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LETTERS

K-Town is now 40-Town

FROM THE READERS, Aug. 5, 2010

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Enclosed are several photos I have taken around the community of Kayenta. We are no longer "K-Town," but should be known as "40-Town."

Our community is overtaken by 40-ounce liquor bottles. We are drowning in alcoholism.

According to the Kayenta Police District there are over 30 bootlegging establishments currently providing alcohol on a daily basis.

"Wake up, K-Town, and look around at the trash in 40-Town."

I have written several letters to the 40-ounce maker St. Ides Malt Liquor Company in Milwaukee, Wis., requesting recycle bins. I have yet to receive a response. When I do I would like to share their response with the Navajo Times.

Jodonna H. Ward
Kayenta, Ariz.

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Voice of the people stomped at summer session

Ya'ateeh. I'm a resident of Dzil Yii' Jiin and a member of the Forest Lake Chapter.

Back as early as the 1920s, our former leaders rode horses to the council session. It was a necessity for the leaders. As they made their way to Window Rock, along their route, they stopped and listened to communities. The messages, issues and concerns, which were communicated to the leaders, were all important.

All concerns were taken seriously because it was the voices from the communities. Each delegate carried those messages to Window Rock. Once they reached the council floor, the concerns were dealt with. The summer Navajo Nation Council horse ride is now a tradition to honor former Navajo leaders but the



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objective is still the same.

As residents of Dzil Yii' Jiin, we, the Benally family, take an active role in our community issues. For several summers we have saddled our horses and joined the horse ride to Window Rock, whether it be with the Navajo Nation Council delegates or not. Nothing was going to stop us this year.

We joined up with the honorable David Shondee (Chilchinbeto/Kayenta) and honorable Kee Yazzie Mann (Kaibeto). Our start point was at the former Black Mesa Mine complex, which one would say is within our backyard or front door.

We did not have to ponder much about our purpose. The plan was to ride to change Title 18 of the Navajo Nation Code. We hear the words echoing across the Navajo Nation almost each day: "My voice should be heard. I want a voice in negotiations whether it is for coal-mining, oil-drilling, power plants or casinos." The impacted people do not want to be left out.

Title 18 of the Navajo Nation Code (aka the mines and minerals law) deals with negotiations of Navajo Nation natural resources and lease agreements with companies. Currently, the negotiations are mostly between the central government and leasing companies (i.e. Navajo Nation Council, Navajo Nation president and Peabody Western Coal Co., in our case).

Amendments to Title 18 is intended to change that by strengthening the role of impacted Navajo Nation chapters in approval of mineral and energy agreements. This would also entail Local Government Act in progress.

Our intentions were respectable. It was an opportune time to take this important message to Window Rock. There would be no planned horse ride in October for the fall Navajo Nation Council session. Our family has busy daily schedules as do most families.

On July 14, full of hope, adrenaline, determination, and expectations, we saddled our horses. From our home at Dzil Yii' Jiin, on horseback we united with other dedicated horse riders. Through the woods of Forest Lake, to the valleys upwards to Black Mesa Chapter, to serene Blue Gap, towards welcoming Cottonwood/Tselani Chapter, to the bustling Chinle community, to the lovely Canyon De Chelly, on to evergreen-laden Sawmill, through industrious Fort Defiance, and finally destination Window Rock.

Aaahh, relief! It rained upon arrival to Fort Defiance. We cherished the blessing although we all got soaked. The Title 18 documents remained dry in its package. Our riding group knew our agenda.

Monday morning with lots of hope and full of chatter, again we saddled our horses and made the final miles to the Navajo Nation Council chamber. We wanted to share the purpose for the grueling horse ride. The reason we endured the hardships of the summer heat, thirst, physical and mental fatigue was to be made known.

