



Siletz, Oregon

Confederated Tribes of Siletz

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Tribal Council Member Expelled

By Brenda Bremner

Saturday, September 21, 1985 was a trying day for the Siletz Tribal Council. The first order of business for the day was to conduct a hearing which would result in the expulsion of a fellow Tribal Council member.

Vernon Brown was the Tribal Council member who was found guilty of gross misconduct by the Tribal Council. The Council determined that he solicited funds in the name of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz, and he used these funds which he received in cash donations for personal gains.

Tension loomed in the gymnasium of the Community Center on Government Hill as the hearing began with LeRoy Wilder, Tribal attorney, stating the allegations brought against Vernon Brown by the Tribal Council. Family, friends and concerned tribal members of each Council member sat in the audience aware of the severity of the allegations and aware of the consequences that could arise from them. Some sat ready to criticize, some to defend, some to listen, but all sat in silence attentive to the voice of each speaker.

The formal charges brought against Vernon Brown by Council were:

- he was charged with the solicitation of money in the name of the Pow-Wow

Committee and/or the Tribe and deposited this money in his personal account;

- he was charged with submitting a timesheet claiming 4 hours of time for attending a Culture Committee Meeting which he did not attend.

With regards to the first charge, Mr. Brown was a member of the 1985 Pow-Wow Committee, and as a member of that committee took it upon himself to solicit in the nearby communities of Newport and Toledo for money. When asked at an earlier meeting if funds had been solicited for the Pow-Wow, Mr. Brown said no. But when confronted with a check endorsed by himself, he said that in fact money had been solicited, but it had been solicited not for the Pow-Wow but for Princess tickets. Mr. Brown said when he solicited money from local businesses he, "told everyone I was raising money for my daughter for Pow-Wow Princess." When in fact he had not told "everyone", but only some of the businesses what his true intentions were for the funds they would donate.

Two community businessmen testified on behalf of the Tribal Council that neither was ever informed that the funds being solicited would be used for

the purchase of Pow-Wow tickets.

A Newport store owner said that he was unnecessarily pressured to donate more money than he had intended. He was willing to donate \$15.00 but was told that this sum was far less than other community businesses had donated. So he did not donate any money at all.

A Toledo businessman said that at no time was he told the money he donated would be used for Princess tickets.

The money that was involved is estimated at a sum of approximately \$200.00, but a definite figure is not known. The only records of the funds solicited are the cancelled checks of the businesses in the community. Also there are no records of how many businesses were solicited.

It was Vernon Brown's intention that his daughter win the Pow-Wow Princess contest — as any father should wish. But he solicited funds for another purpose then deposited them into his personal banking account. From here the funds were withdrawn at a later date and used to purchase tickets which were filled out in the name of his daughter not the donating business.

With regards to the second

charge, in March 1985 Vernon Brown submitted a timesheet which had 4 hours for his attendance at a Culture Committee meeting. He was paid for that attendance. Two months later in May 1985, it was brought to the Council's attention that Mr. Brown had never attended a Culture Committee Meeting. At that time Mr. Brown was confronted with this falsification of his timesheet, he offered no explanation. He was instructed to take care of the matter and said he would. But he did not attempt to take care of the matter until September 1985.

In his own defense, Mr. Brown explained that he did not intentionally falsify his timesheet, but incorrectly put down 4 hours. He claimed it was a mistake. He did

not, however, justify the fact that it took him approximately 6 months to correct this error. And that he did not personally take care of it, but the Chairman had to take action on it. He did explain that he intended to take care of the matter but when he arrived at the Tribal office the matter was already taken care of.

The hearing ended with Vernon Brown being relieved of any future Tribal Council duties; and as a result, Mr. Vernon Brown will never be able to serve on Council at any future time. It is unknown at this time whether or not other committee membership will be affected.

Note: It is not the intention of this article to drum negative publicity for the Pow-Wow, or for the daughter of Vernon Brown. She is a victim in this unfortunate incident, and she should not have to suffer because of gossip or ridicule. If you have negative feelings about this matter do not ridicule the innocent but the guilty.

Housing Applications

The Housing Improvement Program (HIP) is accepting applications for the fiscal year 1986 which begins Oct. 1st. Our funding is limited so it is necessary to get your application into our Housing Office as soon as possible.

The categories which tribal members can apply for are: Category "A" — housing which will remain substandard; Category "B" — renovate existing housing to standard condition; Category "C" — assist tribal members with down payment and closing costs. There is a possibility of some Category "D" money at some time in the future. This is to build a new home on your property. This category has been in the past basically for the elderly or handicapped. If you feel you may qualify for this category, you are encouraged to apply.

Tribal Members must reside in or be returning to the 8 county service area. It has been recently brought to our attention that we are presently unable to serve the 4 Portland area counties.

If you would like an application or want further information about the program, contact the Housing Coordinator, Jeff Williams, at P.O. Box 549, Siletz, OR 97380 or call 444-2532 Ext. 33. Oregon residents can call toll-free: 1-800-922-1399.

Housing Authority Established

The Confederated Tribes of Siletz has established the Siletz Indian Housing Authority. This allows the Tribe to negotiate with the Department of Housing and Urban Development for funds for the construction of new homes for Tribal Members in the low to moderate income range to purchase (Mutual-Help) and for construction of homes for a low income rental program.

At the present, we have received notice of funding for 35 Mutual-Help homes in the Siletz area. Applications are being taken from Tribal Members who may be interested in buying a new home. There is also a possibility of 5 more homes to be added to this total. Prompt response is needed from additional interested Tribal Members so the Housing Authority can decide if we want to accept these.

We also need to establish a list of Tribal Members who may want to apply for a home in the near future, as we intend to apply for additional units of Mutual-Help and Rental for next year's funding. The funding cycle for 1986 begins Oct. 1st, so it is upon us already. We need to hear from you now!

If you think you might be interested or want more information write: Siletz Indian Housing Authority, Attn: Jeff Williams, Executive Director, P.O. Box 549, Siletz, OR 97380 or call 444-2532 Ext. 33 or 1-800-922-1399 (Toll Free).

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Address Correction Requested