlawed slavery in the District of Columbia and the Western Territories, paying money to people who considered themselves enslaved for the loss of their “property.” President Lincoln recommended that newly freed people emigrate to Haiti or Liberia, since he believed that both “races” suffered when they lived together.

January 1, 1863: President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation made the freeing of slaves a goal of the Civil War by declaring them emancipated in areas not controlled by the US government (meaning 40% of areas controlled by Confederate troops). Most enslaved people liberated through the proclamation at some point during the rest of the war considered the Union soldiers who freed Union troops made it relatively safe for them to do so.

Many began celebrating the day of Emancipation as the birthday of the emancipated. June 19, 1865 (Juneteenth): The announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation.

December 6, 1865: The Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution was ratified, making slavery and “involuntary servitude” (“except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly con- victed”) unconstitutional. In other words, except for a punishment of a crime, a lifetime of slavery as a “slave” could still be enslaved.


Beverly Farns, Honorary Chair, and Carolina Mejia along with Deborah Souz Cano Lee and Noel Parrish circled the bridge with cleaning smoke, drumming for peace and justice. Brenda Warriner carried the Juneteenth flag. Photo by Dave Harris.

June 19, 2015: 150 years after enslavement. Dan’s Juneteenth was officially emancipated. President Barack Obama observed what he called “a symbolic milestone on our journey to a more perfect union,” adding that “just as the slaves of Galveston knew that emancipation is only the first step toward true freedom, . . . our work remains undone . . . Juneteenth has never been a celebration of victory. Instead, it’s a celebration of progress. No matter where we come from or who we love, today is a day to find joy in the face of sorrow, to count our blessings and hold the ones we love a little closer. And tomorrow is a day to keep marching.”

June 19, 2019: 46 states plus the District of Columbia, have declared Juneteenth to be a holiday. Washington state is one of these today.

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Juneteenth: Celebrating 150 years of Emancipation.

A bill proposed by Texas State Representative Al Edwards became a law, making Juneteenth a state holiday and creating a fund to support Juneteenth celebrations.

Law & order

From page 7

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