

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Siletz Tribal Election Board has conducted another general election. The ballots were counted during the General Council on Feb. 7 and resulted in the re-election of incumbents Reggie Butler Sr. and Jessie Davis and the election of a new member, Lisa Brown.

As prescribed by our Siletz Constitution, the election of council officers was held by the Tribal Council following the general election. Bud Lane was elected vice-chairman, Tina Retasket as secretary and Jessie Davis as treasurer. I was elected to serve again as chairman, a position that I accept with humility, understanding fully the tremendous responsibilities that this position demands.

I understand that with our nation in the midst of perilous economic and international times, our Tribe and all Indian Tribes face an uncertain and challenging future. I pledge all my efforts to continue to work diligently for the benefit of our Tribe.

In regards to the current Tribal election, Frank Simmons, a respected elder and incumbent candidate for council, died suddenly on Jan. 19, 2009. It was a tragic loss to family, friends and the Tribe to which he devoted his life. Please refer to my words in honor of Frank at the end of this report.

## Gathering of Oregon's First Nations

To celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Oregon's entrance as a state in the Union, a major intertribal pow-wow of Oregon Tribes was held Jan. 31 in Salem at the State Fairgrounds pavilion.

A crowd of more than 4,000, including Indian dancers, other Tribal participants, mainly but not only from the nine Oregon Tribes, joined many non-Indian guests who filled the pavilion where a grand time was enjoyed by all.

Five of the Western Oregon Tribes produced an Oregon intertribal video which was previewed at a luncheon with Gov. Ted Kulongoski on Jan. 30, kicking off the Oregon 150<sup>th</sup> Sesquicentennial celebration. Sue Schaffer, Cow Creek chairperson, introduced the video that runs for about an hour.

All nine Oregon Tribes were invited



Delores Pigsley

to the lunch, which followed the governor's signing of a proclamation at the State Capitol that morning. The proclamation declares that Tribes were present long before Oregon achieved statehood. The Tribes were recognized for all the contributions they have made to the state of Oregon.

The luncheon began with the presentation of a gift to Stan Speaks, regional director, in recognition of his 50 years of service to Tribes in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, many of which have been in the Portland regional office.

## Economic Disaster

As most of you know, during the past few months Congress was in a major political turmoil over how best to address our nation's economic disaster.

President Barack Obama warned that if Congress didn't address the millions of jobs and homes lost, with the situation getting worse, we will face a national "catastrophe." He said there is no "silver bullet or easy answer" to our nation's economic disaster. He pleaded for Democrats and Republicans in Congress "to put aside partisanship."

With the passage of a Senate bill and amendments, the final passage would need to go back to House/Senate conference for final resolution and passage.

As the president continues to work on

and unveils the specifics of his stimulus plan, Tribes continue to keep an eye on it. Our senators, Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, have been supportive of Tribes getting their share.

Sen. Wyden sent a strong letter of support to the president for increased health care. Senators Byron Dorgan, Tim Johnson and Daniel Inouye have followed suit. We are extremely lucky to have this strong support in the Senate.

We will keep a watchful eye as the plan unfolds. Tribal Council members will attend the National Congress of American Indians annual meeting in Washington, D.C., in March and at the same time we will visit and make clear to our congressional delegation our specific Tribal issues and needs.

Hopefully, I will be able to report to you in the April issue of *Siletz News* the administration and congressional decisions regarding the funding of Tribal programs.

## Alcohol on the Gaming Floor

The proposal to serve alcohol on the casino gaming floor has been discussed at various Tribal meetings. While the issue is being discussed by the Tribal Council, three Oregon casinos have already begun serving alcohol: Three Rivers Casino in Florence, The Mill in Coos Bay and Seven Feathers in Canyonville. The increased revenue has been good.

During the discussion of the issue at an Oregon Tribal Gaming Alliance meeting, I asked if the Tribes experienced any downsides to serving alcohol on the gaming floor. All reported that no adverse issues had taken place and no bad press or publicity had occurred. Not only were there no negative consequences, serving alcohol had increased revenues.

