

Dear Editor:

In the past few weeks I have been through one of the most trying times of my life. I started losing the sight in my left eye, and within a few days could see almost nothing. Through all the waiting and wondering, I found myself realizing just how much we take for granted — even the most basic things in life!

My first big thank you goes to our Tribal Council for all their hard work on making sure there is medical and dental insurance available to tribal members and for having an excellent Health and Wellness Center we can go to if we need to.

Thank you Dr. Tolliver for referring me out the same day I came in and for preparing me of the possibilities of what might be ahead. Thanks also to Dr. Molloy for letting me know my test results and getting me set up for my treatments that same evening. They both made the situation a little easier for me to deal with.

And to Contract Health and referrals — thank you for all you do. It leaves a person with one less worry when dealing with a crisis. To Faith and Julie at the pharmacy, thank you for getting my prescriptions right away and letting me know what I needed to know. To the staff at Spirit Mountain Lodge — thank you for your concern and support. You are the best groups to work with.

To my family: Mom, Chip, Ken, Debbie, Cindy, Stacia, Kylea, Rylan, Halona, Leland, Doug, Valentin, Maria, Paola, Sandra, Demetrio, and Michael — thank you for your love and support. It's a comfort to know I can always count on you to be there and I love you all for that.

I am thankful for all I have in life and that when I need it, I had the best medical care available. Every day in life should be cherished, for we never know what tomorrow may bring.

Sincerely with thanks,  
**Susan M. Reyes**  
 Roll # 948

Dear Editor:

I plan to vote no on the amendment to the Grand Ronde Constitution. While I think the overall goal to limit membership is a good one, I am opposed to the amendment because of what it would do to existing members.

First, the unborn children of many tribal members would not be eligible for membership. This would create a situation in some families in which a newborn could not become a member even though his or her brothers and sisters are members.

Second, this amendment pits tribal members whose ancestors were not on the original tribal rolls against those members whose ancestors were on the rolls. I think this is a very sad situation. All members should be equal.

I hope all tribal members will register to vote and read the sample ballot carefully.

Your truly,  
**Marilyn Portwood**  
 Roll # 2915

Dear Editor:

I just read the letter from a tribal Councilman in the last *Smoke Signals* about how we should leave the decisions up to the experts that they have hired. We need to ask ourselves what they are really experts at, and if it is really for the Tribe. Yes, we need to watch out for the rumor mill, who knows if we would have saved money from different contractors.

We need to let all bids be considered and pick the one that will be best for the project, and not because of who it is. I believe we need experts to look into this to see if it is true and not something from the rumor mill.

We can't let the "experts" make all the decisions. This is why we voted the Tribal Council in. So they could look at everything closely and know what is going on with money and resources. If we allow just a certain few to make all the decisions, then why do we need a Tribal Council? They need to look at everything that is going on. We need a Council that will do their job and decide what's best for all the people, not just a certain few.

**Karen M. Knight**  
 Roll # 1117

Grand Ronde Tillicum:

There is so much talk of politics, economic development, health, education, and the direction the Tribe should or should not pursue. There is so much talk of these things that my ears are ringing, my head is spinning — my whole head aches to hear the sacred voice of Ensika Na Ha Illihee (our Mother Earth)! Does not our sustenance depend entirely upon the gifts of Mother Earth? There is nothing we have, not the casino, not the Wellness Center, nor any other holdings that is not made of the Earth and dependent upon the Earth for its continuance.

Indian people have always been about the land and when the land was taken from us we became ill. Our culture, traditions, our very names were about the land. We are the Earth!

I am a small voice, a pitiful two-legged speaking with the love of our Mother Earth in my bones. The greatness of our tribe will never be determined by what we have, but by who we are. And we are the land. We must love, honor, and respect that which sustains us, our Mother Earth.

