

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

A big thank you to the Portland Area Office for contacting the Bureau of Indian Affairs and having six Siletz Tribal youth participate with our organization for a period of five to six weeks.

Six tribal youth were employed at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, working in conjunction with the Siletz Tribal Summer Youth Employment Program. They include Selina Washington (18) and her brother Derrick Washington (16), who both worked in the Roads Department under Joe Bonga. Sophie Kaady (Simmons) (15) and Greg DePoe (15) were employed in the Appraisal Department. Michelle McKelvey (McCollam) (16) worked in Personnel, supervised by Danelle Dutt, and Zachery Anderegg (Simmons) (15) worked in Resources under Jim LeBret.

All six students attend various high schools in the Portland-metropolitan area and are enrolled tribal members of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. I received many comments on their professionalism. They really helped out while they were working in the regional office.

Sophie and Greg came to the appraisal/realty group at a time when we really needed them. Our secretary was on two weeks leave and they answered phones, filed reports and microfilm, and helped with the mail. They really did a great job.

Again, thank you to all the Summer Youth kids and to the tribe for funding the program.

G. Ben

To the editor:

What if the BIA managed our 638 contracts and gaming facility, and was comping relatives? When confronted about comps for personal use, what if the BIA said, "We are the board of directors and can do as we like," ignoring the fact they were managing those funds in trust. After spending thousands of dollars in legal fees, they maintained they had been cleared of all allegations by NIGC, but in their settlement, they complied with NIGC demands? Review the tribal settlement agreement at: <http://www.nigc.gov/siletzsettle.htm>

What if they were writing ordinances that limit tribal court's jurisdiction and ordinances that favored the BIA? If they were restricting funding so court couldn't threaten their control, which eliminates the checks and balance system of our government?

What if General Council told the BIA that tribal member employment and promotion were high priorities and the BIA adopted policies limiting tribal member employment? If they refused to set up a recruitment and training program for tribal members? If they refused to pass a TERO ordinance and the TERO drafts written specifically excluded tribal member hiring preference?

If they placed BIA supporters on our budget, planning, economic development, and other committees, who then negatively influenced projects and plans?

If they used BIA employees in the hiring process and refused to hire tribal members they didn't like, but hired family and friends? If the people promoted to management positions were BIA supporters?

Who rewrote the personnel manual, eliminating tribal member preference, making themselves the final authority in administrative actions, and eliminating court's ability to review those actions?

What if we instructed the BIA to pursue our treaty lands that were taken without payment and they ignored our request?

If they underspent program dollars, didn't expand program services using those unspent dollars? If they took over other tribal organizations, used indirect and grants money for their pet projects, and didn't inform tribal members "what" they were using them for?

If they managed gaming's \$100 million budget and small amounts of money returned to the tribe?

If these activities were creating anger, low morale, high employee turnover, low tribal member involvement, and a feeling of a lack of ownership by tribal members, wouldn't we protest? We can see these actions as harmful when done by others, but when done by council, we permit it. Why? The solution?

A goal to have every job/position in our tribe held by a tribal member. By making this our goal, we would have to confront and deal with our prejudices,

our discriminatory practices we use against each other, and the negative beliefs regarding tribal member abilities, and will begin to create unity. Ultimately, without unity, we will face termination. Again.

Raymond J. Blacketer



To the editor:

I honor my father, I honor my mother, honor myself and above all, I honor the Divine in us all.

I have once again read a letter from a distraught tribal member who can't get past so many self-imposed rules that she is almost on her knees crying.

What is the difference, from those days when we had to go in the cold and with starving bellies to the Great White Father in Washington, D.C., to tell him of our plight. Once there, we were mainly just paraded around the town square and given empty promise after empty promise. Thus was born the stereotypical Native American Indian standing with his hand out.

As for my personal history, I swore to the Almighty that I would **never** become an Indian with her hand held out, never. I am independent, put myself through some college, and have been employed in the professional field since I was 19, always advancing and bettering myself.

(See Vicki Downey on page 3)

LETTERS, DEADLINES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Siletz News Letters Policy

Siletz News, a publication of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, is published once a month. Our editorial policy encourages input from readers about stories printed in Siletz News and other tribal issues.

All letters **must include** the author's signature, address, and phone number in order to be considered for publication. Siletz News reserves the right to edit any letter for clarity and length, and to refuse publication of any letter or any part of a letter that may contain profane language, libelous statements, personal attacks, or unsubstantiated statements.

Not all letters are guaranteed publication upon submission. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Siletz News, tribal employees, or Tribal Council.

Please type or write legibly. Letters longer than 450 words may be edited for length as approved by Tribal Council Resolution #96-142.



Please note: The general manager of the Siletz Tribe is the editor-in-chief of Siletz News.

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Deadline for the October issue is Sept. 10. Photos are encouraged. Everyone loves to see photos of events, tribal members, and especially babies. Don't forget those birthday or anniversary wishes for loved ones.

The newsletter is free to enrolled Siletz Tribal members. For all others, a \$12 annual subscription fee applies. Fill out this form and mail it with \$12 (make check payable to Confederated Tribes of Siletz) to Siletz News.

Name: _____
Address: _____
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Change of address: **Tribal members** call Lisa Norton, enrollment clerk, at 541-444-8258; all others, call the newsletter office at 541-444-8291 and leave your new address with the editor.