

Letter to the Editor

Memorial Day Parade

Greetings!

All members of the Akwesasne community are cordially invited to participate in the Memorial Day Parade that is to be held on Sunday, May 28th. The parade will start immediately following the Ceremony for those who lost their lives at sea which will be held at 1:00 p.m.

The walkers will form on the east side of the river. The horses will gather on the old "Pines Inn" corner. The motorized vehicles will line up on 37C. Please note that the antique cars and motorcycles will line up on the east side of the river.

The theme of the parade this year is "Akwesasne - Past, Present, Future". This year of 2000 is a major turn in time. It is a good time to look back at the past to see how the present was influenced by the events of the past, to evaluate where we are now and to set goals to make a better place for the children. There are threads that have been woven throughout history. Some of the threads need to be broken and others need to be strengthened.

The parade will end at the American Legion with a Memorial Service. Food and drink will be available for the participants of the parade. Hope to see you there.

For God and Country,

signed

Joanne N. Reyome
Parade Co-ordinator

Letter to the Editor

Open Letter to the Residents of Kanatakon and to the Community of Akwesasne
From District Chief Vaughn Phillips

Sekon,

As most of you are well aware, nominations for District Chief and Grand Chief are being held on Saturday, May 13, 2000. The purpose of this letter is to let you know that I will not be seeking re-election for a third term. After serving in this position for 6 years, the time has come for me to move on.

I want you, the community to know that it truly has been an honor and a privilege to be chosen as an elected leader to represent the people, not only for Kanatakon but also for the entire community. I leave knowing that as a District Chief I always tried to represent myself well, whether it is here in Akwesasne or any place that I traveled to.

I can look back over these past 6 years and know that I helped in trying to make Akwesasne a better place. The hard work of the Police portfolio Chiefs resulted in the building of a new Police Station. This past term I was totally involved with the creation of the Drug and Banishment Law and along with the help of the other Justice Portfolio Chiefs we elevated the Justice Department to the forefront within the MCA organization.

As I leave this political office I will miss the people the most. My friends and colleagues who I worked with, not only during this term but also in my first term as well. Although at times this job was stressful I can honestly say that for the most part I enjoyed working for the people.

I cannot close without publicly acknowledging the people who I know supported me the most and they are my 2 children Cass and Lalen, my mother, my brothers and sisters and the woman who has shared my life these past few years, my sweetheart, Lynelle.

I Thank You Kanatakon and the community of Akwesasne for allowing me the privilege to serve as a Chief. I wish all the nominated people the Best of Luck in the upcoming elections and if I can be of any assistance to any one, just give me a call.

Niawen,

signed

Vaughn Phillips

1998 Booze Seizure by Mohawk Police Forfeited

by Neil Drew

A big truckload of liquor seized on the St. Regis Mohawk Reservation more than 19 months ago has been ordered into forfeiture. It now belongs to New York State.

In Canton, New York State Supreme Court Justice David Demarest has declared that the 8,662.5 liter liquor cargo be handed over to the state. The transfer order came after the owners of the hooch failed to contest a lawsuit filed by the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, which had been seeking the forfeiture.

St. Regis Mohawk Police seized the shipment on October 2, 1998 on Route 37 in the town of Massena. Officers removed 300 cases of Zenka vodka, 150 cases of Jenkins gin, 300 cases of Jenkins Canadian Natural whiskey and 75 cases of Jenkins rum from the tractor-trailer.

The booze was confiscated because a licensed liquor distributor was not involved in its transport. Under the laws of New York State, only licensed liquor distributors can import hard spirits into New York.

Tribal Police say, according to the truck driver's manifest, the shipment originated with the Jenkins Spirits Corporation and was being trucked out of Londonderry, New Hampshire. Just where it was to be dropped off, or who was the Hogsburg buyer, didn't show up in the court papers.

The truck was being driven by Shelton Hatten, Jr., an employee of Southeastern Gaming Corporation. The owner of Southeastern Gaming is Griffin Stocks III. The forfeiture order signed by Judge Demarest indicates neither Stocks nor Jenkins Spirits opposed the forfeiture in court.

Monticello continued

what's happening (at Akwesasne)." McKeon went on to say, "We've got all kinds of lawsuits, all kinds of questions being raised."

Following that statement, the Pataki administration dashed off a letter to the nation's capital saying that it was "not possible to consider taking further action until this situation is clarified."

