

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

As the year 2007 began, the current tribal government told us about their investment priorities: "The first priority will be the Siletz Aeroteam, second priority is River Reclamation Inc., third priority is the Chemawa LLC, fourth priority is the Toledo Property and the fifth priority is the Dundas Property."

The Dundas Property was considered for everything from Siletz Aeroteam to a sewing operation, but the Tribal Council decided to use it for a new USDA building. It's behind schedule.

The Toledo Property was bought by the tribe in the 1990s. It was contaminated. There were expensive clean-up issues.

Chemawa Station appeared back on track for construction when President Bush signed a bill clearing the deed so we could use the property for loan collateral. Now Chairman Pigsley says we may not develop the property. We may just lease it to someone else.

River Reclamation Group (RRG) was a timber salvage company. The tribe made Ross Bennett our partner in

RRG. Bennett had a bad business reputation. For months tribal members warned the Council that Bennett lacked the permits to legally salvage timber.

Siletz Aeroteam is a company we've invested heavily into over the past two years, beginning in 2005 when we bailed out US Aeroteam, a bankrupt Ohio company. US Aeroteam was our partner – our mentor – as we planned our own aerospace company in Siletz.

Siletz Aeroteam was scheduled to begin operation in Oregon by early 2007, but it never materialized.

In August I voiced my doubts that the company would ever come to Oregon, but Chairman Pigsley and Phil Rilatos, who is also President of Siletz Aeroteam, assured us that Siletz Aeroteam would definitely come to Oregon. In November, the Chairman tells us Siletz Aeroteam has never been profitable. She expressed doubts that it will ever come into existence.

Here's hoping 2008 rings in better investment practices and open government.

Lynette Warren



To the editor:

Some Natives have more memories of the past than dreams of the future, spending much effort searching the past at the expense of the future. Because historical records are few, the past they may hold dear is mostly imagined and adorned, far removed from the reality.

They speak of "real Indians," "full-bloods," "white-man's religion," "the old ways," and hold everyone in contempt who doesn't at least pretend agreement. Most revealing of the falseness of their dream is the common sense realization that no matter where, how far back in the past they were to be somehow transported, that even in that past they hold so dear, they would speak of "real Indians," and whatever they imagine how it should really be.

It is perhaps their inability to find self-worth, validation and affirmation in any present they may be in, or any

future that they can imagine, that they cling to their imagined past like a rosary or strand of worry beads.

There are many traditions and much ancient wisdom that survives the passage of even aeons of time. There is also much carried over that is simply counter-productive under present circumstances and conditions.

It is for the elders to seek what is the greatest good, for the farthest into the future for our people.

Through ice ages and every imaginable threat to survival, our ancestors adapted and survived. Somehow, through hundreds of generations, our elders made the correct assumptions, the main one being that sometimes a decision must be made to let go of a revered tradition simply to survive long enough to develop a new and more relevant one.

Bobby Oden



To the editor:

A recent letter to the editor noted that the writer "worked with Rob [Bovett] in the area of criminal law due to his leadership role with the Lincoln County Inter-agency Narcotics Team [LINT]." Mr. Bovett is a candidate for District Attorney.

I want to clarify something. Mr. Bovett does not work in criminal law as the prosecutor for the LINT team. For the last three years, I have been the prosecutor for the LINT team.

In the 1990s, Bernice Barnett, then a Deputy District Attorney, worked for about three years as the prosecutor for

the LINT team. At that time, Mr. Bovett worked with Bernice performing non-criminal civil forfeitures. Bernice prosecuted the LINT criminal cases.

Mr. Bovett does a good job in community education about methamphetamine, in obtaining funding from grants that go to support the LINT team, and he occasionally attends our weekly meetings. But he has never prosecuted any criminal case for the LINT team or anyone else. He is a lawyer who works in civil law.

Gerad Egan

Deputy District Attorney

To the editor:

What a great turnout our restoration doings had! The largest crowd I have ever seen. And everyone was in one accord – congratulating our people on our many accomplishments.

Mr. Wilkinson presented such a heartfelt summation of our people's history. I personally thanked him and hugged him, and told him I liked his new jacket "in the oldest way" – but he wouldn't budge.

Before the doings started Saturday morning, I and my Mrs. had breakfast at the casino. I was really admiring the old pictures around the walls when I saw a picture of my mother dressed in her Niidash regalia. It made me cry. All the old memories of my mother came to me in a rush and I'm not ashamed to say I cried like a baby. I wish to thank whoever was responsible for choosing my mother's picture to be one displayed with all the other beautiful photos.

To all you young people out there! Love, honor and obey your mothers! You can have a lot of different fathers – but you have only one mother. When she is gone, your world is gone with her.

And finally, I again want to pay special tribute to my uncle, Eddie

Collins. I had spoken to him before our celebration and he had the idea of having all our tribal veterans record their experiences as youngsters growing up in and around Siletz. Of the hardships they might have encountered while in the military and the years afterward. Not to glorify ourselves, in any way. But to be a history lesson to our young people – far into the future. I don't know how many got recorded, but it is important and should be an ongoing project. My uncle was my boyhood hero – and he is still my hero.

People originally involved in our restoration? Let's give credit where credit is due. Lindsey John, Aurella Tom (Selsic), Alta Courville (Tom), Bob Tom, and Artie Bensell are the ones who called for a meeting in Salem at Alta's home. I was present but had very little to offer. Just that I had gone to jail many times for hunting and fishing. The State would take my kill and jail me overnight – just as a means of harassment. In those hard days, we still had hunting and fishing rights, according to our treaties.

Gilbert Jr. Towner



Dear editor and Oregonians:

We here in Oregon have recently been riveted by a story about a teacher in Medford who was carrying a concealed weapon in her classroom. To date the debate has raged on about the rights of gun owners to carry a licensed and permitted weapon on school grounds. I would like us to take this opportunity to refocus the question.

This teacher has begun carrying a concealed weapon because, as a victim of domestic violence, she fears for her life.

We know that domestic violence doesn't stay home when a victim goes to work.

Why is that? For starters, the workplace is likely to be the one place a batterer knows to find the victim.

Beyond that, victims report an inability to concentrate on their work, they report being preoccupied with the abuse and report that many times the place they are most likely to disclose their abuse is at work.

Did you know that 70% of victims of domestic violence here in Oregon are employed at the time of the abuse. And that 89% of batterers are employed at the time they perpetrate their crime.

So if you think domestic violence is not an issue for the state's Labor Commissioner, think again.

I am launching a program here at the Bureau of Labor and Industries that addresses the rights and responsibilities of employers. My goal is to train

employers to recognize the signs of abuse, to know who to contact in a crisis and to understand what their responsibilities are under the law.

Workplace safety should be a high priority for all employers – and we at BOLI will do everything we can to bring the needed information to employers about this important topic.

Let this situation be your call to action.

When we have victims of violence and sexual assault right here in Oregon who are afraid to go to work, who resort to carrying a concealed weapon, then we need to stop and take a serious look at what we doing for those victims.

What are you, as an employer, doing?

Do you have a policy on domestic violence in the workplace?

Do you have a safety mitigation plan?

Have you reached out and gotten trainings for you and your employees?

Trainings and materials are available through our agency. Contact us at 971-673-0782 for our Technical Assistance for Employers hotline; register for our Employment Law Conference on Dec. 5 and 6, where we will host a three-hour panel with the state's top Domestic Violence experts; or get online at www.oregon.gov/boli to find out more about what you can do to help victims of Domestic Violence in your workplace.

Sincerely,

Dan Gardner

Labor Commissioner