

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

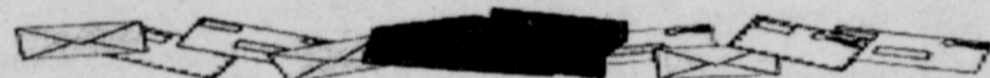
Our Native American ancestors had three major methods of handling and preventing sickness. They stressed being in tune with nature, one another, and the Great Spirit.

From the earth, either directly or indirectly, they received the food that sustained life. They could not go to the downtown drug store for medication, but they were well acquainted with the plants, herbs, and trees; and knew the medicinal value of each one.

They also knew right where to find the one they needed. Picked fresh and used immediately, they were probably

more potent than what we now buy in a health food store, but most of us cannot get out and gather our own. To gather the wrong herb might be bad medicine, indeed. Just getting out there and learning to identify these plants, herbs, and trees would give us some healing contact with nature, however. Even raising an herb garden could be fun.

I wish I could say that the tribes all lived in peace with each other, but unfortunately this was not always the case. They did believe in peace and honesty, and were very appreciative and loyal to their friends.



To the editor:

Once again, tribal officials have ignored the membership.

First, the Tribal Court chief judge, who was appointed by the Tribal Council, disregarded compelling evidence of wrongdoing and allowed the results of the February election to stand.

The current chief judge participated in the appellate panel (non-tribal members) that overturned the recall decision, even though the trial judge (tribal member) ruled that there was substantial evidence to declare the recall invalid. So, do we really have a fair court system? Should we elect the chief judge? This would certainly eliminate the obvious allegiance to the Tribal Council.

Secondly, as before, the Tribal Council appointed a tribal member who had previously showed no interest in serving on the Tribal Council over a candidate who supposedly lost by one vote. At a General Council meeting, the membership had overwhelmingly voted for the Tribal Council to appoint the next highest ranked candidate when considering appointments. In fact, this is one of the recommended constitutional changes proposed by the General Council (which the Tribal Council ignored).

I had fully supported this premise, recommending the next highest ranked candidates to fill the positions left vacant by the controversial recall. Yet, when asked publicly if they would support my recommendations, all other Tribal Council members individually said, "no."

With the mindset of the majority, then and now, it is conceivable that they can just go on appointing their supporters, who are obligated only to them, not the voting membership. So do we actually have a democratic government? Does your vote really count?

A number of tribal members want to see the General Council empowered, as it should be. In discussions on the process, it was suggested that the first step would be to have fair elections. The General Council had voted to have the elections conducted by an independent professional firm that would, in no way, be influenced by the Tribal Council. Yet, for the last four years, we've had the same Election Board chairman and the same election director, and now we all know, from the recent court case, how he conducts elections and the results.

Since there are only two members (Reggie and Lillie Butler) who listen to the people, our only recourse is constitutional amendments and election ordinance changes to assure that our tribal officials are truly supported by, and are supportive of, the membership. We are reviewing the General Council's original proposed constitutional changes and hope to begin a petition drive soon. If we are to be successful, we need your help. Please contact me if you want to participate in this grassroots effort.

Sincerely,

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They knew how to avoid or handle stress. When they were faced with a major situation, they sought the blessing and guidance of the Grand Father Spirit. When they were troubled or stressed out, they would go to a quiet place among the beauties of nature to worship and to relax. Their everyday life also included a great deal of walking, which made for good health.

They were strong believers in water therapy. A good sweat in the sweathouse followed by a cold plunge really got the blood circulating. For a healthy person or for some illnesses, this is good, but when an epidemic of smallpox occurred, it was the wrong thing to do and many of the Coast Indians died as a result.

Science proved that many of our ailments are caused by germs and viruses, thus putting the theory that healing can be found in oneness with nature, each other, and the Grand Father

Spirit in the category of myth and folklore. Then it was discovered that a negative attitude toward our surroundings, other people, and toward God makes the body more susceptible to sickness while a positive, cheerful attitude goes a long way toward a strong, healthy body. This in turn can better fight off diseases or hasten recovery.

Some doctors now admit that faith in a higher power and support from family or friends can in some cases make the difference between recovery or not recovering. More and more, we find that the simple lifestyle and natural remedies of our ancestors were good. They were right after all. The trouble is that we have lost the "know how" of caring for ourselves.

I want to thank those who have made our clinics and medical services possible and those who are working to keep us healthy.

Velma Redmer

ONABEN Business Series to Start

Oregon Native American Business and Entrepreneurial Network will hold a "Starting a Successful Business" series that begins on June 10. Classes will be held in Salem and will run for 11 weeks.

This class is one of the requirements for a Siletz Tribal Business Grant, so if you are in business or are considering going into business, you should plan to attend this class.

For more information or to sign up, please contact Lisa Norton at 1-800-922-1399, ext. 255, or 541-444-8255.

ICW, Children Need Your Help

by Aline James

The month of May was National Foster Care Month. More than 580,000 children are in foster care nationwide. Here at Siletz ICW, we monitor the placement of 50+ children who cannot live with their parents for a variety of reasons.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the care providers for opening their homes and their hearts to help our children. Every child deserves to have a loving, stable home. Our foster homes are doing their best to provide a nurturing environment.

The need is critical for temporary foster homes, permanent care homes, and adoptive placements. We need to keep our children connected to their tribal heritage. This can be accomplished only if Siletz Tribal members step forward to help their children. Please consider being a care provider; we and the children need your help.

Currently, we are trying to place two sibling groups. These children need permanent placement.

To become a care provider, you need to first of all express interest, then fill out forms, give permission for a criminal background check, and let ICW conduct a home study.

If you would like more information on these or any other children, please contact Wendi Schamp at 1-800-922-1399 or 541-444-2532, ext. 278, or me at ext. 272.