

# SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



## Opinion: Lack of facts, bitter tone betray author's ignorance



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Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, a German poet and novelist, wrote: "Nothing is more terrible than to see ignorance in action." David Crosby's new book is out and his chapter on the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians is a perfect example of ignorance in action.

Although I have become accustomed to his constant rants against the tribe, I was deeply disturbed to read his comments about the tribe in his new book. Clearly, Mr. Crosby's emotions got the best of him and he decided to base his comments on fantasy rather than facts.

For an individual who represented the 1960s, a time of peace and love, there's nothing peaceful or loving about Mr. Crosby's bitter tone. He seems to have become the head cheerleader for the tribe's vocal opponents in the Santa Ynez Valley. It appears that the only remaining elements left over from the '60s with Mr. Crosby are his drug and alcohol addictions .

He made so many disparaging remarks in his book about our tribe that I don't quite know where to begin in response. However, I believe that I must respond to a few of the more outrageous of his comments.

Mr. Crosby wrote: "We had a local issue, but what it came down to was that casinos are bad neighbors. Ask the people who live around any casino and they'll tell you they're bad neighbors. They're not working for the casino. Everybody, anywhere near any casino, thinks they're (expletive)."

"Everybody" is a fairly broad term. I'm not sure that "everybody" anywhere near the casino would say that about our tribe and our

casino. Just ask the many local vendors we utilize for services to the casino. Ask the nonprofit organizations who benefit from our donations and volunteerism. Ask the 1,500 local employees who are able to support their families because of our casino. Ask the residents who have lived near our reservation for decades.

Mr. Crosby wrote: "They can do anything they want and they don't have to play by the same rules as us, and that was the crux of it: this is America, they're Americans, whether they like it or not. They're proud of saying they were the first Americans. Well, they're still Americans. They tell us they're sovereign nations and they're very snotty about it. (Expletive). They're still under the federal government, and they're still Americans."

We have stated it again and again and we will state it once more. We cannot do anything we want and we do play by the same rules. The difference between tribal land development and non-tribal land development is the governing bodies that administer those rules. Same rules, different governing bodies.

Why shouldn't we be proud to say that we were the first Americans? And saying that we are a sovereign nation is not being snotty. It's a statement of fact. We are Americans, we are the first Americans, and we're proud of it.

Mr. Crosby wrote: "And frankly, if you want to see them blanch and then get really mad, start talking about DNA testing for who's really an Indian and who isn't. If the guy who's running the tribe here has any Indian blood in him at all, it's a miracle."

To question our tribe's heritage and insinuate an uncertain bloodline is insulting and shows raw bigotry at its worst. Our tribe has been here from the beginning and we can trace our lineage back through time. It's not a miracle that I have Native American blood in me. It's a fact.

Unfortunately, Mr. Crosby chose to devote an entire chapter in his book to our tribe without getting his facts straight. Then again, when have our tribal opponents ever let facts get in their way?

*The author is chairman of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians.*