

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

Apparently a constitutional election to be conducted by the Department of Interior is still pending. Currently, the Siletz Constitution has several requirements that protect individuals from the excesses of government. The following constitutional provisions will be taken away from all of us if the amendments proposed by the Tribal Council are passed:

1. "Five members of the Tribal Council shall constitute a quorum." This provision is the guarantee for an elected representative form of government – a democratic process. It will be taken away from us, however, if the proposed amendments pass.

2. Currently, when dismissing or suspending a Tribal Court judge, the Tribal Council must provide an opportunity for a hearing "open to tribal members." If the proposed amendments are approved, this requirement for "open" hearings will be taken away from us.

3. Tribal Court rules and procedures are currently required to be "consistent with the provisions of this [Siletz] Constitution and requirements of federal law." This will be taken away from us if the proposed amendments are passed and we could then say goodbye to the legal requirements of due process and equal protection of the laws.

And worse, the proposed amendments have placed the rules and procedures for Tribal Court to only be "subject to Tribal Council approval." If these amendments are approved with the Tribal Council as the head of the Tribal Court, then we will lose separation of powers as a check and balance against corruption.

The Constitution is our document for sovereignty and certain provisions must be present for our tribe to survive legal challenges. The proposed amendments will remove those important provisions. Provisions of representative government, separation of powers, due process, equal protection, and guaranteed individual rights are all subject to disappear if these proposed amendments pass.

Please vote No! No! No! And No! on the proposed constitutional amendments.

Sincerely,  
Cynthia Viles

To the editor:

I have been reading the tribal newspaper for months now and it seems to me that there are a few tribal members who are not happy. I ask myself why, and I have come to the conclusion that they need to get more involved in finding the answers to their concerns before they make spiteful remarks in our tribal newspaper. If they would make the effort to go to Tribal Council meetings, which are open to all tribal members, maybe they wouldn't have to get so upset guessing or coming to their own conclusions on what **is happening** with the tribe.

My mother, Jane John, is a Tribal Council member and has been for at least 11 years. She is one of the original Council members who was on the Ad-Hoc Gaming Commission and has worked hard to help get our casino where it is today.

I am very proud of all of her accomplishments and what she has helped the tribe achieve. So when I read all of these articles **from our own** tribal members slurring Tribal Council, it makes me wonder: Do they really know what they're talking about? I know my mother; she is one of the most honest people that I know, and she would never do any of the things that Tribal Council is accused of!

I just want to also say that I was Tribal Council secretary for two years ('91 & '92) and have been associated with Tribal Council members since my mother, Jane, has been on Council. I know that everyone who is on Tribal Council now are all honest, hard-working tribal members who are working to make our tribe **better for everyone**. I hope that our tribe can learn to work together instead of fighting everything that we want to accomplish, for our elders (who brought our tribe back), and all tribal members' future.

Thanks for taking the time to read this, and let's support each other and work together! We all have the same goals!

Glendora (John) Osborn

To the editor:

I am not surprised by the new policy for letters to the editor. In anticipation of this policy, I have been developing a Web site to inform tribal members of issues. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can reach me c/o PO Box 16238, Portland, OR 97292-0238. I have documents to support all the statements I have made previously.

Nonetheless, I have a number of questions for tribal members to consider:

- ⊙ The Tribal Council earns \$9.54 an hour. How then was more than \$2 million spent by Tribal Council in 1999? I propose that the Tribal Council provide an up-to-date expenditures report (including wages, travel, etc. – all "work-related expenses") per Tribal Council member at each General Council meeting and upon tribal member request.
- ⊙ Our tribe and our casino are both listed as contributing to a recent NIGA conference. How much was contributed and out of what funds? What is the total contribution per year to NIGA and out of what funds?
- ⊙ Exactly how much money was received for our health program and how was it spent?
- ⊙ Why weren't our net revenues used to supplement the shortfalls in the areas of immediate need (health care, education, Housing Improvement Program, etc.)? After all, our casino is supposed to benefit all tribal members, especially those in need.
- ⊙ How much is it costing our tribe (in essence, tribal members) in attorney's fees to fight the National Indian Gaming Commission? And, how do you appeal something that is "proposed" rather than a decision?
- ⊙ Isn't it a direct violation of the Ethics Code for Council members to continue benefiting from the 401(k) retirement, a definite fringe benefit, in light of the recent vote of the membership?

These questions should not even have to be asked. Tribal Council members have the responsibility to meet the basic needs of the membership or inform us of the truth as to why they cannot (or will not). The needs of the many should outweigh the wants of the few.

I propose that the Tribal Council enact a policy of full disclosure to the membership, starting with immediate full disclosure of our tribe's and our casino's finances. Perhaps then there would be no need for a policy to "edit" letters to the editor.

Sincerely,  
Pat Duncan