

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

The Native American Circle would like to give a special thanks to the people who made it possible so us brothers could rebuild our sweat lodge here at the Santiam Correctional Facility.

Walt Klamath (Siletz), thank you for the time you have taken for us Natives behind the walls. It was an honor and privilege to have your help in rebuilding our sweat. We appreciate all you do and have done for us.

Paul Butler (Siletz), thank you bro for the time you have taken to collect the willows not only for us, O.S.P and O.S.C.I. May you have many blessings for your hard work for the people. Your prayers and love for us is an honor.

Selene Rilatos (Siletz), for your donation of cloth for our prayer ties and colors for the sweat.

Sherrie Nez-Butler (Navajo), for your help, prayers and the time you took so all this could happen. Your love and patience for me and the brothers is much appreciated.

Without all of your help, none of this could have happened. The lodge looks beautiful and has even started to grow. Your love for us all is appreciated. Thank you all so much.

May you all have many blessings and beauty upon each of your paths upon the Red Road.

Shu Ashi Nuu la! Hvm'-chi'!
Respectfully,
Sage Bruce Butler



To the Tribal membership:

I was in Tribal Court recently and I heard Judge Gantenbein say, "The Tribal Council didn't make me the 'Chief' of anything going on around here!" This comment was made while he sat directly beneath a staff of eagle feathers that hangs on the wall.

As we know, eagle feathers represent respectfulness when speaking, but more importantly they represent fallen soldiers. Ask any Indian veteran if he was called "Chief" in the military! My father served as a medic in Korea and was called Chief. My husband was called "Injun" because the word Chief was already being used.

I sent a letter to council asking them to remove the judge or remove the staff. Shouldn't he be charged by Tribal Council with "making racist comments" and expelled from Tribal Court?

Now there is a lawsuit charging Lynette Warren with libel and slander. The problem with this suit is there is no Tribal ordinance that restricts what Tribal members can say. Libel and slander are not against Tribal law, so the Siletz Tribal Court has no jurisdiction.

Tribal ordinances apply to employees and elected and appointed Tribal officials. Article III of the Siletz Constitution protects Tribal members' speech. The closest anyone in the Tribe can come to silencing a Tribal member is the council chair saying "You're out of order" during meetings.

Delores Riding In can be reached at siletzwoman@nativeweb.net.

Delores Riding In, BS

To the editor:

I never thought I would be writing a letter about our Tribe. I'm very disappointed in how our Tribal programs, Tribal Council and Tribal offices are allowed to give up, forsake and totally ignore our Tribal members' needs.

I know of three mothers of Tribal members who had a miserable Mother's Day. I'm one of them. Three Tribal members in the Portland Area Office have returned to drugs, drinking or suffering from severe depression. Most of the Tribe knows my son as a caring and helpful person who enjoyed working and participating in Run to the Rogue and Culture Camp. He will do neither of these this year unless he gets help and gets back on his medications.

He's homeless now because he was evicted from his apartment because of the psychotic delusions he has when he's off his medications. He went back to drinking and we think to using drugs. He stopped his medications because he feels he doesn't need them since he's doing so well.

Only a few people have tried to help him or showed any caring for him. He's to be terminated from his Section 8 housing since he didn't respond after or before his eviction. With his delusions, he's incapable of knowing what is right or wrong in his care.

They sent someone on a welfare check but failed to check if he was eating or even had food in his apartment. I don't know if any of the Tribal staff from the area office were with the person who did the check or not. If not, why weren't they? When we removed his things from his apartment, he had only five packages of instant oatmeal, one can of tuna, two jars of peanut butter, three pickles in three jars and part of a gallon of milk. He had a fir bough in the freezer and pine cones in the refrigerator. Someone should have intervened at that time and got him some help.

My oldest daughter saw him a few days ago after not seeing him since January. He weighs about 150 pounds, looked homeless and had changed so much she walked right by him the first time.

I think it's too late for these three Tribal members but we can only hope; it's up to the Creator now. I just hope the Tribe doesn't ignore any more Tribal member needs and provides mental health care, more drug and alcohol counseling, more health care and general caring in the areas outside of Siletz. I especially hope that something is done soon in the Portland area so other mothers don't have to wonder where their children are and if they're safe and well.

