

WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GOOSE IS GOOD FOR THE GANDER

Yet again, the Chief has failed to submit a rational and complete budget to Congress with the fiscal year coming to an end in two days. The budget deadline was four (4) months ago and as we were all aware, he was running late as usual.

Consensus is that the scholarship debacle simply boils down to the funds not being there. Where did they go? That's anyone's guess. Suppose the burial fund was paid back with the educational funds?

With the new budget now due, apparently the Chief thought he could breathe more easily. He could dip into the 2009/2010 budget to pay last year's scholarships! Well, guess what. Congress passed ONCA 09-61, an emergency appropriations bill that would fund all departments for ONE month until the Chief can get his act together! What were the results? VETO.

Now the Congress will hopefully override the veto and stick to their guns. It seems to me, the trip to France may be cancelled after all. If appropriations aren't made until the Chief does his job, there will be no money for this waste and besides that, it sounds like he has a lot of work to do right here at home.

If he jets off to France with his right hand entourage, rather than putting these folks to work, how will salaries get paid in November? Well, I guess the same way the students got paid this fall, they didn't!

STUDENTS MIGHT CONSIDER

Students who have not received their promised funds from the tribe may want to consider filing FASFA forms immediately. It is not too late to apply for this academic year.

You will be required to complete the forms using your 2008 income tax return. When completing the form, you will be asked if you want to be considered for work study or student loans. Check "yes" in this area. Once the process is completed and determination of eligibility is made you will have the choice of denying or accepting the student loans or work study.

Some could possibly be eligible for Pell Grants also.

Any student under the age of 24 years old will be considered a dependent of your parents. You will have to use your parents 2008 income tax returns as well as your own when applying for FASFA **unless** you are married, have a child, are an active duty service person or a ward of the court. All students over 24 years old will be considered independent.

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>

If worse comes to worse and the tribe doesn't pay what they promised, you will at least be able to complete your education. If the tribe does finally come through, pay off the loan with the tribe's money.

I realize some of you cannot enroll for the Spring Semester due to your unpaid Fall Semester. If you decide to complete the FASFA you will be able to enroll for spring provided your FASFA application is accepted for funding.

Though this is not fair or in any way right, if you truly want to stay in school, this may be your safest bet. We clearly are aware by now that we can't count on this administration to correct the situation. They already have a stand-off involving next year's budget.

From what I understand, the less than adequate, late budget of a mere 50 some odd million dollars doesn't even include enough money for the Spring Scholarships in the first place.

POLITICAL FOOTBALL

Let there be no doubt that this government is playing political football with the college students thereby, our future as a successful tribal government.

Students are nothing more than pigskin being kicked around by what are supposed to be responsible adults. What an example they are being given to follow. Not only by this administration but by some who

have the idea that the students shouldn't be exposed to the political process even though they have been placed square in the middle of the playing field.

If any Osage has a right and responsibility to get involved in the political process, it would in my view be the students. They are obviously 18 years old, eligible voters, have been harmed by this government and should do all they can to prevent this from occurring again. If they plan to complete their college career and wish to benefit from scholarship promises, surely they should be involved.

I would further add that they will want the very best for their children as well. To discourage our young Osages from involving themselves in the political process or shielding them from exposure is to jeopardize the future of this tribal government yet again. Not only do we want them educated, we want them involved and excited about the future of our government.

Let us not make the same mistakes over and over and over again. Recall that it was Jim Gray and the 31st Council who wanted this new form of government. Now we have it and not only does Gray have to live with it as he bellows, whines and gnashes his teeth, but so do we.

I didn't create this monster but I'm willing to do what I can to help tame it.

IT IS WHAT IT IS

This government was set up in the image of the United States with a major twist of Jim Gray persuasion. Like it or not, we have been placed right in the lap of the political scene. We have no choice but adapt, accept it and move forward.

Those of you who so drastically hate politics cannot in good conscience blame me or any other candidate for carrying out the process. It is what it is at the hand of Jim Gray and the 31st Council. What choice do any of us have?

A LOADED QUESTION

There is apparently some question as to whether the Osage Nation Government should be making land purchases outside the Osage Reservation boundaries.

I find this hysterical. Would this be in regard to Gray Horse, Hominy and Pawhuska camps and the hill or would they be thinking of the entire 1.5 million acres?

I mean really. Let's have a look at the BIG picture and get this on the table before we throw away too many millions more in legal fees.

One of the most well known and relied upon cases on this issue is Montana v. U.S. 450 U.S. 544 (1981) when the Supreme Court held that when Congress allows non-Indians to purchase land on an Indian reservation, the tribe loses its exclusive control over that land.

Given that the 1.5 million acre Reservation has been sold off since 1906 to the non-Indian, would it be inconceivable that all we have left is what the Government specifically reserved for us because it couldn't be sold?

Acceptance will set you free!

If we had the millions this case against the Oklahoma Tax Commission has cost us, look at the land we could have already bought and recovered!

As it is, Gray is taking this losing battle to a higher court. All for the sake of Osages not having to pay state income taxes? Good grief, at the rate this is going, any saved taxes wouldn't touch the costs of this legal action.

---AND---

That's a wrap!



Until next time – be safe and be happy!

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