

— Opinion —

Letters to the Editor

I am responding to the proposed question: **To serve alcohol or not to serve alcohol?**

I feel that serving alcohol at the Spirit Mountain Casino would be a giant step backwards for Our People.

I live in Minnesota, but Grand Ronde is the home of my ancestral family and my heritage. Therefore it is my home, as well as the home of many young Native Americans. It is my belief that alcohol has no place in our homes.

For many generations alcohol has caused great pain and hardships in Native American families, and our only hope for the future as individuals and as a United People is to keep alcohol out of our homes.

"WE SET THE EXAMPLE TODAY BY WHICH OUR CHILDREN WILL LIVE TOMORROW." Lets teach our children to have strong and loving spirits!

I would like to respond to Trina Green's letter to the editor. I certainly would have to agree that it is "EASY" for people to purchase alcohol anywhere. But, I would like to ask her, and others who feel this way, to question this thought: Why not make it "EASY" for people to go somewhere that is "ALCOHOL FREE" to have fun? Let us invite all people into our home or more specifically into our Casino. By doing this, wouldn't we be "HELPING and SUPPORTING EVERYONE NOW and ALWAYS" as Trina Green suggests we do?

I would also like to mention that I live 20 minutes away from one of the largest Native American owned casinos.

Mystic Lake is more than a casino. They also offer great family activities such as camping, shopping, golf, a health and fitness center, and a huge children's activity center.

We could learn a lot from the Mystic Lake Casino, it is growing very fast. The people that belong to this community, as well as the surrounding communities are thriving, and they have managed to do all this WITHOUT serving alcohol in their casino.

Let us also thrive while continuing to keep our focus on the future and the future of our home.

Let us be proud of our home land "THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE" and our future will be bright.

Thank you,
Tonya L. Gleason
Belle Plaine, MN

To the Editor;

I too object to the sale of alcohol at the restaurant/lounge. To those who believe the same as I do, thank you. I'm glad others are willing to say what they think. However, to those of you who think that making a few more dollars makes selling alcohol okay, I feel sorry for you.

Before and during negotiations with the State for the Gaming Commission Compact, the Council promised alcohol would not be served; now they are allowing Spirit Mountain to serve alcohol in the restaurant. I hope the Council keeps their word, and keeps alcohol out of the casino, because I believe if alcohol is served at the restaurant, it is only a matter of time. In fact, the proposal has already been made by Spirit Mountain to sell alcohol in the casino, provided no gaming is being conducted in that particular area. I don't care whether it will generate a few more dollars; and I don't care if people can go somewhere else to drink. If people want to drink, fine — let them go somewhere else! Why should we cater to a few people who want a "drink," versus the health of the Tribe as a whole?

Some feel they are not their brothers keeper; but if we don't take care of our people, who will? We are INDIAN, not immigrants from somewhere else. Our people have been here since time began; we have survived diseases, war and genocide but the disease of alcoholism has and is still destroying many of our people. Isn't it time we say "ENOUGH" and try to stop it, at least here? Maybe other tribes will serve alcohol, so what; does that mean we have to? The answer is NO!

Some members of the Council and Spirit Mountain are fond of saying "it is a business decision." Well, it may be a business decision, but who owns the business? The Tribe! Why do the Council and Board of Directors not listen to tribal members, like me, who don't want alcohol to be served. Apparently, our opinions don't count. We, as tribal members are supposed to be able to advise the Council, so why has no one asked the ENTIRE membership what they want?

It's about time we started "advising" them against the sale of alcohol. There are other ways to make money without hurting our people.

Sincerely,
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Casino expansion will include kids' area

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be a separate Nintendo and Sega games area, a movie area with a television and VCR, a "Barbieland" with the dolls and their accessories and a "Legoland," featuring an abundance of the popular building toy. Another popular feature will be "MacLand," featuring three or four Macintosh computers which children can use with supervision and instruction from the "SuperPlay" staff. In addition to the play areas, there will also be additional games like skeeball, which will allow children to win redemption prizes. A separate room will also be available to rent for children's birthday parties and other celebrations.

The "SuperPlay" area will be designed for children from age 6 months to age 12 years. A separate room for infants will feature cribs and will be closely monitored to ensure all children receive extra attention and care. "SuperPlay" staff will be hired by West Coast Food & Fun, but will follow all Spirit Mountain Gaming, Inc. hiring policies, including tribal preferences and background security checks. Staff members will be trained in specialized child care, first aid

and CPR procedures.

The "SuperPlay" area will be available only to children whose parents are using the other Spirit Mountain Casino entertainment venues. Cost for each child at the "SuperPlay" area will be \$5.95 for an unlimited amount of time while their parents are gaming. Parents will also be required to join the Coyote Club, the Casino's player club, to ensure proper use of the children's center. Harjo says the tentative operating hours for "SuperPlay" will be 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

A 5,000 square foot video arcade is also included in the new expansion. The arcade, designed for children age 12 and older who don't require direct supervision, will also operate from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. The arcade will feature 45 to 55 machines, including many of the most popular video games available and some redemption games. Admission to the arcade is free, with the games costing between 25 cents for the redemption games to \$1 or more for the most popular video games. The arcade will also feature a concession stand offering hot dogs, pretzels and other items.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters From Our Readers

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Smoke Signals is a publication of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon. We have established an Editorial Policy to encourage input from readers about stories printed in **Smoke Signals**, as well as other tribal issues.

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