

## **HowNiKan March (Nmebne Gises) 2009, vol. 30 issue 2 - page 19 - 20**

Despite the recent dissension of the California representatives on two major pieces of legislation, I still believe our legislature is fundamentally strong. Each of us has worked together in our committees, and as a whole, to enact laws and pass resolutions so that enterprises operate, services are delivered, program benefits are put in the hands of individual members, and administrative departments function. And, with the exception of Rep. Goyer in California, your elected officials conduct themselves professionally, both on and off camera.

Those of you who have viewed our last two meetings online have seen the temper tantrums and theatrics displayed when a representative can't wait his turn to have the floor. When a bill is being introduced by the Chairman, Mr. Goyer thinks he is being slighted because the Chairman will not stop mid-sentence and acknowledge him.

I think Mr. Goyer insolent and his behavior improper. In every meeting we have, the Chairman asks if there is discussion on each item on the agenda. We are all given an opportunity to ask questions, and if need be, make a motion to defer the resolution until our next meeting. If the motion to defer does not carry, the Chairman puts the item to a vote. Just because one person does not fully understand the measure does not mean that the majority do not.

To insinuate, which Mr. Goyer has in advance of this printing, that our elected body is a group of "yes men" is not only degrading to me and my legislative colleagues, but should be to everyone who voted. I stand on my qualifications and hard work at the tribe - from becoming an employee back in 1996 to sitting on the tribe's bank board, 13 years in all.

When I sponsor a resolution, make a motion, and cast a vote, I do it with confidence in myself, the Executive leadership, and most of my committee colleagues. I have never been told that I cannot have information when researching something we are voting on.

In my opinion, Mr. Goyer speaks out of both sides of his mouth on acting respectful. You can not believe the disrespect he shows Chairman Barrett and Vice Chairman Capps through his e-mail correspondence. With all of his schooling you would think Mr. Goyer could muster up some professional decorum; of course, that would come from experience and career accomplishments, not from being a career student.

After you read Mr. Goyer's column this month, you will think that our members living near Wanette, Oklahoma are simple folk who would spend their last dollars on frivolous entertainment, rather than basic needs, if tribal legislators ever voted to build an entertainment center and other amenities there.

He has probably never had to stop for gas, run to the bank, grab a bite to eat, or visit the AM/PM health clinic the last time he was in Wanette. If he had, he would have found that none of these amenities exist in the southern portion of our reservation jurisdiction - 30 miles south of the tribal headquarters - even though hundreds of our members live in the vicinity.

Mr. Goyer and Mr. Finks, both California representatives, voted against the tribe making an application to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to take a large tract of land near Wanette into trust. Luckily, the motion to approve carried. The tribe has spent three years buying back highly fractionated interests from individual members and landowners to bring one of the largest contiguous original Citizen Potawatomi allotments back under tribal ownership.

Mr. Goyer, naively and adversely, stated on record that he thinks the land around Wanette should remain rural and untouched by development. Not only does he think us Oklahomans simpletons, he seems to think we live in a historical vacuum. He probably thinks that the state correctional facility in nearby Lexington is an editing service.

Mr. Goyer and Mr. Finks, neither one realizes that their vote against placing the Wanette land in trust is a statement against job creation and community development for Oklahoma tribal members. For years, I have heard Chairman Barrett and Vice Chairman Capps talk about creating a grocery store, gas station, bank branch, and possibly a daycare center in Wanette. These are the immediate needs for the property if the tribe is ever able to get it in trust. When the Chairman introduced the bill he was describing the limitless opportunities he envisions for the development of the land; it is his role to think big.

While I personally like Thom Finks, I can think of no logical reason why he would oppose taking land into trust or expanding the tribe's legal jurisdiction, taxing jurisdiction, and federal funding base if not for political reasons in support of his brother who favors reducing our tribal wealth.

Mr. Finks and Mr. Goyer also voted against the General Council budget request. The motion to approve carried despite both representatives opposing a budget which would allow for the planning of a North Texas Regional Center and Assisted Living Center. Unlike the State of California, there is a large population of tribal members concentrated in north Texas.

If the aim of the California representatives is to shoot down worthwhile legislation in order to take credit away from our seated Chairman, I hope it backfires on them. Chairman Barrett has held his office for 24 years and has pushed an agenda to better each of us through education. He draws intense criticism from those who want a small per capita payment in tough economic times. If per capping is ever authorized, the first tangible benefits to go will be tribal scholarships, burial assistance, health aids, prescription drug benefits, the *HowNiKan*, and even our annual heritage festival.

I will never vote for a one-time payout of any tribal revenue no matter how sugarcoated the proposal appears to be. I would rather keep our Nation financially strong with educated members devoted to protecting tribal sovereignty, healthy elders to keep us all grounded, and children given every opportunity to learn their culture.

As always, I am thinking Potawatomi.  
Lisa

# GOPOKES!

If you are a tribal member student at Oklahoma State University or a tribal member living in or around Stillwater, I would like your email address to coordinate local meet and greets, sport and kid activities, and to introduce myself to all the Citizen Potawatomi I see driving around town and parked on campus.

Please email me at [Lisa@CopperBearConsulting.com](mailto:Lisa@CopperBearConsulting.com).

*Paid for by Lisa Kraft*

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