As I reported in a past issue of *Siletz News*, most Indian casinos outside of Oregon serve alcohol on the gaming floor. Our Tribe currently has three venues where alcohol is served: the Rogue River Room, the hotel lounge and Aces Bar & Grill at the golf course.

Some Tribal members expressed concern that if alcohol is allowed on the gaming floor, disorderly drunks leaving the casino could cause Tribal liability. We would have the same liability we currently have, however, when inebriated patrons leave the casino from the three venues where alcohol is allowed.

We must currently have agreed to not give away alcoholic drinks. Alcohol served on the gaming floor would not be free, drinks always would be sold and casino management would be responsible for closely monitoring patrons' consumption of alcohol and their conduct.

We have lost some casino conventions because we don't allow or serve alcohol in the showroom. One of the largest was the Dart Convention, which was huge and lasted most of the week. Our convention area isn't big enough for some conventions that must overflow into the showroom.

If our membership approves the advisory vote to allow alcohol on the gaming floor, training of casino personnel will take place, possibly within a couple of weeks following the vote. If the membership disapproves, there will be no change and business will remain as it exists now.

The Tribal Council plans to hold the advisory vote in March of all members 18 years and older.

## The Passing of Frank Simmons

I can't let this month's issue of *Siletz News* slide by without saying a few words about Frank Simmons. I'd like to share with you parts of my eulogy during Frank's funeral service, in which I said:

"I thought about all the good things that could be said about Frank Simmons. The sad thing is that no one, including myself, ever says all the good things about a person when they are alive. Saying 'thank you, you did a good job, you are important to me, you've been extremely helpful, you were someone I trusted and I looked up to' are just a few words of kindness that we all would have said to Frank.

"I remember Frank when I was just a little girl and visited the Simmons home. He was a few years older, but I recall that he was friendly, always smiling and quite a dresser. Everyone called him Sonny. He had a powerful smile and demeanor.

"Frank took an active role in Tribal issues, beginning with the Tribe's Restoration and Reservation plan back in the '70s. He had strong beliefs in cultural and natural resource issues and eventually went to work for the Natural Resources Department, where he was able to accomplish some remarkable tasks.

"He was the lead contact and negotiator with several state and federal agencies on various agreements and MOUs. Frank's assertiveness, calm demeanor, pleasant style and his knowledge about natural and cultural resources has led to many great relationships between the Tribe and state and federal agencies.

"Frank said and did what he believed in. He was serious in his deliberations and his time served on the Tribal Council was productive and professional. He also had a great sense of humor!

"The last major project that Frank was involved in was a video that was debuted at the Oregon 150 Tribal ceremony in Salem. In the video, he spoke about the Tribe's culture and history and he did it in his special way.

"It's sad to have to say goodbye to someone like Frank, who I would say lived life to the fullest. He was a friend, a councilman, an employee and a trusted associate. He was devoted to Teresa and the rest of his family. He was a proud Siletz Indian who will now join his mom and dad, brothers and sisters and the ancient ones that he always spoke of so eloquently.

"We will all miss Frank Simmons."

### Siletz News Letters Policy

*Siletz News*, a publication of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, is published once a month. Our editorial policy encourages input from readers about stories printed in *Siletz News* and other tribal issues.

All letters must include the author's signature, address, and phone number in order to be considered for publication. *Siletz News* reserves the right to edit any letter for clarity and length, and to refuse publication of any letter or any part of a letter that may contain profane language, libelous statements, personal attacks, or unsubstantiated statements.

Not all letters are guaranteed publication upon submission. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of *Siletz News*, Tribal employees, or Tribal Council.

Please type or write legibly. Letters longer than 450 words may be edited for length as approved by Tribal Council Resolution #96-142.

Please note: The general manager of the Siletz Tribe is the editor-in-chief of *Siletz News*.

Editor-in-Chief: Brenda Bremner  
Editor: Diane Rodriguez  
Assistant: Natasha Kavanaugh