

The

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# Federation Indian Reporter



AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBAL NEWS \* ERNIE C. SALGADO JR., PUBLISHER/EDITOR



## Grand Opening Not A Big Hit!

Please accept this business analysis in the spirit it is offered: As an objective professional overview of the business strategies of the tribes casino business.

The casino and hotel are nothing more than brick and mortar and as beautiful as it may be without qualified management it is nothing. I have no idea who the new general manager is and really don't care.

However, after the travesty of the opening of the new and improved Soboba casino, the Soboba Tribal Council needs to stop and take a hard objective review of the casino management.

The absents of qualified management at the Soboba Casino's Grand Opening was obvious to everyone that matters, our customers.

Someone must be held accountable for this first class folly. It's not as if the casino management and Tribal Council didn't have almost 2-years to develop a plan for the "Grand Opening" and transfer to the new facility.

Again, back to the **Soboba Casino Grand Opening.** 500 machines were left at the old casino which is 25 percent of the total of 2,000 casino machines. Not good.

Many of the machines were not working, and there was no **"Non Smoking Area,"** which in its self beyond unforgiving. A poker room and bingo were also noticeable on the missing list as was food service, the only food available was from a snack



bar that charge \$10.50 for a cup of coffee and a roll and you were not allowed to it take out on the casino floor.

The Black Jack or 21 games, whichever you prefer to call it is a non-starter because it is not acceptable to the players and is not competitive with the other casino's. Not to mention the obvious lack of staff training and customer service which was sorely evident.

All this is fixable, however the Tribal Council must recognize their is a lack of qualified management. It's going to take some real creative and highly qualified management to make Soboba casino competitive.

If we continue with the same management leadership Soboba is doomed to follow Viejas tribal members to the poor house.

The Viejas tribal members were getting over \$15,000 per month in per capita until they made the same business mistakes we

are currently making and now they qualify for HUD housing and many have had to file bankruptcy.

We aren't there yet, but we are on the fast track toward this end, unless we wake up a face the reality that we need real professional management leadership.

From the beginning I have warned the good folks of Soboba that the cost of the casino and hotel would have a negative impact on our per capita checks to the tune of \$2,000 to \$3,000 per month.

Just to keep the per capita checks at the current level the casino needs to make at a minimum \$2 million more per month than it was making at the old casino. However, if it stayed at the same income level our per capita checks would go down about \$2 to 3 thousand dollars per month. And the added expenses of the golf course don't help either.

We have yet to be told what the final cost

is for the casino and hotel. My guess is that it is well over \$300 million with over \$50 to \$60 million in over expenditures.

This is problematic at best, since \$50 to \$60 million in over expenditures represents about 20% over the original estimated cost.

The tribe must demand a full independent audit of the construction and related cost on the new casino and hotel.

Accountability must be the norm for the Tribal Council leadership and the casino management. If we are to survive this political and management miscalculations we must start by holding our elected officials accountable. Good business practices and the law demand that we hold our employees and elected officials accountable.

It is not my intent to imply that anyone has committed any larceny or financial misconduct. However, we, the Tribe is operating a multi-million dollar business and can't afford to run it like an Mom and Pop store.

I have talked to a lot of good folks that attended the Grand Opening and they have expressed their dissatisfaction and have vowed to never return. This is not good.

We need to set aside our tribal politics and save ourselves from ourselves. And we need to do it now before it's to late.

Sorry folks, I though you needed to know how critical it really is now!

## Michael Castello A Disgrace To The Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians

In the early morning hours of Sunday, February 24, 2019 in the Presidential suite of the New Soboba Tribal Hotel, Soboba Tribal Administrator, Michael Castello was hosting a wild party with members of his family and friends.

As most often when Michael gets drunk he become agitated and violent and after a full night of drinking in the wee hours of Sunday morning on February 24, 2019 was no exception.

Again, as is the case most often he directed his hostilities toward his live-in girlfriend. As he proceeded to beat her up causing such a disturbance that hotel security and Riverside County Sheriffs were called to remove him from the property. However, someone intervened on his behalf preventing the Sheriffs from arresting him and searching the room for illegal drugs.

According to confidential sources the Tribal Council was divided in a vote to firer Castello with his cousin, Chairman, Scott Cozart casting the deciding vote siding him. And cousin, Vice-Chairman, Isaiah Vivanco advocating for him.

It is not clear what other sanctions were imposed on him, if any.

However, his girlfriend was banned from the casino and hotel for being the victim of the domestic violence while Michael appears to have been exonerated.

