

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

I want to publicly thank and acknowledge Alfred "Bud" Lane for his efforts on behalf of all tribal members. True to his words as a candidate and again later as a council member, Alfred "Bud" Lane followed through with his pledge to challenge the ordinance and resolutions prohibiting tribal member employees from serving on Tribal Council.

While still a candidate, Bud presented his case against this prohibition to the Tribal Council at its regular January meeting. He based his presentation on the Tribal Constitution, the Indian Civil Rights Act, and federal law, arguing that the prohibitions were unconstitutional and discriminatory.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Bud asked the Tribal Council to rescind the language prohibiting tribal member employees from serving on council from ordinances, manuals, and any other documents. By a vote of 4-3, the council passed three resolutions rescinding this language from the Personnel Manual, the Operations Manual, and the Ethics Ordinance. However, the vote was not binding on the Ethics Ordinance as an ordinance can only be amended by a 2/3 majority vote of the seated council.

As most know, Bud Lane was successful in his bid for a seat on the Tribal Council. Just prior to the election, Bud secured a temporary restraining order from Tribal Court that prevented the council from denying him his seat and the administration from terminating his employment until the matter could be heard in Tribal Court.

On Saturday, March 6, 2004, Bud had his day in court. Representing himself, he once again presented his case that the prohibitions were unconstitutional and discriminatory. Tribal Attorney Craig Dorsay defended the five council members who felt the laws were valid and should remain. Many past and current council members, on both sides of the issue, appeared as witnesses or supplied affidavits.

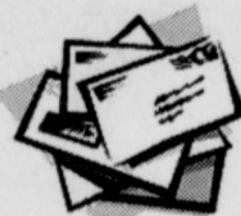
The hearing lasted about four hours. Then after about 30 minutes of deliberation, Chief Judge Calvin Gantenbein issued his decision, finding that the laws and documents containing the prohibition against tribal member employees serving on council were unconstitutional.

Again, I want to thank Bud Lane for his courage for putting himself on

the line and for the hours he spent putting together and presenting his case. Also, I want to state my admiration and respect for Bud's wife, Cheryl Lane, who gave him unwavering support, staying by his side through this whole experience—including in the courtroom. And finally, I want to thank the many tribal members who took the time to attend this important hearing.

On March 6, 2004, tribal history was made and I'm glad I was there to see it.

Shu' nuu-xwa nin la
(we thank you or good for us you did)
Bonnie M. Petersen



To the editor:

I'm writing this letter to request the Strong family burial plot be closed. My grandmother, Mamie Strong, on her deathbed requested me to take care of the graves in the Strong family burial plot at the Siletz Paul Washington Cemetery. The date of her request was April of 1973.

I have gladly taken on this responsibility for years. She was very clear in her wishes to me that she was to be the last one to be buried in the Strong burial plot. We also had discussed, when the time came that I could no longer care for the graves, grass was to be planted.

It has become difficult for me to care for the plots. The time has come to request grass be planted and the Strong family plot closed. This was her dying wishes to me and I do wish to honor her request.

I hope that council will be able to honor her request as well. If there are any questions, please call me at 503-393-5855. I would like a written response to this letter for my records. Thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Donna L. (Strong) Kessinger
Royce R. Strong

To the editor:

I want to thank all the tribal members who supported me in the elections. Many of them have convinced me to run again next year.

Those of you who live outside the Siletz area may not be aware that newly elected Tribal Council member Bud Lane challenged the legality of the Siletz Constitution on March 6, 2004.

Bud contended that his constitutional rights were being violated because the Constitution doesn't state that a tribal member cannot simultaneously sit on council and be employed by the tribe.

The policy in the Siletz Personnel Manual, Operations Manual, and Tribal Council Ethics Code states that if a Siletz Tribal employee is elected, he/she must give up his/her tribal job.

After the elections, Bud received a stay from Tribal Court and was allowed to work and be on council until his hearing.

A few tribal elders who helped draft our Constitution and the policies testified on why they were written the way they are. The conflict of interest issue was the main concern. They shared some problems that could occur if a council member was someone's subordinate and had issues with his/her supervisor. The issue of time was also addressed. Council cannot vote on tribal issues without a quorum.

Each Tribal Council member testified. Some were asked by the judge if they thought the policies made it impossible for younger people to run for council. He stated that policies could be changed so tribal employees could work for the tribe. If there was a conflict for managers and supervisors that council could state which employee could run and which could not.

It was brought out that each employee has a choice. When they run for council, they know if elected they'll have to resign from their job. It's been that way for 20 years.

After all was said and done, the judge rendered his decision. In his closing remarks, he talked about freedom of speech; this issue wasn't under debate. He said the policies were in violation and our constitutional rights were being violated. Just because the policies had been in effect for 20 years and members had been abiding by them, they were in violation of our rights.

I don't understand how the judge can say council is in violation by stating that no employee can sit on council and work for the tribe. But it would be OK if council changed policies and then they could pick and choose which employee could run and which could not.

In the future, what would stop the managers from claiming these same issues?

I believe the tribal elders were right when they set the policies the way they did 20 years ago.

I hope when you vote on this issue, you'll think of the issue, not the person whom the issue is about.

Thank you,
Loraine Y. Butler



To the editor:

I have a problem that maybe someone can help me with. Over the last year, my company lost a lot of equipment. I don't even know if some of my equipment was lost on the tribal housing paint job. There were garden hoses, tarps, and hand tools. Mostly, my biggest loss was ladders. One was a large fiberglass extension ladder.

I really need ladders and sure could use any help I could get. If someone knows of any extension ladders available, I would even buy them if the price is right. A 20- to 28-footer is what I really need.

I've also been looking to get another Siletz Booster jacket. I would use just the patches if they are available.

I decided to write this to see about getting some ladders. Last week, I got a call from a man in Newport to ask if I was ever gonna pick up my six-foot ladders that were in his backyard for over a year. It's easy to lose track of stuff and hard to replace. Any help is appreciated.

Phil Rilatos Jr.
Eagle Painting