Respectfully,
Kay Steele, Siletz Elder

All members of our Tribe,

As if stripping Lisa Brown of her rightful election to the Tribal Council was not detestable enough, it has come to my attention that former Tribal Council candidate Lynette Warren is being sued for libel by Election Board members Tracey Worman and Kurtis Barker.

Though I do not reside in the Siletz area, I do my best to stay abreast of the matters that affect our Tribe. I believe this gives me some perspective. As such, it seems obvious to me that those who control the leadership of our Tribe are not only afraid of an outsider rocking the boat, but worse, are vindictive to the point of recklessness.

Please stop this madness and listen to the voices of those you represent. One of those voices belongs to me.
Sincerely,
Nicholas Daniels

To the editor:

I want to make a few comments regarding the trend of suits, the most recent one by the Election Board against Lynette Warren, who was one of the candidates who ran last year for Tribal Council election and plans to run in future Tribal Council elections.

I'm wondering why we can't put into effect a peacemaking effort or mediators to resolve disputes, conflicts and differences. Find out the reasons and circumstances on why people get caught up in this situation.

Most cases, I see where both parties believe they are in the right. Why can't a meaningful list of remedies or a context of choices be created to use in promoting peaceful and harmonious relationships. When these remedies and choices are exhausted and they don't resolve the issues, use the suit as a last resort. I think this is a more dignified and respectful manner to use other options than the indifferent, harsh and chilling action of taking a member and suing them in court.

Doesn't our Tribe have peacemakers? If so, are they ever in session?

The great law of peace was adopted by the Iroquois Confederacy long before settlers set foot in this country. Their principals of respect and diplomacy were applied among themselves, neighboring nations, cultures and traditions, but also had significant positive consequences among individuals by using a created context of choices.

This law and the democratic framework were admired by the founding fathers of this nation; it was influential in the makings of the American Constitution. Our founders also used this framework for relations of peaceful coexistence. The United Nations applied these principles. World and community leaders sit down to a table today to discuss their differences.

There are so many reasons why people bring suits against one another. It could be just for self-satisfaction, monetary, to stop an opposing action, to thwart future actions, to satisfy a favor for someone, peer pressure, to enhance community citizens or a friend's relationship, to keep a job, to better a job position or to be in a boss's favor, wrongful death and for justifiable causes as defamation of character.

I love the following quote: They "may get me at last, as you say, but I will have good times till then. You are fools to make yourselves slaves to a piece of fat bacon, some hardtack and a little sugar and coffee." Sitting Bull was right - It's a mistake to surrender humanity for a pittance. - Sitting Bull

Thank you for your time.
Rose Kentta



To the editor:

In 2007, I wrote to the membership about the lack of timely information from the Tribal government.

I said, "It has been a constant struggle to persuade the present Tribal government to transmit information to the members in a timely and accurate manner ... We are not informed of what occurs in the meetings for at least a month, and often three months, after the meetings."

Since I wrote that statement 18 months ago, we've gotten a new Tribal website and our *Siletz News* has become a more stylish publication filled with large color pictures of awards ceremonies and photo ops for the Tribal chairman and her political supporters, but little else has changed. The official Tribal website features the minutes, the *Siletz News* and the *Nesika Illahee*, unfortunately we still don't receive the minutes until they are yesterday's news.

All our members, particularly our distant members, need meaningful information about our businesses, finances, Tribal programs, committees, and elections in order to best select and advise our leaders.

For example, Tribal members should have been informed about the action to expel Tribal Council member Lisa Brown before the hearing to expel, not after it was a done deal. Members were not informed in any effective sense until directly after the vote to expel, when it was too late for them to voice their concerns about it. In the May issue of the *Siletz News*, the Tribal Chairman gave only her side of the issue.

Our Tribal publications, which are supposed to belong to each and every member of the Tribe, have become a tool for the entrenched powers-that-be in Tribal government to advance their own political agendas. There are other sides to these and many other issues.

Members should also know that there is an attempt under way to silence political speech among the membership of this Tribe. The chairman and vice-chairman of the Election Board are attempting to sue me to silence my whistle blowing in my personal campaign letters sent out at my own expense directly to members.

We have our work cut out for us if we are going to protect the members' right to communicate with one another, but I remain optimistic that in the future our government will become more open and tolerant to criticism and input from our membership. Until then, you can read the rest of the story at www.siletz.net.

Lynette Warren

