

To the editor:

I want to thank everybody for helping and everyone who came to the Downey reunion, especially Charlotte Noble for getting all the footwork done to pull it together.

Pete Downey

To the editor:

I would like to thank the Tribal Council for selecting me and my friends, Alfred Lane Jr. and John Roe Sr., to be grand marshals of the 2012 pow-wow parade. I was honored to be selected to represent my uncles, cousins, friends and other distinguished Tribal members who answered the call to World War II.

I was also honored to be accompanied by my wife, who also had uncles who answered the call to duty.

Thank you.

Ed Ben

To the editor:

When I read Chairwoman Pigsley's report on HR 6141 and Senate Bill 908, I wondered why the Grand Ronde and Coos Tribes would try to "distort history" in opposing our Tribe's efforts to gain more land into trust. It was not until I read the Grand Ronde paper that I gained any information.

According to these other Tribes, the legislation we put forth would exclude them from doing the same thing we want to do. So if that is the holdup, why not rewrite the legislation to include all Tribes originally included in the Coast Reservation. Isn't it much better for all Oregon Tribes to gain more land than for none of us - or just Siletz? Isn't one of the very reasons our Tribes lost so much due to the fact that there was always some other Tribe willing to work with the Blue-Coats against other Natives?

If there is a treaty from 1855 (20 years prior to the Siletz Treaty), that sets apart 800,000 acres for multiple Tribes in this state, why aren't all of these Tribes working together to gain at least a portion of what should already belong to us?

As we bicker and isolate, each generation's blood quantum goes down. I don't know that I could even find a woman in Siletz who isn't my cousin one way or another. So how am I to carry on another generation of Siletz Natives?

I am just under half Native with blood from Siletz, Klamath and Grand Ronde - all Oregon Tribes. But my blood quantum is only listed as 1/8 with Siletz. If Oregon Tribes worked together for all of our benefit, we would be stronger.

If we had a joint reservation, as this 1855 Coast Reservation was apparently intended, we could recognize blood quantum from all Tribes represented. Our people could find other Natives to have children with that weren't their close relations. Our blood quantum would go up. Seems to me like something we should think about.

Right now, our minimum blood quantum is 1/16. If we don't figure something out, will there even be any Oregon Natives left 100 years from now? Once blood quantum drops low enough, what is to stop what happened in 1954 from happening all over again?

If we don't start working together for what's best for all of us, we may see that in generations to come, there are none of us.

Randall Hartwell

Dear Native American community members:

The Seventh Annual Northwest Indian Storytelling Festival is scheduled for Oct. 26-28, 2012, at Portland State University in Portland, Ore. The NISA Emerging Tribal Storytellers Workshop also will be all day on Oct. 27-28. Tribal members as well as those who self-identify as Native American but lack official Tribal affiliation paperwork are all welcome to join us for this weekend of storytelling and cultural enrichment.

The storytelling festival is sponsored by the Northwest Indian Storytellers Association, Portland State University's Indigenous Nations Studies Program and Native American Student and Community Center, and Wisdom of the Elders, Inc.

NISA was formed in 2005 to encourage, preserve and strengthen traditional storytelling among Tribes in Oregon, Washington and Idaho, and to share Tribal oral cultural arts with our entire regional community. We hold storytelling festivals in Portland each fall with plans to hold festivals annually in Washington.

We invite all Tribal members to become members of NISA and join us at this year's NISA Storytelling Festival and Emerging Tribal Storytellers Workshop. Members registering for the festival weekend and workshops will enjoy five home-cooked meals during the two days of the storytelling workshop. Plus, you will receive a pass to attend the entire weekend of festival events.

In return, you pay a modest registration fee of \$40 to cover food and expenses plus we ask that you donate an item for our silent auction held during the festival weekend. A limited number of scholarships will be available. Let us know if you need a scholarship.

Please join us for a weekend of Tribal culture and learning. You can e-mail Rebecca Tait at NISA@wisdomoftheelders.org or phone her at 503-775-4014 and request a NISA membership form and festival/workshop registration information. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to ask.

Dogidinh ("thank you" in Deg Hit'an Dine)

Rose High Bear (Deg Hit'an Dine)

Executive Director/Executive Producer

Wisdom of the Elders, Inc.



