

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

My name is Kari Schaller and I am the daughter of the late Terrence Mason.

For the past year and a half, my family and I have been corresponding with Tribal Council in regards to a tribal member (Tristen Leroy John aka Tristen Holt aka Tristen Trudell) we believe has been fraudulently enrolled. I have tried to keep this matter confidential to protect Tristen and my intent has not been to harm or humiliate him in any way but to protect our tribal rolls.

It is very important to my family and I that our tribal roll is accurate and the integrity is not compromised by nepotism and disregard for our laws and Constitution. This issue had remained confidential for almost a year until Tristen himself addressed this issue at the May 2006 General Council meeting.

On Dec. 21, 2006, Tristen was given his right to an enrollment hearing. In this hearing, it was revealed that **Tristen's mother had submitted two previous enrollment applications for Tristen John in 1990 and 1991 that were not processed or were returned because the applications were incomplete and not accompanied by a birth certificate or other birth record. Tristen failed to provide any evidence at this hearing that he is eligible for enrollment under my father, Terrance Mason. It was further revealed the application for Tristen that he was enrolled under contained false information.**

The end result – Resolution No. 2006-436 was approved to dis-enroll Tristen Leroy John. However on March 5, 2007, due to a technicality, the council re-voted and without additional evidence two council members changed their vote and the resolution has now been denied.

**Under the Tribal Council Ethics Ordinance Section §3.002, "Tribal Council members shall take action in the best interest of the Siletz Tribe and the Tribal membership,** not in their personal interest. Tribal Council members shall carry out their duties and responsibilities in the highest ethical manner. Violation of this ordinance may constitute 'neglect of duty' or 'gross misconduct.'"

I am asking each of the council members to review their Code of Ethics and their positions and to revote on the enrollment hearing of Dec. 21, 2006. This issue affects all of us as a tribe and compromises the integrity of our rolls. While this involves my family personally, this could happen to any one of us.

The leaders of our tribe need to be held accountable for their decisions and it is my opinion that five of our members have ignored vital evidence and have jeopardized our rolls due to conflicts of interest and personal emotions that are not in the best interest of our tribe.

Kari (Mason) Schaller

To the editor:

### **Integrity of Our Enrollment Under Attack**

It is with a sad heart that I'm writing this letter to express my concerns on the recent vote of our Tribal Council on March 5, 2007, held at Chinook Winds Casino.

The vote I'm writing about concerns the enrollment of Tristen John, who was notified in writing several times by the Siletz Tribal Council to submit a DNA to prove his parentage based on a reasonable basis existing to question the parentage listed on his application.

A motion was made at this meeting to dis-enroll Tristen due to: submission of a fraudulent enrollment application, his repeated failure to submit a DNA test requested by Tribal Council, and various other evidence brought forward to question who his true biological father is. Sadly the vote failed, five voting no and four voting yes.

The facts are that Tristen John's enrollment application listed my father, the late Terrance Mason, as the father and his mother as Trish John (a non-Native). It was brought to Tribal Council's attention that the hospital record (**not a legal birth certificate**) provided on his enrollment application was not signed by my father, Terrance Mason.

It was also brought to council's attention through a highly accredited handwriting expert analysis that it "was **highly probable** that the signature of Terry Mason on the application submitted for enrollment was **written by Trish John** (based on the slant of the writing, sizing of loops, stop and start patterns, and various other tools used to analyze handwriting)."

Until recently, nobody in our family knew that Tristen was an enrolled tribal member claiming (my father) Terrance Mason was the father. Upon hearing the news, my sister (Kari Schaller) contacted Tristen and asked him if he was willing to take a DNA test to prove he was our brother, since we were always told that my dad had only four kids.

Tristen told Kari initially that he would but stated, "It would suck if he found out he was not Indian." Tristen still to this date has not submitted a DNA test and because of the last Tribal Council vote now will not have to in order to stay enrolled.

It's highly likely that we now have a non-Native on our rolls, which I believe is terribly wrong and disrespectful to all our ancestors. It's my understanding that a request for a re-vote can be made at any time.

I'm asking you, the people, to please inquire into the facts of this case and to ask your Tribal Council members to revote. We just need one council member to change their vote to protect the integrity of our rolls.

With humbled respects,  
Kelly Mason

To the editor:

### **Attention All Tribal Members!**

We believe someone has fraudulently enrolled into our tribe under our brother Terry Mason's name. Unfortunately, our brother Terry Mason passed away March 25, 1984, and is not here to defend himself, but we are and will.