Sincerely,  
**Michael Standing Elk Reibach**  
 Roll # 669

**SMOKE SIGNALS**  
 Public Information Office  
 9615 Grand Ronde Road  
 Grand Ronde, Or 97347  
 1-800-422-0232  
 (503) 879-2254  
 FAX: (503) 879-2173

# Letters

Dear Editor:

Recent focus in *Smoke Signals* has been articles regarding economic development and tribal self-governance. It is clear that these issues hold the greatest interest for many Grand Ronde tribal members. There is another dimension to these issues which is many times overlooked. Grand Ronde is in need of professionally trained tribal members to fill the leadership positions in all key programs. It is my feeling that for tribal members to get training, appropriate Grand Ronde committees and departments should establish firmer relationships with the Native American student unions and associations at the university level.

The history of Native American student unions has involved a significant amount of social and political activation possibilities for many Native students. These students unions have provided the necessary political and social representation for Native students to be able to gain their equal rights in the universities of this country. Native students have learned how to work with the inner-workings of public administration; how to operate an organization and administer thousands of dollars for the benefit of Native cultural requirements; and how to collaborate with other ethnic groups to push diversity and anti-discrimination agendas.

In my five years at the University of Oregon I have maintained a relationship with the Native American Student Union (NASU) and have taken multiple leadership and administration positions. My involvement has led to other positions within the Associate Student Union. I have served multiple times as primary grant writer and fund-raiser for NASU. I have probably acquired the equivalent of a business administration degree with all of my work for the student union's yearly pow-wow event. During this same time period I have received a Bachelor's degree and completed two years of graduate school, with the help of a higher education scholarship from the Grand Ronde Education program. My activities have also led to additional scholarships from the University of Oregon and multiple opportunities to travel abroad which have deepened an already rich educational experience.

The student unions at all of Oregon's universities should be utilized for the training of Grand Ronde higher education bound members. If Grand Ronde and its committees were to create relationships with the student unions, students could benefit by receiving better guidance through their academic years, in subject areas which would eventually aid the tribe in its leadership and administrative needs. Grand Ronde would be grooming its members for the betterment of both futures. I advocate for committee and departmental contacts. Grand Ronde needs doctors, lawyers, administrative personnel, anthropologists, teachers, architects, and many other skills associated with nationhood. If people want to contact me, please call 541-684-9003 or write P.O. Box 3086, Eugene, Oregon 97401.

Thank you,  
**David Lewis**  
 Roll # 2741

**FOR SALE:**  
**TRIBAL LOGO ITEMS**

Pendleton Blankets are for sale through the Cultural Resource program. Mugs are for sale through the central operator at the Governance Center. Both items are available to tribal members and tribal staff only. You may stop by the Governance Center or return this coupon. No phone orders. For more information call 1-800-422-0232.

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<p><b>Pendleton Blanket: \$97 ea.</b>                  (\$92 each + \$5 shipping &amp; handling)</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;"><b>Quantity</b></td> <td style="text-align: left;"><b>Color</b></td> <td style="text-align: left;"><b>Total Price</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>Red</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>Tourquoise</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Glass Mugs: \$8 ea.</b>                  (\$5 + \$3 shipping &amp; handling)</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;"><b>Quantity</b></td> <td style="text-align: left;"><b>Color</b></td> <td style="text-align: left;"><b>Total Price</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>Clear</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>Green</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>Blue</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>TOTAL ORDER PRICE:</b> _____</p>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Color</b>	<b>Total Price</b>	_____	Red	_____	_____	Tourquoise	_____	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Color</b>	<b>Total Price</b>	_____	Clear	_____	_____	Green	_____	_____	Blue	_____	<p>Name _____                  Address _____                  _____                  Phone _____                  Tribal Roll # _____</p> <p>Checks or money orders payable to CTGR. No phone orders. No cash or credit cards. Expect 4 weeks for shipping &amp; delivery. To avoid shipping &amp; handling costs, items may be purchased in person at tribal offices.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Return this coupon and payment to:</b>  <b>CTGR</b>                  9615 Grand Ronde Road                  Grand Ronde, OR 97347</p>
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