

# *A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER:*

Chris Spicker:

As many of you have heard by now, the first task I took on after becoming treasurer for the Sierra Hillbillies was to go through the bank statements of the club to verify the account balance and financial status of our club. Unfortunately, what I found was that the club's financial condition was not as good as previous financial statements indicated due to some expenses not being properly recorded and mathematical errors in the accounting spreadsheet. Rest assured, though, the club is financially sound. With membership dues in from most of our 2004-2005 members, the club is in good shape, and I will be sending out a brief report with actual numbers shortly. We are in a good position to start a new year.

A finance committee, consisting of Dean Shinn, Karen Geller-Shinn, Bob Kofnovec, and Roger Rangel was appointed at the October Board meeting to work with me to implement some changes to the way the club's finances will be handled and accounted for in the future. I felt some changes were necessary to help insure that the club remains financially sound, spends YOUR club money responsibly, and to establish a set of rules to help me do the job you elected me to do.

You should be aware of and become familiar with the following:

1. At the last Board meeting, a set of Standing Orders for the Treasurer was approved by the Board. A copy of these new Standing Orders is included in this issue of the Holler and is being posted on our website. I recommend that you all look these over and become familiar with them. They will guide how I handle the finances for the Sierra Hillbillies and your responsibilities in order to be reimbursed for club related expenses.
2. A new "REQUEST/AUTHORIZATION FOR REIMBURSEMENT /PAYMENT" form has been developed that will be required to be completed and turned in before you can receive reimbursement for money spent. For those of you that have Internet access, this form will also be posted on the Hillbillies website, so that you can

download it whenever you may need a copy. For those of you without Internet access, I will have a supply of printed forms that you can get from me. As part of the Standing Orders approved by the Board at our last meeting in November, no reimbursements will be made in the future until this form has been completed and turned into me with the receipt or invoice for any money you may spend on the club's behalf. Until a budget for 2005 has been approved, see Item 3, I would suggest checking with the Board before spending money to insure you can get the authorization signatures on the form that are now required. You can get Board members to pre-sign the form, before you spend money, with a "Not to Exceed" amount filled it.

3. I am currently in the process of finalizing a draft budget that will be submitted to the Board at the December Board meeting for approval. This budget, once approved, will be the primary tool to guide the financial affairs of the club for 2005. The budget will run from January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005. Although this does not coincide with the fiscal year of the club, it was decided that a budget based on the calendar year was preferable. Doing a budget based on the calendar year will give future years' board members time to approve their budget for the next year. A budget will not restrict our ability to spend money for legitimate needs or activities; it is a guide that will help us keep on track. Many of you may remember a time, not that long ago, when the club's finances were in dire straights. Hopefully this tool will help make sure we never end up there again.

There are a number of other things that I already have on my plate to make the most of our money. I will try and take some time to fill you in as the year progresses. On a final note, please keep in mind that it is not my job as your Treasurer to decide how the club's money is or is not spent. That is the responsibility of the Board and is the responsibility of each member of our club.....it is your responsibility. The only way that you can fulfill your responsibility is to be involved. My responsibility is no more than to be accountable for it.