The enrollee was posted for enrollment under a different tribal family's name 10 years after our brother passed away. The **only** thing that the enrollee had to enroll with is a birth record (not certificate – which lists **no** father). The birth record has our brother's name hand-written, listing him as the father. It was proven in court by a handwriting analysis that the writing was probably that of the enrollee's biological mother.

This case of fraudulent enrollment has been going on for over a year. Our family has provided Tribal Council with enough evidence to question the enrollee on being our brother's son and the only way to prove it would be for him to take a DNA test.

The enrollee was asked to provide Tribal Council with a DNA sample on three different occasions, but has not. On Dec. 21, 2006, he was given the opportunity to have an enrollment hearing and bring forward any new evidence to prove he is our brother's son.

After hearing all of the testimony and **no** new evidence presented, Tribal Council voted to dis-enroll him by a vote of 4-3-2 (Phil Rilatos Sr. abstained because his family is involved, and Loraine Butler abstained because she was called as a witness in the hearing, it was an enrollment issue and she is the Enrollment clerk).

He filed in court to have a revote because he was dis-enrolled during the tribal elections. The judge ordered it to go back to Tribal Council for a revote.

On March 5, 2007, a Special Tribal Council meeting was held with Enrollment on the agenda to revote. There was no new evidence presented and nothing had changed.

To our disappointment, he stayed enrolled by a vote of 4-5-0. The two Tribal Council members (Phil Rilatos Sr. and Loraine Butler) who previously abstained due to conflict both changed their vote to no this time.

Our family was not only shocked by the outcome, but was saddened. We feel that the Tribal Council members who voted no are voting personal because no proof has been provided that he is our brother's son.

We hope this opens the eyes of all tribal members. We want to thank all tribal members who have supported us with phone calls and genuine concern.

God bless,  
Monica Bessette on behalf of the  
Mason family

To the editor:

I'm writing this letter to bring to light the neglect of duty and gross misconduct of some members of our Tribal Council.

Beginning November 2005, my family and I have provided Tribal Council with an overwhelming amount of evidence to question the enrollment of a member (Tristen Leroy John) who we believe has been fraudulently enrolled under my deceased uncle, Terry Mason.

Terry passed away in March 1984. Tristen's mother attempted enrolling him in 1990 and 1991, and the request was **denied** for failing to provide a birth certificate or birth record to complete his application. In February 1993, on the **third** attempt, he was enrolled in this fashion:

- Using **Terry Mason** as father (10 years after Terry was deceased)
- Posted to General Council as **Tristen Leroy John**
- Using a birth record listing him as **Tristen Scott Holt**

Upon learning about the above, Terry's daughter (Kari Schaller) contacted the Siletz Enrollment Department. She was told she could only protest his enrollment when he enrolls a descendent (i.e., a child). We later found this information not to be true.

Enrollment Ordinance Section §2.310 states, "The Enrollment Staff shall recommend to Tribal Council removal of the Tribal roll any person whose application, after approval, contains certain false information that is material to the eligibility for enrollment of that person."

In February 2006, *Siletz News* posted a birth announcement of Tristen John's daughter and it listed the grandparent as Phil Rilatos Jr.? There was no mention of Terry Mason or any connection to the Mason family.

Our family protested this enrollment of his daughter and asked Tribal Council to open the file under the Enrollment Ordinance Section §2.307 "Tribal Council may inquire into the paternity or maternity of an applicant where a reasonable basis exists to question the parentage of an applicant."

At the Aug. 5, 2006, General Council meeting, Reggie Butler stated, "It doesn't say anything anywhere in our ordinance that anybody has to take a DNA test."

On May 22, 2004, Resolution No. 2004-172, a member after **18** years of enrollment was dis-enrolled from the Siletz Tribe because she was enrolled based on false information and she is not of Siletz blood by a vote of 7-1-1 (**Reggie Butler voted no and to keep this person enrolled after a DNA test showed she was not of Siletz blood**).

On Oct. 22, 2004, Resolution No. 2004-401, two members were dis-enrolled from the Siletz Tribe because they were enrolled based on false information and are not of Siletz blood by a vote of 7-0-0 (**Reggie voted yes to dis-enroll these two members**).

This issue is not about low blood quantum, this issue is about **no** blood quantum. Stephanie (Mason) Morrow