

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Tribal Council Members, Officers Elected

On Feb. 3, the Siletz Tribe held its annual general election that resulted in the election of two incumbents, Dolly Fisher and myself, and a former Council member, Lillie Butler.

For those not familiar with our political system, our Constitution provides for a Tribal Council of nine members, three elected each year on a staggered-term basis that helps lend continuity and stability to our tribal government.

On Monday following the general election, the Council elected its officers. I appreciate the confidence the Council placed in me by electing me once again as chairman, a position that I know carries with it awesome responsibilities and challenges. I would like you to join me in congratulating the election of Jessie Davis as vice chairman, Dolly Fisher as secretary, and Jane John as treasurer.

On behalf of these newly elected officers and other Council members, I assure you that we will do our utmost in conscientiously carrying out our tribal leadership responsibilities and challenges.

NIGA Summit

An essential part of our responsibilities is being involved in national Indian issues and attending meetings of national Indian organizations. The Siletz Tribe does not, after all, live in a vacuum. We are directly affected by what happens in the U.S. Congress and by the current administration, and we must do our part in affecting national Indian policies and programs.

During the week of Jan. 15, four Council members, including myself, were in Washington, D.C., to attend the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) annual summit and make other important contacts. More than 300 tribal leaders from across the country attended the summit.

National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC) Chairman Montie Deer addressed the summit on the issue of adopting Minimum Internal Control Standards, which are intended to provide uniform regulatory standards for Indian gaming nationwide. Commissioner Elizabeth Homer addressed the commission's proposed Environment, Public Health, and Safety Regulations.

A major topic of discussion was how NIGA and the tribes should deal with these controversial NIGC initiatives. The tribes believe that the proposals go beyond the authority and intent of the Indian Gaming Regulatory



Chairman Delores Pigsley

Act (IGRA). Various work groups have laid the groundwork on which concrete plans will be formulated.

Bipartisan Congressional Activities

The summit brought out the fact that through bipartisan congressional effort and tribal involvement, some important legislation was passed in the 106th Congress that helps strengthen tribal self-determination. These include re-authorizing the Indian Tribal Justice Act through 2007, enacting the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Amendment P.L. 106-554 and 569, promoting economic development on Indian lands, and strengthening various Indian Health Service programs.

The assistance of a bipartisan group of legislators helped tribes to successfully get a bill passed to treat tribes as governments under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act.

When I prepared my February chairman's report, we didn't yet know who President Bush would appoint to key posts affecting Indian affairs. I commented, however, that "although Indian tribes have generally supported Democratic candidates for national offices, we should keep in mind that some of our staunchest Indian advocates have been Republican ... We need to work to actively educate, work with, and make an effort to gain the support of these government officials, whichever side of the political fence they are on."

The Native American Caucus, a group of congressmen dedicated to fighting legislative attacks on tribal sovereignty, helped pass legislation favorable to Indian tribes and defeat various anti-Indian measures in the

106th Congress. Congressman Dale Kildee, who founded the caucus four years ago that now numbers about 100 members, addressed the summit.

While we have many Democratic advocates and also friends in the GOP in powerful positions, the assault on tribal sovereignty from the anti-Indian and anti-Indian gaming forces will continue unabated.

Inaugural Activities and Congressional Contacts

With these thoughts in mind, we continue to be actively involved with NIGA and NCAI. And once again with this in mind, we contacted the offices of our congressional delegation to bring our own legislators up to date on Siletz and other Indian issues.

The NIGA Summit coincided with the Inauguration, so we were able to attend part of the Inaugural activities at the Lincoln Memorial and the Inaugural ball. My grandson, Timmy, accompanied me. The opening ceremonies included introduction of all tribal chairmen.

We also took advantage of networking with various officials, including outgoing Assistant Secretary Kevin Gover, housing officials at the Amerind reception, and representatives at Sen. Smith's Native American reception.

Siletz Tribal Involvement in State, Federal, and Other Meetings

Today, many Indian organizations and federal and state agencies are involved in Indian issues. To keep abreast of current issues and have input into proposed legislation and programs, the Siletz Tribe must be involved.

These include meetings of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, NCAI, Self-Governance, National Indian Education Association, National Indian Housing Association, and the National Indian Health Board, many of which hold regional as well as national meetings. Many state, city, and county meetings also affect the tribe.

It's not possible for all Council members to attend all these meetings; we would be neglecting important business at home. We must therefore prioritize and balance critical state and national issues with our own tribal issues because the two usually are interrelated. Attendance is assigned to Council members based on their areas of responsibility and interest. I believe we have been successful in coordinating our individual agendas and accomplishing both.

Siletz Basket Exhibit and Gathering

"... Promote our cultural and religious beliefs and to pass them on in our own way to our children, grandchildren, and grandchildren's children forever ..."

Siletz Constitution

Siletz Tribal Community Center, Government Hill

April 7, 2001 - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Everyone is welcome!

We encourage you to bring your basket(s) and materials for display and interpretation.

For more information, call Bud or Cheryl Lane
at 541-444-1258 or 541-444-8215.