

SMOKE SIGNALS

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**SUBMISSIONS
FROM OUR READERS:**

SMOKE SIGNALS, a publication of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, is published twice a month. We have established an Editorial Policy to encourage input from readers about stories printed in **SMOKE SIGNALS**, and other tribal issues. However, all letters must be received at the newspaper office with author's signature, address, and phone number in order to be considered for publication. **SMOKE SIGNALS** reserves the right to edit any letter for clarity and length, and to refuse publication of any letter or any part of a letter that may contain libelous statements or personal attacks. Not all letters are guaranteed publication upon submission. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of **SMOKE SIGNALS**, tribal employees, or Tribal Council.

UPCOMING DEADLINES:

Monday, July 6, 1998

Monday, July 20, 1998



Printed on recycled paper.

Letters

To the Editor:

Without mentioning their names I would like to thank the four local Grand Ronde women for their services on the Grand Ronde Juvenile Sanction Court. Court was held in Tribal Council chambers on June 18, 1998. Along with representatives from Grand Ronde Elementary School, Polk County Juvenile Department, and the Polk County Sheriff's Office, these four ladies participated as court members and helped set up sanctions to several local area youths for such crimes as burglary, curfew violation, and drug and alcohol possession. A similar court was held in April.

The Juvenile Sanction Court is designed to help wayward youth in finding the right direction within society with such court ordered sanctions that include tours of the Yamhill County Juvenile facility, and cleaning trash from the school yard and local areas as decided by the court members. Washing cars to pulling weeds to cleaning up after the Rodeo were also some sanctions received along with essays detailing what the youth did wrong and what better decisions he or she could have made.

Sanctions ordered by this court are alternatives to sending the children directly to the Juvenile Court in Dallas, OR. If the youths were sent to Juvenile Court, a court record and record of arrest would follow them until they reached 18. All Sanction Court records are retained by the Juvenile Department. Sanction Court is recognized by the Juvenile Court as a legal and binding court offering offenders and their parents a second chance.

Records are not sent to Juvenile Court. If sanctions are not completed as directed by the local Juvenile Sanction Court, the Juvenile Department can then send the offender to Juvenile Court for failure to do the ordered sanctions. A Juvenile Court record is then initiated.

This is a new program. Its success can only be measured by the participation received from within the community. In the last court proceeding, we did very well. Several ladies came forward to aid the court. If there are other community members who are interested in helping with this youth program, please call the Polk County Sheriff's Office. Thank you.

Deputy Tom O'Brien

4th of July facts: Firework Safety

- Use only legal fireworks sold from a licensed retail stand.
- Have a hose or bucket of water handy for emergencies and to douse misfired or exhausted fireworks.
- Always have an adult present when using fireworks.
- Use fireworks only outdoors — away from buildings, vehicles, dry grass and other flammable objects.
- Keep fireworks, lighters and matches away from small children.
- Never point or throw fireworks at people, pets, cars or buildings.

Candidate Forum coming August 1

The Election Board would like to announce that there will be a Candidate Forum held at the Tribal Community Center on Saturday, August 1 at 11 a.m. We would like to encourage all tribal members who have questions but can not attend, to send their questions in writing to the tribal offices in care of: Valorie Sheker, Election Board, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR 97347. We will ask all questions and publish results in the August 15 edition of *Smoke Signals*.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE CORNER



Kids can get into gangs – even in small towns

By Sunny Bigby,
Community Resource Worker

We don't live in the city. There is no gang problem here. My kids would never join a gang. These are comments you may have heard or spoken yourself. Believing this could be a terrible mistake. Because we live in a rural area does not mean that your child is exempt from gang influence. Gangs are everywhere, not just in the cities. Parents of gang members are from all walks of life and every social level. Many gang members come from loving caring environments, but feel excluded for one reason or another.

Potential gang members may have learning difficulties, others may exhibit amazing organizational and leadership skills and may strive to be the big duck in the little pond. Status can be achieved in a gang situation that the child may not feel is possible outside the gang environment. Not all gang members dress a certain way or exhibit behavior that seems to be gang related. Attitude is a strong indicator of vulnerability of your child to gang influence. Be aware that not all gangs shoot and kill, there are many levels of gang activity.

The level of violence in a gang is

determined by the strongest members and their ability to coerce others to go along with them.

Young people are motivated to join gangs in search of identity or recognition, protection from real or imagined enemies, brotherhood or companionship, or may be intimidated by their peers to join gang activity. Gangs have rules, a set of values, and behavior codes; a child may be searching for structure. Be sure your home has structure. Make sure your child knows the consequences of not following the rules and follow through with punishments or restrictions. Physical punishment is not a deterrent and sometimes escalates behavior associated with gangs.

Spend time with your child. Ask for education in what signs to look for. Join in community programs that are fighting for early intervention in schools for gang activity, band together with school officials, social workers, police and law makers and the community as a whole to fight for your child's life. The best defense is to know who your child's friends are, where they hang out, and what kind of activities they are involved in. Be aware of your child's needs, concerns, interests, and maintain

open loving communication with your youngster. Set rules and standards for the child and make sure they follow them. It's OK to be nosy, this is your child's life; you are responsible.

You can not afford to turn a blind eye or feel sure that it is just a phase your child is going through. If you suspect that your child may be at risk of becoming a member of a gang, start collecting supporting evidence; check your child's room or places they keep their private possessions. Ask for professional help, CALL your school or local youth agency. Gangs give young people a sense of family.

Be sure your kids feel secure in their family ties at home. Keep children involved in positive activities, if your child does not participate in extra curricular activities such as sports or school supervised clubs, encourage him/her to get an after school job; too much leisure time can lead to trouble.

Being an important part of something is a basic human need. By providing the love and acceptance your child needs you will go a long way in ensuring your child does not get involved in gangs.