We followed in the footsteps of our leaders, as we brought an important message across the Navajo Nation. To share our message would take only a few minutes of anyone's time. But our first amendment right, the freedom of speech, was denied. Honorable Leslie Dele, council delegate of Tonalea, Ariz., adamantly denied this basic constitutional freedom.

To state our cause was all we wanted. Voicing objective was for all, not just for horse riders from Tonalea, Navajo Mountain, Kaibeto or Sanostee, but also for Dzil Yii' Jiin riders. In fact, he outright refused our honorable Council Delegate Amos F. Johnson from acknowledging us or even mentioning our objective.

According to Mr. Dele "it was too controversial." What is controversial about giving "the voices back to the local level?"

The message of Title 18 amendment legislation was our goal. It was stomped on that day on Monday, July 19. The enlightening moment was obliterated. As a family, our disappointment was evident. But we will not let our determination be extinguished.

Thank you for reading my letter. I request all Diné from all across the Navajo Nation to support Title 18

amendment, "a step in the right direction." Lobby your council delegate to pass this important legislation in fall 2010 session.

Many of you have said, "We do not want secret negotiations. We want to be part of the process." Title 18 amendment will do just that.

We plan to come to as many chapters/communities to request supporting resolutions.

Fern Benally
Black Mesa, Ariz.

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Be on alert for re-elected incumbents

Heads up to new incoming Navajo Nation Council delegates. There will be some current delegates that will be re-elected in November. These are the ones you need to be on alert for.

They will try to manipulate you and try to get you on their side. They will try to do everything to win your support.

You were elected to make you own decisions for the good of the Navajo people. If you're going to be a follower, then you have no place or business being a council delegate. You might as well give up your post and move on.

Since this is a new beginning with election of 24 delegates, there should be no high-ranking officials or delegates. There should not be any privileged delegate. It should not matter how many years they have been a council delegate or if they were a council delegate before. Every delegate should be treated equal.

This is a new era, history, future of the Navajo people. Stop giving false promises. Work on the existing system and improve it. The things you are promising us now are already there and need working on (i.e., health, school, veterans, senior citizens, scholarships, jobs, roads, etc.).

New legislative council and staff, attorneys should be replaced. Why? These people will favor the old re-elected delegates over you. They will not be fair to you. Get rid of all pale-face attorneys and replace them with our own Navajo attorneys. They are holding up progress, I hope you can see that.

Stop reading Bill Donovan and his weekly opinions. All he is doing is suggesting ways to run Navajo government. And you leaders are always falling for his idea and comments.

Why can't you people see this? It is so obvious.

You think that non-Navajo lawyers are working in the best interest of the Navajo people. Wrong! They are not. They just make easy money and are laughing at us and to the bank.

If they were (working in the best interests) we would not have this many problems with our government and we would be saving money if these problems didn't exist. Progress would be evident.

Ben Bahe
Sanders, Ariz.

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Give ladies a chance this time around

It's 2010 and men have been to the moon and back, technology has surpassed a thousand-fold the wildest dreams of the early inventors, but on any First Nation reserve in the U.S., people are still living like their great-great grandparents did in the 1940s and 50s.

No running potable water, no electricity, no viable roads to get to and from the local trading post - forget cranking up the old Ford and "flying" down some dirt road at 55 mph to get grandpa to the nearest IHS hospital. (Heck! the drive would most likely kill the old man.)

And every four years a slew of old and new candidates come seemingly out of every dry ravine, gopher hole, or who knows where else, and make promises from here to Timbuktu and back saying they'll bring water to every community, ensure veterans and the elderly are "taken care of," they'll fix every road, etc., etc.

No one really says how they are going to accomplish these things for the nation. Another unknown here, folks, is can they?

You see, people, it is one thing to talk - anyone can tell you they can do just about anything. (Well, if someone tells you they can "fly" to the moon by flapping their arms and you believe them I've got a goose who lays gold bricks I'd like to sell you. That's right! Gold bricks.)

Anyway, as I saying, people talk. But when it comes to doing, well, that's a whole different puppy.

