

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

I Forgot To Say Thank You

The Siletz Tribe has given me so much and I have returned so little; please forgive me. I'm typing this letter on the new Gateway computer the tribe gave me and I didn't bother to say thank you.

I'm enrolled in my second year of college and the tribe is paying for my education. My family is healthy because we're receiving adequate medical care and our medical bills are paid by the tribe. Each year, my family and I joyfully receive per capita distribution payments (sometimes we grumble because we think the check amount could be larger).

Last summer, my 15-year-old daughter participated in the Tribal Youth Employment Program and earned \$1,000. She was delighted that she'd earned her own money and had gained valuable work experience at a veterinary clinic (she's always dreamed

of becoming a veterinarian). I guess maybe I didn't say thank you because I'd figured the white man stole my Indian ancestors' lands and treated them brutally, so I'm entitled to all of this.

There isn't enough space here to list all the things our professional public servants who work in the Eugene area office have done for my family. In addition to all the tangible benefits we've received, they've gone above and beyond the call of duty. Moral support, words of encouragement, educational advice and direction, praise, and hugs cannot be measured. We truly have the best.

We live in a society that reinforces "victimization" and "self-importance." It's so easy to blame someone else for our inadequacies, our lack, and our problems. Let me renew my thinking and view the many blessings I've received from my tribe as a "hand-up" and not a handout. Let me overcome

my weaknesses so I can become a better person.

As my life becomes richer, let me give something back. Let me ask myself, "What can I do for the people in my tribe?" I believe my voice is important and my ideas just might make a difference. Forgive me for not always having the best attitude. Sometimes when I don't get what I want when I want it, I get impatient. From now on, I'll make sure I do my part to get the job done sooner.

Let me not criticize the decisions of those who are in leadership positions within the tribe. Let me stay informed, have all my facts straight, and come up with a positive solution before I speak out in opposition. Let me be an informed voter and vote for the most qualified Tribal Council candidates because I know my vote counts.

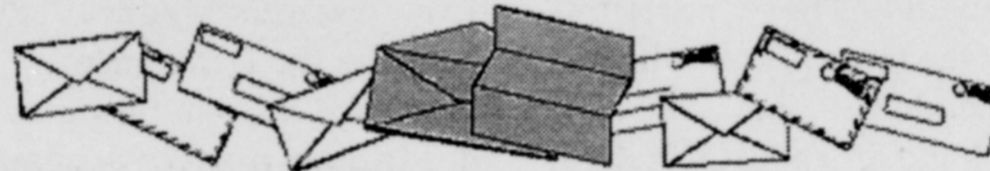
Since I don't perceive myself as a "leader" (and definitely not an eloquent

speaker), I'm not sure how I can help. But I guess I can start by lifting up and supporting those tribal members who are.

A genuine smile or even a nod is encouraging. Maybe I can even muster up some positive feedback once in awhile. Let me remember to send a small card, or thank someone in person, for all their hours of footwork and all the important meetings they attend for my benefit. After all, I haven't lifted a finger and have received much. I've placed my confidence in those council members who represent me and know they'll remain sober and vigilant in their privileged positions. I am grateful for them.

Prosperity doesn't come from one talented person or a group of gifted people, it comes from our Creator. Let me remember to thank him, and thank you.

Adrienne Crookes



To the editor:

An issue that still bothers me is third-party billing at the tribal health clinic. The clinic is a business and third-party billing will help provide anywhere from \$100,000 to \$500,000 to help support needed services.

Council member Landis came up with the same idea that I had - hire a temporary, qualified person at a good wage to train a tribal member on third-party billing as part of the job description. The money is there, we just need to get it for the clinic.

The Oneida Tribe in Green Bay, Wis., has tribal members in the top positions of their casino, but they've been gambling longer than we've been restored. I'd hoped some of the casino money would have been used to help tribal members get job training at two- and four-year colleges because they need to see how things go in the non-Indian world to see if they want to become involved in our casino world.

Some tribal members started at the bottom when the casino opened and have now moved up in their jobs. I'm glad that the casino started the mentor program, but it's still our responsibility to get training to support ourselves.

Tribal government doesn't owe us a living. It's our responsibility to get help from tribal programs when we need it. Tribal government's responsibility is to have the type of programs members need to help them succeed in life.

Another issue is that when I was on the council, I saw a plan to build a dam on Big Rock Creek eight years ago to pipe water to the valley for public consumption. The plan said that building the dam would take 15 years and it's still in print and on record.

I hear that other communities in Lincoln County are planning to take more Siletz River water to drink and it's frustrating to me because my tribe is promoting fish and there may be no water. A dam somewhere to help summer river flows is needed and we can get the feds to help. It will take time, but it just needs to be done.

The last issue is tribal voting. In the last presidential election, there was a big foul-up with voting machines. Tribal members living in other states or in the military wouldn't have access to tribal voting machines. Is that fair?

Tom Brokaw said Canadian voters didn't have such a problem. The Canadian system lists the candidates alphabetically and the voter puts an X by the name of choice, like we do with our elections.

The biggest problem in Oregon elections is that voters usually don't follow the directions provided, as happens in tribal elections. I'd rather have my vote not counted because I made a mistake than have a machine foul up my vote. The machines are very expensive and would take money away from tribal services.

We have honest people working to make sure the election process is run according to the rules and it's our responsibility to make sure we follow voting directions and get our ballots in on time.

Bensell Breon

General Council Meeting

Keizer City Hall
930 Chemawa Road N.E.
Keizer, Oregon
1 p.m.

Agenda

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| Call to Order | USDA Food Program Report: |
| Invocation | Kitti Hostler |
| Roll Call | Tribal Member Concerns |
| Approval of Agenda | Chairman's Report |
| Approval of Minutes | Announcements |
| Tribal Investments Program Report: | Adjournment |
| Gregg Gubuan | |