

Letters to the editor

Communication and good governance

By Alyssa Macy

East Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi said, "Truth never damages a cause that is just." The current tribal government has taken some steps to ensure an informed citizenry, and this is a positive and important step forward.

Let's celebrate this and work together to increase transparency and communications within our community—it will have a positive impact on our efforts to build this Nation.

Communication has been identified by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights as an important attribute of good governance.

Our tribal government is tasked with managing tribal resources and conducting affairs on behalf of over 5,000 tribal members, keeping in mind future generations and working within our cultural understandings of who we are as a people.

One of the key aspects of good governance and democracy in general is communication, specifically transparency and access to information. Our tribal government is working hard to improve the livelihood of our community, and in order to successfully affect change, government must build support amongst the people. This requires effective communication internally and externally. In meetings, we often hear the many divergent views, some of which are not based on facts. Transparent and timely information sharing on tribal issues is important as it reduces misperceptions and rumors. We may not all agree on an issue, but when facts are available, time and energy can be focused on the issue at hand.

Information has to be accessible. It is helpful for information to be presented visually and in writing. To ensure effectiveness of meetings, information should continue to be provided in advance through common outlets but should also be available online. This helps the tribal members to understand the issue, formulate relevant questions and ultimately build support for an issue.

Communication is a two-way street. Our voice is heard through the voting process and by engaging in public life. This includes attending meet-

ings, working on facts (not personalities) and choosing to be a part of change-making that works within the framework of our Constitution and By-laws. You can't complain if you refuse to engage in the process, no matter how difficult, and we must respect the governance framework that we operate within.

Governments, elected officials and citizens who commit to the concept of transparency and communication ultimately strengthen the work they do.

By being transparent and ensuring that information reaches the people and vice versa, trust is developed between all involved.

Transparent and timely information reduces misperceptions and rumors, and allows energy to be focused on building support for ideas.

Transparency and communication of government, elected officials and committees is a great way to demonstrate the positive work being done, ensures accountability and is an effective measure towards reducing rumors.

Indian Business Talk

Avoid harmful holiday debt

It's a darn shame that Christmas has become such an economic event. I don't remember it that way as a kid. But then, what do kids know?

More important is, what do kids remember? What will they remember?

How about cutting their own tree; sled rides and snowball fights; making angels in the snow; or the hot chocolate when they get home?

And dad-made and mom-made presents. Or grandpa and grandma-made presents.

Those were special presents and special Christmases.

My wish for you and yours is that this Christmas be special for all your family and may next year continue in that fashion.

You know I have to bring something about talking business into this so here it is.

Please, don't go into severe debt funding a huge pile of presents for under the tree.

What is severe debt?

Payday loans, car title loans, and maxed out credit card debt would qualify as severe debt. The interest rates for the first two can exceed 400 percent.

I suggest that any debt

that takes more than two months to pay off might be thought of as severe.

Down home I would say, "Kai an dada." Don't do that!

Instead, be inventive. Do something else that is a lot more fun and much less injurious to your financial plans for next year.

How about that Christmas tree hunt? Or the sledding? Or the snowball fight?

Definitely, enjoy the hot chocolate?

Merry Christmas.

Bruce Engle, loan officer, W.S. Credit

Great event

It was honorable to attend a well organized event by the Housing Department staff.

People were greeted and acknowledged at the door. Staff brought in pies and other food items.

Saphronia was head chef, and she had a big smile for everyone, which made her food even more tasty.

The holiday cheer of Thanksgiving was observable, the children were making friends, and the laughter was cheerful.

This was the most genuine social event I have attended. There were many people who mingled together with joyful spirit.

Thank you Scott Moses and your entire Housing Department team for such a good time. The environment was great.

People will be celebrating the holidays and the end of the year, and bringing in the New Year. May God bless all people and keep each one safe during this holiday season. Enjoy the snow as nature's cleansing takes place.

Respectfully,
Priscilla Frank.



Happy Holidays, from Warm Springs artist Travis Bobb.

Better tomorrow

The winds of time have been taking away our old ways and our traditions. Our culture is rapidly disappearing.