While domestic violence is a hideous crime at the same level as pedophilia, rape and child abuse the cousins on the Soboba Tribal Council have chosen to ignore his unacceptable and criminal behavior.

And it is also beyond my comprehension of how anyone could in any way shape or form ignore the domestic violence, not to mention disturbing the peace and the alcohol and substance abuse.

Michael Castello has a long criminal history of domestic violence along with alcohol and substance abuse as shown on police records dating back three decades, which include several incidences since he has been employed with the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians.

Many tribal members are outraged at his behavior since he is the Chief Administrator of the Tribe and his public actions re-

flect on the Tribe. He lacks the moral and traditional values we hold in high esteem.

The members feel as though a double standard is applied in his case because his family and cousins control over the Tribal Council and casino.

At a minimum he should be fired, lose 2 or 3 months of his per capita and banned from the casino and hotel. Since he has the protection of his family members on the Tribal Council as the cover-up and double standard prevails.

What is funny is the same people that find my newspaper **"Offensive"** don't find his behavior **"Offensive."**

The incident raises many questions that need to be answered, but given the current questionable political leadership of the Tribe they will most likely go unanswered.

However, since the questions may lead to evidence of corruption, fraud and conspiracy let me ask them.

### QUESTIONS:

1) **Who authorized the upgrade from the tribal room comp to the Presidential Suite for Michael Castello?**

2) **Who was at the party?**

3) **Did Michael use his tribal credit card to cover the additional room cost if any?**

4) **Who paid for the cost of food and alcohol, in the suite and at the bar?**

5) **Were illegal drugs (Marijuana, Cocaine or others illegal drugs) available in the hotel suite for the party goers?**

6) **Was Michael officially representing the Tribe at this so called party?**

7) **Why wasn't a criminal complaint filed against Castello by the casino security, management or Tribal Council for domestic violence?**

8) **Who intervened preventing the Sheriffs from arresting him and searching the room for illegal drugs.**

9) **Is Michael Castello's family members on the Council "Covering Up" for him?**

With the elections for two Tribal Council members coming up on March 28, maybe it time for a change for a better and fair tribal government by electing a new person to the Council as a way to bring about equal treatment for all Tribal Members.

## Soboba Tribal Elections scheduled to be held on March 28, 2019



**DISCLAIMER:** By Ernie C. Salgado Jr.: The **Federation Indian Reporter** is based strictly on my humble opinion of the numerous American Indian tribal matters and issues. It is not intended to represent the views or positions of any group or organization. The primary purpose of this newspaper is to provide current, educational and entertaining information to the American Indian Tribal Community and the general public at large. As a private and personal publication it will be distributed at my own expense by U.S. mail, e mail and my websites. Any reproduction or posting of any data herein in any form is strictly prohibited unless authorized or used for educational purposes. Violators will be subject to us creating an effigy of you and stick it with pins and needles.



Soboba Elders Corner

March 18-22, 2019 - Arizona to attend the *Cactus League 2019 Baseball Spring Training*. Elders will stay at the “Talking Sticks Resort & Casino” on the Salt River Rez. **FINAL SIGN UP DATE:** February 24, 2019.

May 7-9, 2019 - **Quechan Senior Games** - Lodging at the Quechan Resort and Casino. April 17, 2019 final sign up date.

November 6-20, 2019 - **New Zealand & Sidney, Australia Trip** - MUST HAVE A VALID PASSPORT

2019 Elders Board Members

At the January 2019 Elders meeting the Soboba Elders Board Members were elected.

- **President: Frances Diaz**
- **Vice-President: Carlene Masiel**
- **Secretary/Treasurer: Lorraine Masiel**

For more information or questions call Erica at 951-392-1900 .



Rose Salgado 3/7

Sorry folks didn’t get any notices from the Elders office.



Robert J. Salgado Sr.

September 25, 1942 - March 6, 2016



During his 35-years tenure as Tribal Chairman for the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians the tribe went from an improvised community to a multimillion dollar enterprise.

In the mid 70’s he successfully challenged the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the release of tribal water development funds under the authority of P.L. 923-638 The Indian Self Determination and Education Act of 1976 for the construction of a tribal domestic water system.

He later was successful in settling the water law suit against the Bureau of Indian Affairs for negligence and the 67-year battle with EMWD.

He understood the importance of having a

secure and safe water source for the tribe for as long as the tribe exist.

In the late 50’s the Soboba Tribal Council gave away the right-of-way to Soboba Rd. and Castile Canyon Rd. to the County of Riverside. He was successful in getting the roads returned to the tribe.

