

Letters to the Editor



TO THE EDITOR:

When I was young I was not on the tribal roll. I asked my Uncle Robert why that could be. He told me it wasn't that my relatives said I wasn't Indian. It was the United States Government that said I wasn't Indian. My mom and dad told me as far back as I remember that I was Indian. So if not anywhere but in my heart, I was an Indian, and to be told I was not recognized as an Indian hurt a lot.

Then one day Senator Hatfield came to Siletz. I saw him talking to my Uncle Robert. I was with my cousin, Rollie Rilatos. When Uncle Rob introduced us, Rollie wiped his hand on his pants and shook his hand, then I did as well.

I was young then, and wanted that man from the United States Government to know my name was Phil Rilatos Jr. and I was an Indian. In my heart I was and my heart pumps my blood every day of my life. So how could it be said I didn't have enough Indian blood? The only way I could not would be to bleed to death and die. I would be a dead Indian without any blood and buried on Government Hill with all my relatives.

Then the blood quantum was 1/8 and I was in with some to spare I thought. But now I am older and have two sons that could feel that "no breed" feeling. As our Elders saw fit to fight for me and the others in my moccasins, think of our young, we had them, they didn't have us. That means any, I mean any, descendent to our Tribe is a member, or in not so long there will be not one alive left on the roll. We could one day be no more and some tricky politician will get a hold on all that has been built. Let me be proud to see my sons names on the roll, Philip Walter Rilatos 3rd, and Joshua Lennon Mullins/ Rilatos. We will all be better off to enroll all our family.

Thanks,
Philip W. Rilatos Jr.

(edited for length)

TO THE EDITOR:

Are we a Tribe? Or individuals using tribal status for benefits? How do we become a united Tribe? There are 1300 eligible voters, 350 voted. There are other benefits available to the Tribe and Tribal members. *A land base of 200,000 acres, housing, employment, education and total health care for all, small business opportunities, more hunting and fishing rights, Tribal participation in import/export, tribal member & foreign corporation's, banking, college's, dam's, a trade free zone, establishing a true nation to nation relationship with all countries.* A core group started the restoration process. Many are still active. Some moved on or passed on. They established an umbrella of tribal status, and benefits. It's not perfect, but the benefits exceed the problems. Dolly Fisher has been active 20 years, Eloise Case, Wilma Strong, Dee Pigsley, Bonnie Peterson, Frank Simmons, Bud and Cheryl Lane, Joanne Miller, Pauline Ricks, and others. They worked for free or if Councilpersons, for \$5.00 to \$7.00/hour. They gave years to the formation of this tribe. It's time we recognized this. How? I don't know. A part-time council cannot achieve the above goals, nor can we expect it. There are council members who can and wish to work full time. We should support that. We have achieved much with a part-time council, they could achieve more, if fulltime. We need to pay these people. They have contributed to our lives. I hear people who are disgruntled, but are unwilling to show up for General Council or to vote. There are solutions. *If we want to be a Tribe.* Clarence Darrow said "If a nation has a common interest,

than different ideas will not destroy them, but if they don't have a common interest the conflict of those different ideas would surely destroy them". The Tribal Constitution does not prohibit the Tribal Council from working full time. It's our lack of support that restrains this. What's our common interest? Self-sufficiency? Land? Culture/Traditions? All of the above? Lets identify our common interests, get involved, assist our councilpeople, individually and financially, and support each other in achieving those interests.

Submitted by: Ray Blacketer

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing this letter to express my dismay and disappointment at an article in the last issue of the Siletz Newsletter. A full page was used to display pictures of the tribe's "Natural Resources" staff. Every person listed was a forester! Is that how the tribe views their role as land managers? How very typical of an extraction-oriented mind set--if it can't be mined, cut, or otherwise used for profit, then it's not a resource worth dealing with. What about the multitude of plant and animal species inhabiting tribal lands that our ancestors relied on for their subsistence? Are those species no longer valued by our Tribe? Has commercialization and greed reduced our view of the natural world to merchantable tree species? Frankly, I expected more from my people.

We, of all people, should consider all species when dealing with land management decisions. I don't see how that is even remotely possible with a staff composed entirely of foresters. Where are the biologists who can provide insight and assistance in planning timber sales? We currently have programs designed to exploit fish and wildlife resources but I see no effort to manage for sustained populations of those resources. Tribal lands may contain critical habitat components for some species but without a biologist to determine that, we

will never know how our actions may influence them. This is especially important in light of the blatant disregard shown by such timber giants as Boise Cascade and Georgia Pacific who own thousands of acres in and around Lincoln County.

I hope the Tribal Council and STEDCO will take this letter as a challenge to develop a more well-rounded natural resources staff that includes at least one biologist/ecologist to assist with planning, and to develop a fish and wildlife program for tribal lands. Let's not lose sight of our past and the importance of the earth to our spiritual and cultural identity.

Sincerely,
Angela Sondenaa
Tribal Member,
Wildlife Biologist

THANK YOU:

To whoever left 150 empty cans of snooze for my jingle dress at my door, thank you very much!

Megan Blacketer

To: Ty Gem Arthur Louis Butler
Happy 3rd Birthday,
from all the Butler family, and
that says alot!

Love Mom and Dad!

Letters to the Editor :

All letters received will be printed. Please type or write legible, no profane language will be printed. LETTERS THAT EXCEED 350 WORDS IN LENGTH WILL BE EDITED as approved by Tribal Council Resolution #91-04. All letters must include your name, address and signature. Send letters to : Siletz News, P.O. Box 549, Siletz, Oregon 97380.

PLEASE NOTE: The Chief Executive Officer of the Siletz Tribe is the Chief Editor of the Siletz Newsletter.

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