

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR/TRIBAL PROGRAM NEWS

To the editor:

This is to let the people of Siletz know that Kenneth J. Fielder is now the father of a new baby girl named Luna E. Fassett. The mother is Janie E. Fassett, who is from that area. At this time, I must state that the mother has gone with another person, a former best friend of mine. However, through the powers of our Lord above and the spirits in us, I know that things will be better. Luna was born on March 3, 2000, at Memorial Hospital in Modesto, Calif. (Stanislaus County), at approximately 4 p.m. I am in process of obtaining more information. Thank you for your time. Also, let us join our strengths for Luna so that she may have a full life, with all.

Sincerely,
Kenneth J. Fielder

To the editor:

Tribal Council has proposed constitutional changes designed to limit Tribal Court's current authority. The events of the past few years have shown why we need an independent, functioning Court. The proposed changes limit our access to Court and the Court's ability to be impartial. It is in all our best interests to vote **no** to the changes.

The Tribal Court is empowered to exercise all judicial authority of the government, Siletz Tribal Constitution, Article IV, sec. 2. This is how our Constitution reads now. It's broad and inclusive.

The changes reduce Tribal Court's jurisdiction only to violations of the Tribal Constitution and the Indian Civil Rights Act. It would be extremely difficult to bring any actions against Council or administration. Our Court would not be a broadly sovereign Court.

Our current Constitution delegates the authority to the chief judge to develop the rules for Tribal Court. Tribal Council can only do so if Tribal Court fails to do so. What is proposed is Tribal Court can develop rules, but they'd be "subject to Tribal Council approval." This means Tribal Council has control over Tribal Court. If Tribal Court makes a rule Council doesn't like, Council can overturn it. Currently, Court has the authority to overturn Council. The change would give Council the ability to make Court rules in Council's favor.

Also, the changes say, "The Tribal Court shall consist of the chief judge and such other judges and staff positions as the Tribal Council 'may' establish..."

Currently it reads, "The Tribal Council 'shall' set forth qualifications for Tribal Court chief judge, associate judges, and staff

Young Woman Preserves Tribal History

At the age of 20, Sara Bell has already been representing the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians for more than a decade as Little Miss Siletz, Junior Miss Siletz, and, currently, Miss Siletz.

The title requires Bell to travel throughout the year as the Siletz representative.

"As Miss Siletz, I am asked to go to pow-wows and conferences to represent our tribe," explained Bell, a native of Siletz who now resides in Lincoln City.

The custom of the Miss Siletz pageant, said Bell, began more than 50 years ago and has been a source of pride for her family.

"I remember being 4 years old and my cousin was Little Miss Siletz," she said. "So I guess it's part of my family history."

Before competing for the Miss Siletz title, Bell was required to exhibit her knowledge of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians and of her own family's history.

In addition, Bell was asked to dance the plain style of dance that is usually seen during pow-wows.

"This includes the feather dance, the tradition tribal dance, and we have to be knowledgeable about our (tribe's) own style of dance," explained Bell. "I've been dancing

positions by ordinance." There is a big difference between the word "may" and "shall." The Constitution requires Council to set forth qualifications and **provide a court**. The proposed one doesn't. Council could control Tribal Court by not writing an ordinance.

Currently, the chief judge or associate judge can be suspended or dismissed, but only for cause, with due notice and a hearing open to "tribal members." The changes drop the "open to tribal members" and allow Council to try judges behind closed doors.

These seem like minor changes but aren't. It's dangerous to give a governing body this much power. The Separation of Powers Doctrine was designed to stop this interference.

Council has historically hampered Court by not funding it adequately and treating it as a tribal program rather than a branch of government. Tribal Court receives funding from the 638 dollars, but never received monies from timber dollars. Council has cried lack of funding as the issue, but forgot to mention that they use all the timber dollars for their budget!

Ray Blacketer



Sara Bell (r) greets other participants during a dance at the Nesika Illahee Pow-Wow last August.

since I was little, so it was something that I already knew."

When Bell is representing her tribe as Miss Siletz, she dresses in regalia made by her mother, Karen Bell – which includes a buckskin dress with long, buckskin fringe, a breastplate and a crown atop her head.

Bell urges younger girls to think about becoming Little Miss Siletz, Junior Miss Siletz or Miss Siletz.

"It's a really great experience and it's a lot of fun," said Bell. "I've learned about public speaking and about my own background, so I would encourage others to do it. It's a great opportunity."

This article was written by Kelly Moyer-Wade and is reprinted with permission from the Newport News-Times.

USDA Distribution

Siletz

Monday, May 8	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Tuesday, May 9	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Wednesday, May 10	10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Thursday, May 11	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Salem

Monday, May 22	3 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Tuesday, May 23	9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Wednesday, May 24	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

