

Andrew Viles <[vilesa@lanecc.edu](mailto:vilesa@lanecc.edu)>

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## Letter to Editor

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Andrew Viles <[vilesa@lanecc.edu](mailto:vilesa@lanecc.edu)>

Mon, Feb 10, 2025 at 2:19 PM

To: "pias@ctsi.nsn.us" <[pias@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:pias@ctsi.nsn.us)>

Hello Andy,

My hope is that you and your family are doing well. We were able to spend some time with your Bro over the holidays at Smith River . . . and he later shared a video of a hide tanning process he completed.

On another topic, I was hoping you'd be able to print the following letter to the editor. Would you please (it's also attached).

Drew

Dear Editor,

As we congratulate Diane Rodriguez—who's just retired as Siletz News editor—and say hello to Andy Taylor—long-time associate editor who is taking over the reins, I find it wise to recall some history.

I remember that Siletz tribal members were hired nearly always—if not exclusively—to be the editors of the Siletz News during its first years. I remember the late Ted Werth did an excellent job, and the late Shirley Strickler did, too, before Ted's tenure—and maybe after, too. "Editor" back then meant "writer, photographer, dark-room technician, circulation manager, mail clerk, subscription clerk, and graphic designer." I don't think that has changed much still. Lately, it's been just Andy and Diane. Plus, we must not forget, the "editor-in-chief"—currently Kurtis Barker. As the Tribe's Chief Executive Officer, Barker is advertised in each issue as the newspaper's "editor-in-chief."

That was not always the case. In former times, the Siletz Tribe had a General Manager (not a CEO) and the GM was not advertised as editor-in-chief.

That changed after a certain GM (the late Phil Rilatos) directed a certain editor (yours truly) to "pull that article"—also after that same GM fired that same editor for refusing to execute the directive. (I remember the editor was convinced that the GM—by not offering any rationale other than "pull that article"—was revealing that he (the GM) was likely either bowing to undue political influence or wished to censor the news for no apparent reason, and I remember the GM appearing to be convinced that one of his subordinates was acting insubordinately and unreasonably). It was also after a lawsuit had been filed. That's when someone—someone other than replacement editor of the Siletz News I suspect—decided to start publishing that blurb, "CEO is editor-in-chief . . . "

Firing an editor for refusing to act as news censor—that came first. The blurb soon followed.

1 February 2025 issue of Siletz News was edited by a Siletz General Council member. The last time that occurred: 1 August 1989.

Drew Viles

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Andrew (Drew) Viles, Ph.D.  
Instructor Emeritus, Department of English, Lane Community College  
Former Associate Judge, Tribal Court, Confederated Tribes of Siletz  
pronouns preferred: his/him/he

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2 attachments

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Andrew Viles <[vilesa@lanecc.edu](mailto:vilesa@lanecc.edu)>

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## Letter to Editor

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**Kurtis Barker** <[KurtisB@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:KurtisB@ctsi.nsn.us)>  
To: Andrew Viles <[vilesa@lanecc.edu](mailto:vilesa@lanecc.edu)>  
Cc: Andrea Taylor <[andreas@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:andreas@ctsi.nsn.us)>

Mon, Feb 10, 2025 at 8:00 PM

Hi Drew,

After review of your letter the following statement violates the Siletz News Policy and cannot be published. Would you like to revise or remove?

(I remember the editor was convinced that the GM—by not offering any rationale other than “pull that article”—was revealing that he (the GM) was likely either bowing to undue political influence or wished to censor the news for no apparent reason, and I remember the GM appearing to be convinced that one of his subordinates was acting insubordinately and unreasonably).

Respectfully,

Kurtis Barker (pronouns: he, him, his)

Chief Executive Officer

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians

PO Box 549 Siletz, OR 97380

(541) 444-8204

[Kurtisb@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:Kurtisb@ctsi.nsn.us)

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**From:** Andrea Taylor <[andreas@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:andreas@ctsi.nsn.us)>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 10, 2025 2:39 PM  
**To:** Kurtis Barker <[KurtisB@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:KurtisB@ctsi.nsn.us)>  
**Subject:** FW: Letter to Editor

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Andrew Viles <[vilesa@lanecc.edu](mailto:vilesa@lanecc.edu)>

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## Letter to Editor

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Andrew Viles <[vilesa@lanecc.edu](mailto:vilesa@lanecc.edu)>

Tue, Feb 11, 2025 at 8:35 PM

To: Kurtis Barker <[KurtisB@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:KurtisB@ctsi.nsn.us)>Cc: Andrea Taylor <[andreas@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:andreas@ctsi.nsn.us)>

Yes, Kurtis, count me in as willing and able to make revisions so as to bring this letter into conformity with your publication's policies.

It would help me a great deal as I get to the work of revision to know more precisely what policy this letter has violated.

Drew

PS At the risk of speaking out of school, I will say that it both surprised me and displeased me to see that your response to my letter was sent way past typical work hours. You are, Kurtis, well-known as a hard worker and while I, as a tribal member, appreciate your efforts on my behalf and the Tribe's behalf, it makes me sad to think that you are having to working such long hours. Of course, I'm risking speaking out of school--I'm making many assumptions, here, but I do want to tell you that I value you more as a energetic and hard-working individual Siletz man than I value you as a employee of the Tribe having to work long hours to the detriment of other more important obligations. Again, I hope you receive this concern in the way I mean it: nobody, I think, wants you to overwork yourself . . . even if that may result in a short term benefit. Long-term, family and personal well being are always more important than work, imho.

[Quoted text hidden]

Andrew Viles <[vilesa@lanecc.edu](mailto:vilesa@lanecc.edu)>

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## Letter to Editor

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**Kurtis Barker** <[KurtisB@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:KurtisB@ctsi.nsn.us)>  
To: Andrew Viles <[vilesa@lanecc.edu](mailto:vilesa@lanecc.edu)>  
Cc: Andrea Taylor <[andreas@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:andreas@ctsi.nsn.us)>

Wed, Feb 12, 2025 at 3:04 PM

Hi Drew,

Thank you for your comments and concern! It can be difficult at times, but in order to be responsive to the membership's needs and meet the demands of our projects/workloads, it often requires work outside the regular schedule. Luckily it's something I knew coming into this role. We have a great team doing a lot right now.

In regards to the statement in question, you mention a specific name (Phil Rilatos) and your comments can be construed as libelous, a personal attack and an unsubstantiated statement. I consider it presumptive and concerning since it's an elder who has walked on. It might be okay if you just deleted the name.

Please let me know your thoughts soon as the layout for March is in process.

Thanks again.

Respectfully,

Kurtis Barker (pronouns: he, him, his)

Chief Executive Officer

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians

PO Box 549 Siletz, OR 97380

(541) 444-8204

[Kurtisb@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:Kurtisb@ctsi.nsn.us)

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