He also met with four sitting United States Presidents during his service as Tribal Chairman.

The impact of his leadership will benefit the tribe and its members for decades to come.

Margret Silvas Estrada  
March 1921 - February 2018  
Memorial Service  
March 8, 2019



**Margret Silvas** Estrada, 96 was born and raised on the Soboba Indian Reservation.

Her parents, Albert and Mary Silvas her brother, George and sisters Barbara Guanche and Rosemary Tortez and her grandparents, Jose and Juana (Apapas) Silvas all lived at Soboba in Indian Canyon.

Close by where her aunts, Lucy Bentiste, Nora Garcia, Suzie Estrada, Matilda Silvas, Rose Soza with her husband Pete and her uncle Francisco “Chico” Silvas.

She attended grade school in Valle Vista and graduated from Hemet High School.

Margret was an outstanding academic student and athletic. And an exceptional golfer as an adult.

For many years she worked as a manager for the Gilman Resort in San Jacinto.

She is the last World War II veteran descendent from the Soboba Indian Reservation. Although she has an extended family presents at Soboba she was enroll on the Ft. Peck Indian Reservation in Montana.

She is survived by her son Dr. Bruce Ramirez of Renton, Virginia, sisters Barbara Guanche and Rosemary Tortez. And her grandchildren and many relative on the Soboba, Santa Rosa and Ft. Peck Indian Reservations.

Her memorial services will be held at 11am on March 8, 2019 at the San Jacinto Valley Cemetery followed by the Traditional Dinner at the Soboba Tribal Hall.



Virginia Lyons

May 30, 1947 - January 31, 2019

Lyons Sr. for 50 years.

She was head diet nurse at San Gorgonio Hospital in 1971, worked for Ahmum Education Morongo Preschool as director from 1977-1987, was a Sunday School teacher, foster parent in 1987,

member of the Morongo Charity Committee, volunteer at Morongo Preschool, and a member of the Morongo Moravian Church. She loved to teach, church, walk and travel with elders.

Virginia is survived by her husband Ronald Lyons, Sr. of Morongo; daughter Keri Lyons of Morongo; son Ronald Lyons Jr. of Cherry Valley; granddaughters Ilonna Lyons and Bethany Lyons, both of Cherry Valley; grandson Ronald Lyons

III of Cherry Valley; sisters Joanna (Norman) Ruiz of Morongo and Yvonne Silvas of Soboba; brother Joe (Terry) Becerra of Morongo; nephew Jeremy (Carissa) Cervantes of Morongo; niece Destiny (Bobby) Garcia of Morongo; great nephew Gabe (Courtney) Lyons of Morongo; and 3 grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her mother Frances Grace Becerra of Banning and father Joe Jesus Becerra of Banning.

Visitation was held on Friday, February 8 from 6:30pm-9:00pm at Wiefels & Son Mortuary in Banning.

Celebration of Life at 10:00am on Saturday, February 9 at Morongo Moravian Church on the Morongo

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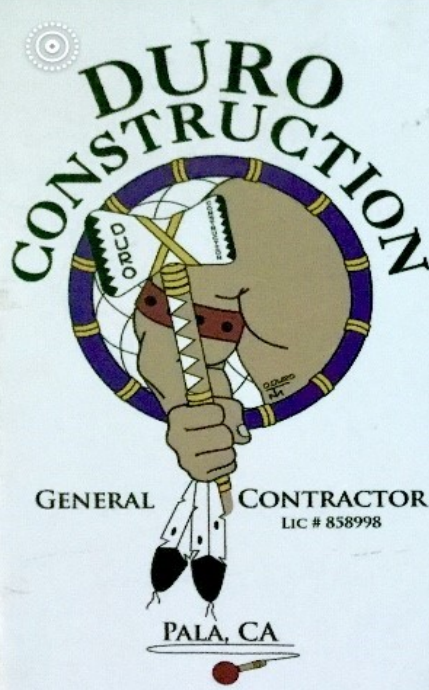


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2 Vote

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**Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians**  
**2019 Tribal Council Elections**  
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**Rhonda Valenzuela**



**&**

**Monica**  
**Herrera**



**Soboba Tribal Council**  
**Leadership & Honesty**





# My View - Your View

Ernie C. Salgado Jr.



## Frances “Salgado” Diaz Ends Tribal Housing Manager

Soboba Tribal Housing Manager, Frances “Salgado” Diaz, last day on the job was Thursday February 28, 2019.