That note drifted 300 miles to the southwest (as the crow soars) to Washington, D.C., where Stephanie Hanna, a spokeswoman for the Department of the Interior, recipient of the Pataki note, said officials there continue to be 'confused' (there's that 'c' word again) by the casino battle. Hanna told the New York Times, "We still haven't heard anything from the tribe but the governor has apparently chosen to stop the clock for now."

It was, after all, the Interior Department that had approved, only last month, a long-standing plan by Catskill Development to construct a \$500 million casino with St. Regis Mohawks at Monticello Raceway. But since that approval was granted, the Tribal Council turned its collective back on Catskill Development and signed a secret agreement with the largest gaming company in the world, Park Place Entertainment.

That decision, if carried forth, could mean an approval delay for the new site of from 2-5 years.

And in Governor Pataki's mind, that puts the Monticello plan out to pasture, at least for now.

The Governor is seen as a strong advocate for the Mohawk plan to build the Monticello casino. Pataki has long favored the development of Indian casinos in depressed resort areas such as the Catskills. It was expected that his administration would give final approval to the proposal, perhaps before the end of this year.

It should be remembered, however, that there was one obstacle that still needed attention from the Mohawk community regarding final approval of the casino. The St. Regis Tribe was being asked by Pataki's negotiators to settle future land claims at Akwesasne with the State of New York in exchange for the casino. That, to some tribal members, is a very high price to pay.

However, the trade-off could be worth a king's ransom, especially in light of Wall Street predictions that a Mohawk casino at Monticello Raceway, only 90 minutes north of New York City, would probably generate more than \$1 billion a year. One year's income from the casino would probably exceed any future land claim settlement in its entirety.

One tribal member told Indian Time (not so facetiously, but with tongue in cheek) that five years of income from the casino would probably be enough to buy most of Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties, should the Mohawks be inter-

ested in enlarging their land holdings.

But a 2-5 year delay could have serious repercussions for any Mohawk casino in the Catskills. Not the least of those problems would be the likelihood that Pataki may well move on to greener pastures in the political world. Under that scenario, the Mohawks could be sentenced to a new chief executive in Albany, one who has far less enthusiasm for a casino operated by the St. Regis Tribe.

The April 14 decision by the St. Regis Tribal Council to do business with Park Place Entertainment, owners of three casinos in Atlantic City, New Jersey, continued to prompt reaction from many corners this week. Here are some samplings.

Many of the Tribe's supporters in Washington, D.C. are angry. Elected officials in the Catskills, who have been big backers of the Monticello project, are angry. The company that has been guiding the casino plan along for many months is angry. And many Tribal members at Akwesasne are angry, many saying that their chiefs were duped by Park Place Entertainment.

Among the most outspoken critics is Robert Berman, a partner in Catskill Development, who said this week that Park Place had achieved its true goal: delaying, perhaps forever, construction of a gambling enterprise in the Catskills that might compete with Park's own casinos in Atlantic City.

"Right now," said Berman, to a New York Times reporter, "Atlantic City is probably having a champagne toast in celebration of their robbing New York State of this important economic development." More optimistically, however, Berman went on to say, "In the final analysis, we believe that Governor Pataki will not be muscled in his own state by New Jersey interests."

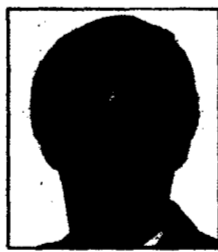
More ominously, Catskill Development, which owns the Monticello Raceway, a site that has already received federal approval for a Mohawk casino, recently began talking to other tribes about the possibility of a casino deal.

And, in a letter mailed to the St. Regis Tribal Council last week, the Chairman of the Sullivan County Legislature, Rusty Pomeroy, accused the Council of placing the entire Monticello project in jeopardy. He went on to say that the tribe should not assume that Sullivan County would support a new casino application in consortium with Park Place.

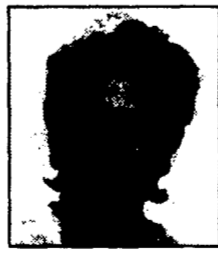
And then there is Arthur Goldberg, the CEO of Park Place Entertainment. Responding to accusations that his real plan is to block a casino in the Catskills, he countered, "We'll pay the (St. Regis) tribe \$100 million cash if we don't build as soon as we get approval."

Of course, if approval never comes.

Clarity is very reassuring.



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