Soon, our native tribes will be as naked as a tree that has lost all of its leaves. No longer are we guided by the old ones but are, instead, ruled by politics.

What happened to unity of the people? Did it also die with the wise elders?

It seems that we are residues of a once great nation—the American Indian of yesterday. It seems, today, many of us are only part time Indians who have lost or forgotten the greater things, such as walking the good red road. A solution cannot be

found when we are led by blind leaders who are so pitifully lost within two worlds. We do not want to be lost. We want to be found. And we want to see again.

Thank you great Creator for giving us the tools we need, such as prayer and hope for a better tomorrow.

Charles Littleleaf

Grant helps tribes' Dream Catcher education program

The Oregon Community Foundation recently awarded \$68,415 to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs for a k-8 education program.

The grant was through the foundation's K-12 Student Success: Out of School Time Initiative.

The initiative was strengthened and expanded through a partnership with the Ford Family Foundation.

The grant to the tribes will help fund Dream Catcher, offering Native American students skills that make them successful in school, resulting in positive impacts on academic achievement and higher graduation rates.

The grant to the tribes was part of an overall award of more than \$550,000 in grants to different nonprofits around Central Oregon.

The awards this year include first-time grants from the Small Arts and Culture program.

Arts and Culture

Recent research revealed that of the 1,468 registered arts and culture nonprofit organizations in Oregon, more than 60 percent have budgets under \$100,000.

Although these organizations are central to the vitality of Oregon's communities,

they are often not eligible or competitive for traditional grant programs from many foundations.

In response to this need, the Oregon Community Foundation board decided to invest \$300,000 annually for five years to support small community-driven arts and culture organizations.

The Oregon Community Foundation's Central Oregon regional team serves the counties of Jefferson, Crook, Deschutes, Sherman, Wasco and Wheeler, and the Warm Springs Reservation. Their main office is located in Bend.

In Central Oregon for 2014, Small Arts and Culture grants totaling close to \$17,000 were awarded to:

The Archaeological Society of Central Oregon in Bend. The society received \$780 for protection of endangered archaeological sites.

Crook County Parks and Recreation Foundation in Prineville. This foundation received \$5,000 to offer a safe environment for adults and children to celebrate Christmas in the Pines festival of lights, and enjoy the spirit of the season.

Fossil Players of Fossil. They received \$5,000 to purchase a new or used portable

performance stage and backdrop flats for theatrical and musical performances in the community.

The High Desert Chamber Music in Bend received \$2,000 for general operating support of High Desert Chamber Music's seasonal concert series.

Rise Up International of Bend; \$2,000 to conduct interactive art workshops with the focus on collaborative murals and screen-printing.

ScaleHouse of Bend received \$2,000 for general operating support.

Regional nonprofits

In addition to Small Arts and Culture, and the K-12 Student Success grants, the Oregon Community Foundation awarded more than \$466,000 in 68 grants to nonprofits in Central Oregon during the recent fall grant cycle, contributing to a total of \$7.6 million awarded statewide. Additional grants in the region included:

Central Oregon Veterans Ranch, Bend; \$4,500 to establish a multi-generational program that offers transitional and hospice care to aging veterans in a rustic setting while engaging younger veterans and other commu-

nity members in sustainably managing the farm.

Kids Club of Jefferson County, Madras; \$20,000 for capital improvements to space used for homework, the Brain Domain tutoring program operated in partnership with the Jefferson County School District, and programs that help Hispanic and Native American families bridge the digital divide.

Jericho Road, Redmond; \$7,900 for food and assistance programs for homeless and hungry persons in Deschutes County.

The Landing Youth & Tutoring Center, Prineville; \$10,000 for out-of-school programs for middle and high school students.

Oregon Natural Desert Association, Bend; \$15,000 to increase collaboration among diverse partners and expand volunteer-driven habitat restoration work in Crook, Gilliam, Harney, Lake, Malheur & Wheeler counties.

Sisters Schools Foundation, Inc., Sisters; \$17,000 for the Seed To Table project, providing nutrition science education and access to fresh unprocessed produce to students and their families.

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