

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

The hot topic of the Aug. 5 General Council meeting was the wrongful spending by the Tribal Council from Chinook Winds Casino revenue. The Tribal Council will not admit any wrongdoing. Instead, Tribal Council chooses to risk the closure of the casino.

If they had simply admitted a mistake and cooperated with the National Indian Gaming Commission, the notice of violations and huge fines would not have happened. The individual charges against Tribal Council members are for personal use of net revenues of the casino.

As of Aug. 4, 2000, the Tribe is being fined up to \$25,000 per violation per day. For tribal members who are concerned about the harmful impact on the tribe's reputation and tribal members, the response of Delores Pigsley during the General Council meeting was "If you can enroll in another tribe, do so." So her contemptuous advice is if you don't like it, get out!

The Tribal Council has blamed former Tribal Council Chairman Pat Duncan for "turning" them in. This is a blatant, libelous lie and a very foolish approach to a threatening matter that affects all tribal members and the future of the tribe.

Tribal Council is complaining that NIGC is violating our tribal sovereignty. They are the ones who violated our tribal sovereignty when they signed the last gaming compact to give the state of Oregon everything they wanted! Not only that, but Bonnie Petersen told of how they sought the IRS to "approve" Tribal Council "fringe benefits."

Remember that so-called "election" we just had – to vote on Tribal Council "fringe benefits"? The tribal members overwhelmingly voted **no**! The final tally was 128 for and 427 against. Bonnie Petersen is not happy with this outcome; she said we'll have to vote again! I guess next time the ballot box will have to be stuffed! When she claims that the IRS has approved their 401k retirement fund, she violates the Tribal Constitution, tribal sovereignty, and Tribal Council code of ethics.

The Tribal Constitution requires a General Council vote on the wages of Tribal Council. If Tribal Council wants "fringe benefits," they need the vote of the General Council, **not** the IRS. By involving the IRS in tribal government to veto the General Council elective decision, they have thrown away that part of tribal sovereignty.

To the editor:

In May 1998, at Tribal Council direction, the Ad-Hoc Constitution Committee recommended three constitutional amendments for a General Council vote. Those proposed amendments were: 1) fill a vacancy on Tribal Council with the runner-up; 2) General Council authority to vote on tribal budgets; and 3) move elections to May.

At the last General Council meeting, a question was asked, "What happened to those Ad-Hoc Constitution Committee recommendations?" The answer was, "We referred the amendments to the bureau" – thereby Delores Pigsley confused the amendments we'll be voting on.

In fact, Tribal Council ignored the recommendations of the Constitution Committee and submitted amendments to strip the membership of their rights. Except to move elections to May, the amendments proposed by Tribal Council take away constitutional rights of tribal members, especially the right to elect Tribal Council along with rights to individual due process and equal protection of the laws.

Since July 1999, the constitutional amendments drafted by Tribal Council have received barely any mention in the numerous tribal publications or subsequent General Council meetings. In November 1999, the amendments were forwarded to the secretary of the Interior to conduct the constitutional election.

In March 2000, Craig Dorsay and Delores Pigsley published the proposed amendments for the first time, along with misleading and untruthful explanations, such as stating the Council chairman has "veto authority" and the quorum reduction was for the business of "the tribe" to continue during crisis on Tribal Council. There is no "veto authority" and the General Council is the proper branch of government to continue as "the tribe" during crisis. Additionally, the Tribal Council as the head of Tribal Court strips the constitutional separation of powers and that element of tribal sovereignty.

The Department of the Interior commented on the proposed amendments, pointing out problems such as "seating" Tribal Council members would strip the General Council of its electoral powers. Plus, the Tribal Court rules and procedures would no longer be required to comply with Siletz constitutional and federal laws.

Craig Dorsay's part in this is unmistakable, through his contempt for tribal members as evidenced by his statement, "There is a need to clean up the court rules to include non-tribal members as associate judges" (Tribal Council meeting in September 1998). If these amendments pass, the Siletz Tribe becomes an official dictatorship with no recourse for individuals.

Tribal Council replied to the Department of the Interior, directed the election to proceed, and have kept that reply secret from tribal members. By proposing these amendments, Tribal Council has violated the constitutional tribal purpose to "protect" individual rights. Do not give up your rights! **Please vote "no" on the constitutional amendments!**

Cynthia Viles

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Sovereignty does not exist without members. Without honest elections, there is no membership. It is all fake and trickery. By Tribal Council enriching itself against the authority of the General Council, they have violated the tribal code of ethics. By making these statements, Bonnie Petersen has revealed herself to be a self-serving, dishonest Tribal Council member!

Lori A. Johnson