Diaz said *“It was an honor for me to have been given the opportunity by the Soboba Tribal Council to work in the capacity as the Housing Manager for the tribe.”*

Frances was on a consultant contract with the tribe for the development and implementation of the Soboba Tribal Housing Department. And to oversee the construction of new homes on the reservation for the tribal members.

The funding for the homes is provided through the Tribal Credit Loan Department.

It was Diaz’s short term goal for the construction and occupation of 20 homes by the end of 2019.

Over this past two years, under Frances’ guidance the funding and construction of 10 new homes have been completed and an additional 3 homes are currently under construction.

Although she will not be with the Tribal Housing her goal of the construction of 20 homes seems to be a given.

Another major accomplishment for the Tribal Housing Department was qualifying and gaining approval to conduct and certify the Tribal Survey Report (TSR). This is the legal description of the tribal land that the home will be built.

Expanding home financing options for tribal member was still another added benefit for the membership which include the HUD 184 home loan program and the Veteran Home loans on the reservation using trust lands.

*“Having been raised on the reservation and experiencing the poor housing conditions we were subject to was my primary reason and personal goal in*

*attempting to improve the quality of life by providing safe, affordable housing for our people.”* She added.

Diaz main goal as the Housing Manager was to get the housing program up and running by establishing policies, procedures and a functional management system consistent with tribal customs and values. Once established, for it to move it forward in a positive manner for easy access for tribal members.

Francie has worked in tribal housing for Soboba for over 40-years, beginning with the formation of (AMIHA) the All Mission Indian Housing Authority in the early 1970’s.

She is currently Chairperson of the AMIHA board of commissioners which she has held since 2014.

AMIHA consists of 13 Southern California American Indian Tribes in Riverside, San Diego and Santa Barbara counties.

Even though she submitted her resignation eight months ago, in June 2018 it was within the last two months the tribe hired her replacement, Julie Padilla as the Housing Specialist.

Julie is available Monday thru Thursday at the tribal administration office and can be reached at 654-5544 extension 4145.

Frances planned on retiring and spending more time traveling and enjoying quality time with her grandchildren, but she was offered as new challenge.

Frances will be moving on as the Tribal Liaison for Southern California American Resource Center, Inc. (SCAIR) located in the City of El Cajon, California.

The SCAIR organization was established twenty-two years ago in 1997 as a non-profit Tribal Organization under the authority of P.L. 93-638, the Indian Self

Determination and Education Act of 1975.

SCAIR was established to provide support and training to the American Indian Tribal population living in East San Diego County.

The organization has received national recognition as a highly successful American Indian educational *“One-Stop-Shop”* Workforce training center.

Most recently SCAIR has been awarded additional funding from the Department of Labor, Division of Indian and Native American Programs, to expand its highly successful *“One-Stop-Shop”* Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Program services for the following six counties, San Benito, Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, Santa Barbara, and Ventura.