Wisdom of the Elders

Committed to Native American
cultural sustainability, multi-media
education and race unity

To the editor:

The children of Roy Downey Jr. would like to thank the Tribal Veterans Honor Guard, in particular Tony Molina, Stan Werth and Clint Muschamp, for honoring our father, Roy Downey, with his well-deserved gun salute. We also thank Selene Rilatos for her beautiful song. You are all so very much appreciated.

This year we are coming together to celebrate and spend a weekend together without the company of our dad. We will miss his jokes, the stories and all of the laughter and pride he has brought to us throughout our lives.

His ashes are now placed next to our grandparents and our brother, but we know he is not there. He is soaring high and free in the heavens with those who have gone before him, watching over us all.

Thank you,

Rebecca "Downey" Williams

To the editor:

I would like to send a very grateful thank you to our Tribe, to our Elders program and to our entire membership and all staff for making this Tribe all that it is. Without all of you, we wouldn't be where we are today.

My grandmother, Caroline Allen, came to our Nesika Illahee Pow-Wow for the first time this year. For the first time in her lifetime, she was an enrolled Siletz Tribal member. She grew up on and around another Tribe. Her ancestors left the Siletz lands when their recognition was taken away so many years ago. In 2011, she came back to her roots. She came home. This year, she celebrated with her people. And this year my grandmother felt loved and respected.

For those who don't understand what I mean, my grandmother walked onto the hill. She was shown the Elders seating area, she was given cold water and a fan to fan herself. She was given lunch and she was smiled at and talked to. This practice isn't something she's used to where she's from. On Sunday, she again was given food - this time, fresh open-fire salmon, rice and veggies, cold water and again served by our smiling-faced Royalty. These may not be grand gestures to some, but they were to her.

When we left, my grandma was holding my hand. She squeezed - I stopped. I looked at her and she had tears rolling down her cheeks. I asked her what was the matter. Her reply was simple, "In over 70 years of being a Tribal member in another Tribe, I was never treated as well as I was treated in one weekend here in Siletz." I felt so proud to myself be a member and employee of the Siletz Tribe.

Thank you all for giving my grandma that moment, this weekend, this amazing pow-wow weekend. It truly takes a Tribe.

With a full and proud heart,

Casey Godwin

To the editor:

Accountability

During per capita, there were angry people because the Tribe took their per cap or allowed other entities to do so.

This reflects a double standard that the past and current Tribal Council have perpetuated against Tribal members. Tribal Council wants its Tribal members to be held accountable and responsible for their debts and obligations. To ensure Tribal members are, they have enacted and enforce strict policies, ordinances and laws. However, this idea of accountability and responsibility is not applied to Tribal Council or its administrators.

In the early 1990s, Tribal Council had invested Tribal dollars in STEDCO, which lost money in various enterprises. The first one I remember is the company that bought fern, salal and chittum. This lost money.

Then they allowed our Tribal sovereignty to be waived so STEDCO could obtain a million dollar loan to invest in more businesses that lost money. I don't think STEDCO ever repaid that loan and council had to use our dollars to pay it off.

Against the Timber Committee's recommendation, they bought the mill in Toledo. The Timber Committee knew it was a big timber saw mill and the Tribe didn't have enough big timber to keep it running. They spent a couple million remodeling it. It was common knowledge that it was contaminated and it would take millions of dollars to make it clean.

The clinic had obtained its state certification so they could bill insurance companies. They accumulated over \$5 million to be used toward needed medical procedures for Tribal members that Contract Health couldn't provide. Council took \$5 million of that money and used it to clean up the mill site. It didn't work. Council says it was paid back, but with whose money? Tribal member money.

Then it bought a box company, seafood company; invested in an aerospace company, an underwater salvage company and a software company. They all lost money. These are the only ones we know of.

The only thing the council has invested in that returns money is the casino, but we have the lowest per capita payment of any Tribe in the Northwest.

Who was held responsible and accountable for all these failures? Nobody. I am betting that the money lost over the last 20 years is over \$10 million. The federal government was held accountable for mismanaging various Tribes' money in the Northwest. We received \$9 million of that Nez Perce settlement. The Navajo is another example.

Why can't we hold our past and current Tribal Council and administrators accountable for these mismanaged funds? Election time is coming up. If nothing changes, nothing changes. Block voting is holding our Tribe back. Hold them accountable.

Ray Blacketer