People who talk and can do are called leaders. Leaders do not grow on trees nor are they made. You see, leadership is not taught like math or English. If a candidate snorts he/she has Ph.D.s out his/her ying-yang, do not allow that to impress you.

Right now, there is a confused (and an extremely terrified) first phase recruit at Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, Calif., who has better leadership qualities than 99.99 percent of the current gaggle of presidential candidates for the Diné Nation. It's true.

And that brings me to the point I want to make, which is the best leaders are those with military experience, especially those who have combat experience.

Where else, under what other circumstance can the true colors of a real leader be displayed? No, not in any corporate meeting room or courtroom or anywhere else - with the exception of maybe one: the home, the hogan or tipi or wikipup.

So why not give the ladies a chance this time around. Yes, the lady candidates. Shucks! The guys have been making a mess of things for too long. Elect a lady into that office in Window Rock and allow her to (with all due respect and speaking figuratively, of course), "clean house."

Another quality about ladies, they are a whole lot easier on the eyes (forgive my chauvinism).

Mike Mullins
Blanding, Utah

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Let's get serious about energy development

Many candidates advertised their catchy slogans of promises and held rallies to convince many voters. However, many candidates vying for Navajo Nation president and council delegate have ignored or lightly addressed important issues.

Many candidates may not consider it important but many people base their votes on environmental issues, whether it is local, state or national elections. And many environmental issues need to be addressed during tribal elections because it is important since we live in the ecosystem that has become fragile by anthropogenic activities.

First, water is a very important resource that sustain life and is a commodity that cannot be used excessively or exclusively for large industrial use at a cheap price. Candidates need to consider the water as commodity that should be protected for future generations.

Members of the 21st Navajo Nation Council literally gave away groundwater to Desert Rock Energy

Project for a measly \$1.80 per 1,000 gallons. Yet, we live in an area where water is scarce and we can't even use the "running water" to water our small gardens as such practices are prohibited by a local tribal utility company.

In addition, we are limited by amount of "running water" we use for our household. Yet, the council delegates voted on the water lease for \$2.70 per 1,000 gallons. Some surface waters have not been fully adjudicated for the Navajo Nation and no one has yet to address issues associated with water depletion, rights, development, etc.

Secondly, the candidates have not fully addressed issues associated with energy production, particularly those that are produced without consuming nonrenewable natural resources. No doubt about it that increasing levels of carbon dioxide is associated with anthropogenic activities and United States is leading contributor, thus, Navajo Nation is obligated to reduce its share of carbon dioxide.

Some politicians indicated that they support green energy and green jobs but have not elaborated on details. Perhaps Navajo Nation should pursue another form of alternative energy, which is geothermal energy production since there are some places on the reservation where groundwater has elevated temperatures. An example, it is obvious to see steam from a broken water line in the Twin Lakes area. Twin Lakes Chapter could become a leader in this alternative form of energy production.

Thirdly, the tribe still needs to create an energy department. With absence of this crucial department or hub for utilities and energy companies to work with, bickering among departments as to who controls such companies creates additional bureaucracy and leaves no transparency for the Navajo Nation.

Currently, entities such as Diné Power Authority and Navajo Tribal Utility Authority are fighting over the notion of which entity oversees the project in the western portion of the Navajo Nation. Energy companies work with many offices of the Division of Natural Resources to negotiate and approve leases. Creation of an energy department would eliminate conflict of interest for the members of the Resources Committee.

An energy department would work solely with energy and utility companies without having circumventing situations for council delegates, Division of Natural Resources, or companies. Definitely, it would allow Diné Power Authority to do what they were created to do and that is to produce energy for Navajo Nation not dictating to the council delegates, president, or tribal offices. Navajo Nation still lacks energy policy.

In conclusion, Navajo Nation has its share of carbon dioxide contribution but needs to protect its nonrenewable natural resources and yet be innovative or ingenious to provide sustainable economy for its members.