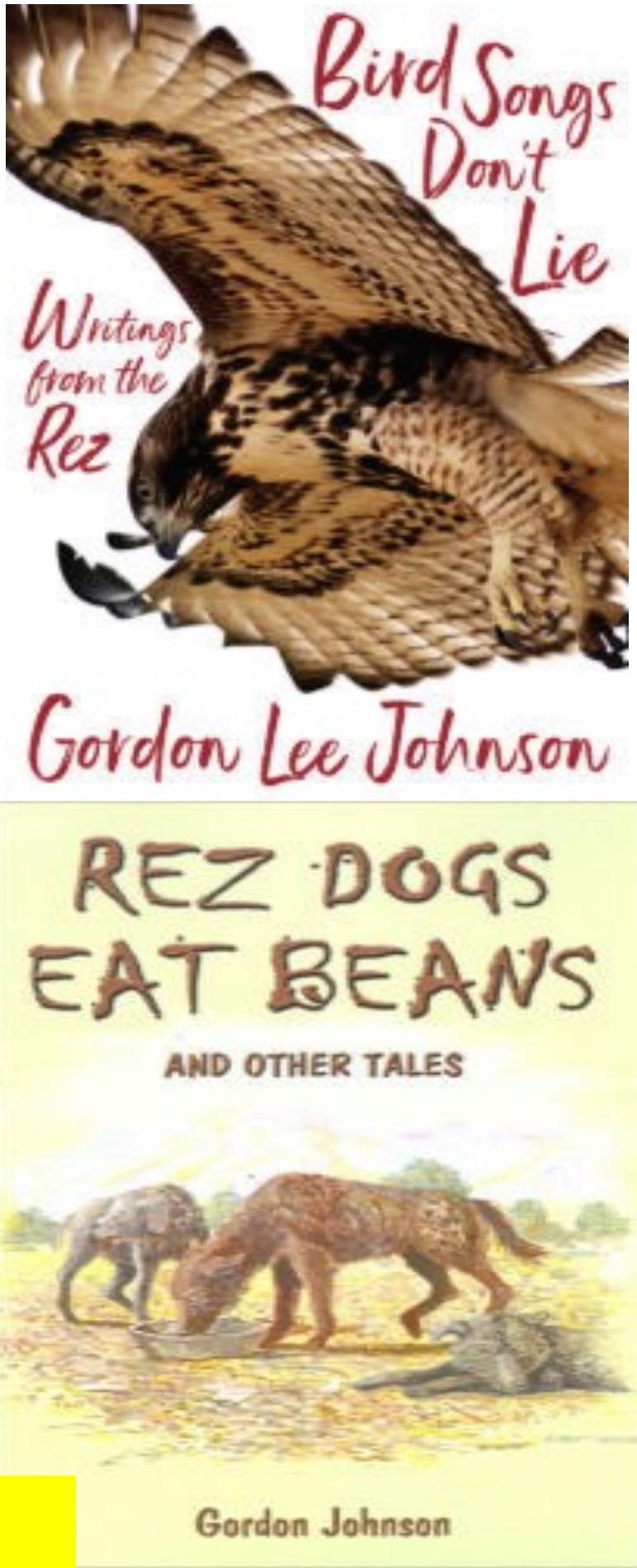
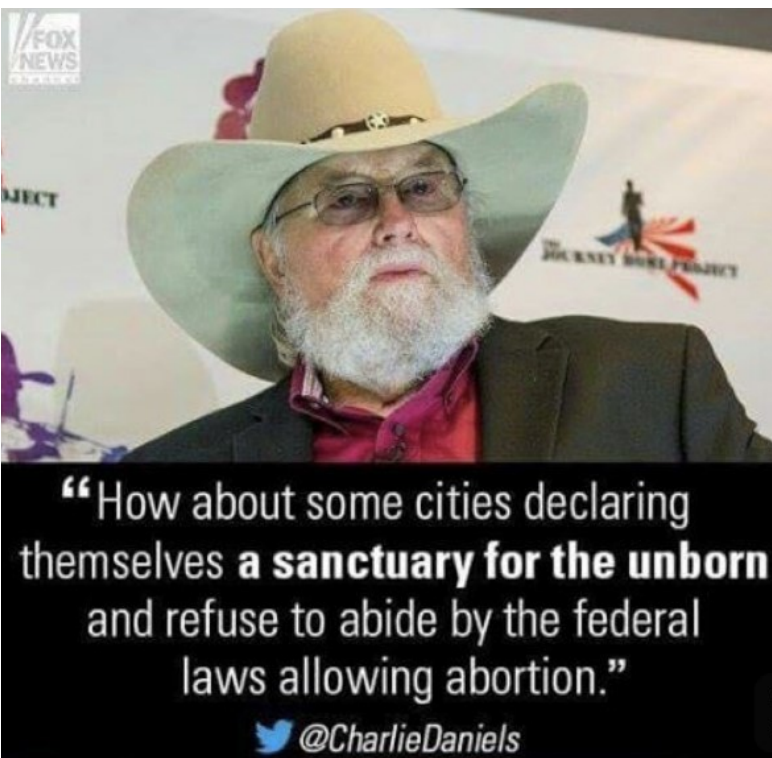
This expansion funds will allow for the establishment of a SCAIR *“One-Stop-Shop”* Workforce training center in the City of Oxnard in Ventura County.

The SCAIR training center in Oxnard will serve as the home base for the newly designated service region which will begin providing services on July 1, 2019.

Over the next four months Frances will be setting up the new SCAIR *“One-Stop-Shop”* Workforce training center, recruiting program participants, establishing new collaborating partners and meeting with tribal community leaders and organization within the six county service area.

Diaz said. *“I’m really excited about the opportunity to join the highly organized SCAIR team and although it is a new area of services it will also be a challenging time and I’m looking forward to it.”*

*“I Guess “Retirement” will be put on the back burner for a while.”* She added with a smile.



Gordon Johnson is a tribal member of the Pala Band of Mission Indians. The Pala Indian Rez is located in north San Diego County, Southern California.

Johnson has published several books providing a great insight into the ongoing lives of Rez folks. His most recent books is “Rez Doggs Eat Beans” and “Birdsongs Don’t Lie” which can be purchased on line at Amazon or Barnes and Noble,

