

Letters to the editor

Letter to Editor:

Last week I attended my very first Pow-Wow, and I wanted to thank the Siletz Tribe for permitting me to participate in this joyous expression of life. It was so beautiful and loving, that I 'cried for happy' most of Saturday. It can be a real shock to the system for newcomers. When the veterans entered the arena, the combination of drums, voices and the energy of the crowd was simply overwhelming. It was my first exposure to a culture in which the young are taught to honor themselves by honoring their elders. That evening when the elders entered the arena again, I joined those who went to greet them. Being able to shake each hand and look into their eyes while thanking them for their sacrifices was a powerful and moving experience. I camped with friends and the security officers were great. They were friendly and helpful, and they made the whole area feel safe. I'm one of those people who dropped into a strange town, immediately checked out the cemetery looking for a peaceful place to meditate. Your cemetery is lovely, and another way of showing your respect for each other and your ancestors. So many pictures bring to mind like snapshots, spring to mind especially touching. There was the man who danced with tiny jingle dancers dressed in pink; the 15 year boy who "lives, sleeps and breathes" his dancing; young men dancing with babies in their arms and the beauty of the young women in regalia. You do a good job choosing vendors too. I'd buy a little, visit a little, and they would as often as not throw in something extra. They explained, answered questions, showed me how things were made and how they worked. Next year I'll bring more money special thanks goes to the white haired woman in white regalia who judged the ladies dancing; she hugged me and invited me back. And thank you Joe Shade, for answering questions, sharing laughter, being an instant buddy. While their I heard of Tribes who no longer permit whites to attend their Pow-Wows, and I hope that never happens in Siletz. If mother earth is to survive, we must all work together, and you have so much to teach the rest of us. All in all, it was a glorious weekend, and I'll definitely be back next year.

In Love and Light
Inez Castor

Tribal Elders and Tribal Members

I would like to thank our elders for participating in the parade at Siletz. Before the parade at Siletz we had some people from Grand Ronde reregistered in our parade. I asked one of the ladies from Grand Ronde. Who also was on their Pow Wow committee if we went to Grand Ronde could we register our truck and participate in their parade. I would personally like to thank these elders Gladys Bolton, Madge Ma-

son, Maxine Rilatos, Shirely Walker, Kay Steele, Doris Riding In. If I have missed any one I apologize. Our efforts and the participation of the Siletz elders we took home the first place trophy. The trophy will be put in each area office for a length of time to be decided later by the elders

Melvin La Chance

To The Editor

Re: Where did the traditional values go
Submitted by: Frank D. Simmons,
Enrolled Tribal member

All responsible Tribal council members must be held responsible for their part in the destruction of the integrity, dignity and honor the Siletz Indians once possessed. The Siletz Tribe is better than that and deserve a lot better representation.

The Siletz Indian people have enjoyed the luxury of working in harmony, the Tribal staff, Tribal and non Tribal had one goal, the betterment of the Siletz Tribe.

Within the last seven months, we have witnessed some of the worst decision making in the Siletz tribes history. We have seen direct violations of the procedures of hiring, and firing.

According to the Personnel Manual, the Tribal Government will not discriminate in selection because of race, creed, age, sex, color national origin, physical handicap, marital status and "politics". We have lost some very important staff that were honorable people with families. They were let go on count of some of the Tribal Council members personal vendettas and prejudice. Most of the tribal staff feel the same threats to them. Are we going to continue letting this destruction of Tribal integrity continue?

"We were promised", that the Tribal Council would listen to the General Council and to the Tribal Elders. One of the Tribal Council members said, "I will be in the Tribal Staffs corner, I will go to bat for you". The dialogue between Tribal Council and Tribal Staff is almost nil. When the Tribal Council goes into executive session, the Administrative staff and the Chinook Winds staff "chringe, which one of us is next". Some of the Tribal Council will walk right by you and wont even look at you, let alone speak to you. Then they demand respect. Respect is earned and deserved, it is not a given.

We are the proud Indians of the Siletz Indian Tribe. If we are to have a bright future, immediate action must be taken.

Dear Tribal Members,

The Council's recent actions to hire a General Manager have created controversy. According to the Tribal Personnel Manual "The Tribe will give preference in hiring, first to enrolled Siletz Tribal members, and secondly to enrolled Indians of other federally recognized Tribes..."[emphasis added]. The manual states that the only reason for not following these preferences is if "...the applicant is determined to be unsuitable for the position, or has unsatisfactory performance issues." It further provides that "...The Interview Committee shall document the reasons for non-selection of an applicant who qualifies for Indian Preference."

Tribal member Phil Rilatos and a non-tribal candidate were interviewed for the position. At the meeting where they made their selection, a majority of Council stated that Phil was "unsuitable" for the position and voted 5-4-0 to hire the non-tribal applicant (Delores Pigsley, Jessie Davis, Pat Morrell, and JoAnn Miller dissented). During discussion of Phil's "unsuitability", the majority referenced actions he took as STEDCO Executive Director. The minority voices on Council pointed out these were actions Phil took at the direction of the Tribal Council!

I have served on tribal interview committees, as a Council representative and as a Manager. I am aware of the "unsuitability" and "unsatisfactory performance" clauses. I understood this to mean documented conduct (i.e. police record, court finding, performance evaluations or other written documentation of employee performance or conduct). Determining "unsuitability" absent an objective, documented process is alarming. It sets bad precedence and sends one of two messages: Either future interview committees do not have to provide documented evidence of unsuitability or the Tribal Council is not bound by it's own policies.

Phil Rilatos is appealing Council's actions. He filed a petition in Tribal Court and an injunction against completing the hiring until the Court has ruled on his petition. At another meeting, Council voted 5-3-0 to continue hiring despite the pending hearing (dissenting were Pat Morrell, Jessie Davis, and JoAnn Miller, Dee Pigsley was absent). Pat Morrell went on record, stating that she felt Council should not go forward with the hiring until the Tribal Court has ruled on Phil's petition. I believe the dissenters are correct in this case. As a past tribal Court Clerk and an Associate Judge, I know that parties to an action are required to mitigate damages. To proceed with hiring could create more damage, if Council is reversed. The Assistant CEO is filling in as General Manager until the position is filled. There is no pressing reason to go forward and several reasons to wait.

I am tired of a leadership that makes up it's mind despite the facts and the rules. This abuse of power must stop. Respectfully Yours

Bonnie M. Petersen

(Conti. on page 11)