Geothermal energy production is worth pursuing by utilizing groundwater that is recycled in its operation. Perhaps we will see some spas spring up in remote corners of the reservation by utilizing warm springs and local minerals within the next election.

Definitely a department of energy is a must for the Navajo Nation for purpose of transparency and to lessen bureaucracy while avoiding circumvention.

Above all, future generations are to be considered when natural resources are being discussed. Candidates need to do more than posting their flashy billboards, yard signs and banners to convince voters who base their votes on environmental issues and future generations.

Cecilia Barber

Tse Alnaozt'i'I, N.M. (Sanostee, N.M.)

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Don't trash Crownpoint cemetery

Dear Crownpoint Community:

As a lifetime resident of the Crownpoint community, I'm very proud of my community. I was born here and now watch my grandchildren grow here.

My grandmother, mother and brother, niece, nephew, and many old friends and relatives are buried in the Crownpoint Cemetery. I feel sad and cry looking at the trash and garbage collected over the years. I know many of the community members feel the same.

The hurt and pain we suffer from our lost of our loved ones is bad enough seems like someone is throwing trash on our loved ones.

I'm pleading for your help, please don't dump trash on this road to the cemetery or within our community, let's clean it up.

Jacqueline Browning
Crownpoint, N.M.

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Reward offered for Jake the heeler

Last week I mentioned my sister's blue heeler who is missing since Wednesday, July 21, in Shiprock. It's sad when a person steals a dog in daylight. It's a wonder what type of family one is raised.

What drives this type of person who has no respect for others and the community? People outside the reservation observe (actions by Navajo people) and this gives the Diné Nation a terrible name.

Our leaders in positions stealing from their own people set the example for the whole Diné Nation. Well, we need to teach the youth to be respectful to people (elders) and their community. It all starts with the home and the individual's desire to change.

My friend, the humane society is an organization you don't want to mess with, they will take stealing an animal seriously. There are a few suspects who have made a pastime of stealing items. You should also know that we have an aunt who is a judge. I'm giving a fair warning.

Many of you out there who have lost or had a pet stolen from you, go to the humane society and make sure you place a police report. It is also the job of the police department to write a report on theft (it's their job).

This is your chance to come clean and return the blue heeler Jake to his rightful owner. There is a reward for his return and it's \$350.

Get your own dog or ask for a pup. I would be happy to give you one. Don't resort to stealing and living up to the stereotype people have of our beloved Diné Nation.

My sister's contact information is Lunde10@hotmail.com. Yolanda is her name, don't forget her name. She will be a judge someday. You might be standing before her one day.

Change comes from within our hearts, and shows in our daily actions. This goes for every person in our Diné government to the individual lives of the Diné people.

Greg Redhorse
Sausalito, Calif.

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Thanks for attending forum

Ya-ta-hey. I hosted a Navajo Nation presidential candidate forum on Wednesday, July 28, at Beclabito Chapter. I just wanted to thank the candidates that showed up: Navajo Nation Council Delegate Rex Lee Jim, Vice President Ben Shelly, Daniel Peaches, D. Harrison Tsosie, Sharon Clahchischilliage, Jerry Todacheenie, Anthony Begay, and George Herrera.

The candidates introduced themselves and their ideas if elected Navajo Nation president. We heard a lot of new items: made in Navajo, make our own slot machines, improve livestock, sell our own, buy our own, Navajo cell phones, need our own gun shop, listen to our elders, use our water rights, charge a toll, and, of course, the Treaty of 1868. The Treaty of 1868 was stressed, a sacred agreement between two nations.

Thank you again and hopefully two of you will win the primary. I also would like to thank the chapter officials present at the forum: vice president Mr. John, grazing official Vincent Bekis, people of the community, visitors, and my mother who cooked lunch for everyone.

Chris Bekis
Beclabito, N.M.

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