

## Letters

Dear tribal members:  
lus uk-san, (good day)

I am writing to my fellow tribal members, also known as General Council members. I have recently witnessed some disheartening behavior by Tribal Council members. In regard to how they conduct their business with committees/boards, how they treat their employees, the choices they make in how OUR tribal funds are used, how they respond to tribal members who ask questions or voice their opinion.

As a result I began to inquire about what ordinances do cover the conduct of Tribal Council members. There is an ordinance which does in some limited fashion address Council. It deals with the expectations of their office and general conduct. In my opinion it is too generic.

As a result of my reading, I began to study the constitution of our Tribe. As many of us, I hadn't read this very important document. There are two main ways for an ordinance or a law to pass. One way is by Tribal Council. The other way is where the General membership follows the process of petition (see Article II, Section 1, of the Tribal Constitution). After some inquiring, I found out that we need approximately 954 or 1/3 General Council members, to sign a petition to call for a Special Election. To validate the election we need about 860 or 30% to vote in the election. If 2/3 of those who vote, which is approximately 574, vote yes, then it becomes law or an ordinance.

I didn't realize that we as tribal members had such an opportunity. I was under the impression Council could do what they wanted and we were powerless to have them listen to us. I have heard repeatedly that if we didn't like how they were doing their job, don't vote for them. Unfortunately, if you do not live locally, if you don't work for the Tribe or if you are not active in tribal politics, I believe you may not be informed as to how business is really ran in our Tribe.

I have consistently heard at General Council meetings that Council

is "doing the best they can" that it is a hard job. Yes, it is. This is an opportunity for them to communicate to the membership the challenges and solutions to problems they encounter while they represent US to the world.

I am proposing a Tribal Council Accountability Ordinance and creation of an Oversight Committee. This will be a beginning for all of us to be better informed. It is not uncommon for organizations to do activity reports. Their reports can be oral or written. The oral report can be a 5 or 10-minute summary at the General or public meetings. The meetings will probably shorten up because the same OLD business can be addressed instead of coming back up time after time. As I recall a few months ago, upon the opening of the General Council meeting, it was brought up that the Elders were getting upset that the same issues were coming up in OTHER business. The issues are still coming up because they are not addressed. The Oversight Commission can be a way of dealing with these issues.

This will also give our governmental system a balance I feel it does not have now.

I have written up a petition, because this process needed to start somewhere. By all means this is not my personal petition or ordinance. This will have to be done by *the people, for the people*. I am praying that all tribal members will take this chance to make a positive change in OUR government, as well as utilize our constitutional rights to make this much-needed change. I have heard repeatedly we "are setting the standard" for how tribes can do business. Now let's set the standard for responsible government.

If you would like to know more about this petition or would like a petition to get signatures, you can contact me at, P.O. Box 158, Grand Ronde, OR 97347.

Sincerely,  
**Shawn Hostler (Tdro-Li-Tdret)**  
Roll # 1699

Dear Editor:

I have never written before, and never thought I would. But I feel so strongly about this that my mind cannot rest until I say how I feel. My name is Teresa Nicholson and my grandmother is Marjorie Scheese, formerly LaChance. She grew up on the reservation and I grew up knowing that my grandmother was part Indian. There were reminders everywhere in her home of the Indian people and our heritage. I was 29 years old before anyone bothered to tell me that I had enough Indian blood (1/16) to be put on the roll. I was honored to be put on the roll and went with my grandmother to prove my connection with the Tribe. At the time I lived in Texas and the only thing I knew was that I could prove my heritage. I knew very little about the benefits I could receive. I wasn't eligible for medical, besides, I didn't need it. Now I live in Vancouver, WA. I stay in touch by reading *Smoke Signals*. I talk to my grandmother and my aunt about the Tribe. I go to powwow when I can. I've taken my grandmother to visit my grandfather's grave, for he is buried at the Grand Ronde Cemetery.

I am not saying I don't like the benefits we now have, but I am still part Indian whether or not money is made available to me. I will still be involved to the degree that I can regardless of where I live or how much blood is in me. I love my heritage and don't want to see it taken away from another grandchild who, not by their own choice, is born "impure" or does not live near Grand Ronde. I also think that if the Tribe continues to plan ahead for the future and invest money wisely, there will be enough resources for everyone. Those who are our Elders, and the future generations. Thanks for listening.

Sincerely,  
**Teresa Nicholson**  
Roll # 4001

### Correction

The Community Resource Division has moved to the Modular buildings on the west side of the community center. Their direct phone number was incorrect in the last issue. Please make note of the correct number:

Direct Local Number: **879-2034**  
Toll-free: 1-800-242-8196  
Fax: (503) 879-5127

### SMOKE SIGNALS

DEADLINE	ISSUE DATE
May 5	MAY 15
May 20	JUNE 1
June 4	JUNE 15
June 21	JULY 1

Submissions must reach the SMOKE SIGNALS office by the dates listed.

Dear Editor:

I want to give tremendous thanks to those who have helped me to graduate from college. On May 8, I will be graduating from Utah State University in Logan, Utah, with a Bachelor of Science degree in History. Also, upon my graduation I will be receiving my teaching certification for grades 6-12. This great accomplishment would not have been possible without a wonderful caring family and the considerate individuals at Grand Ronde. My junior year I was awarded the Eula Petite teaching scholarship and I would not have been able to finish my studies without this great help. I would like to thank Marion Mercier in Education who helped me with information about the scholarship and always kept me aware of the items I needed to get done. I am so appreciative to the Tribe for providing me with the opportunity to receive an education. I know that I could probably never repay the Tribe for what it has done, but I do plan to try by teaching students of a diverse background. I want to give as much back to the students as the Tribe has given me.

I would like to publicly thank some individuals in my family who have strengthened me personally in receiving my education: my husband, Milton Stephenson, Jr.; my mom, Marta Lu Clifford; and my dad, Ron O'Neal. I would also like to thank the rest of my extended family who have always encouraged me to do my best and go for my dreams. Thanks!

**Jennifer Rose Stephenson**  
Roll # 4050

Dear Editor:

I am writing about the article that appeared in the last issue of *Smoke Signals*, where somebody didn't sign their name. Saying a lot of Elders are upset because of a few members who received a free meal. My question is, did this stop some of the Elders from getting their meal? Are we this short of money, that we cannot afford a few more members a free meal occasionally? If so, I think we better have somebody look into where all of our money is going. Isn't there a rule that if somebody puts an article in *Smoke Signals*, and not have enough nerve to have his or her name, it should not be printed? If there is not such a rule, there should be.

**Delores Knight**  
Roll # 340

**Editor's Note:** Yes, there is a rule that all Letters to the Editor must be signed. We do not print anonymous letters. The article that appeared next to the letters in the last issue was a notice, submitted by the Elders Committee. It was not a Letter to the Editor. In the future, we will put headlines that are more clear, and keep notices and letters separate from each other. We regret the confusion that this has caused.

### EDITORIAL POLICY:

**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.

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