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Medeiros would know because it is chiefly her duty to administer all those benefits. Yes it's true that Tribal Elders can show up at the Community Center for a free lunch, but that's just the beginning. There are also Elders' Housing, annual field trips, and monthly events that can range from February's crab feed to March's trip down to Coos Bay for Elders' Honor Day.

All that naturally requires planning, Medeiros and the committee's domain, but more importantly there is also the issue of nabbing volunteers to cook, drive, etc. And all that must be

accomplished on a budget that the Elders' Committee submits at the onset of each year. Cost overruns are inevitable, and to counter that the committee engages in all sorts of fundraising activities—bake sales, etc. This year in particular will demand more funding than usual. In July, they plan on hosting Elders' Honor Day, inviting Tribes from all over Oregon, and featuring drumming and loads of food. September will see a major undertaking - the annual trip to Albuquerque, New Mexico, one that has Medeiros and company scrambling to make happen.

But what most people fail to see are the little things that the Elders' Committee does, like sending flowers to the families of sick or departed Elders. Delivering meals to Elders unable to make it down to the Community Center. Or just picking up and driving Elders to the meals and other functions like the free buffet at Spirit Mountain Casino on Mondays.

The workload does nothing to diminish Medeiros enthusiasm, or ambition for that matter. She still cites building a strong Elder community as the ever-present goal of the committee. ■

Election Board



Ellen Fischer  
Chair

Committee: Election  
Meeting day: 2nd Tuesday  
Location: SMC Conference Rm  
Time: 6 p.m.

**BACKGROUND:** When Tribal Council passed its Election Ordinance, with that came the inception of the Election Board. Depending on whom you ask, this could be one of the more important groups in the Tribe.

**PEOPLE INVOLVED:** Since the beginning, as now, the board consists of seven (7) members, all of them appointed by council. Board members must be Tribal, be of 18 years of age or more, and most importantly, have no stake whatsoever in Tribal politics, either through council candidacy, or being related to someone who is either running or already occupying a council position. For that reason council also appoints anywhere from three (3) to seven (7) alternates to sit on the board, in the event that members must recuse themselves from overseeing an election due to a conflict of interest. Terms are for two (2) years, and are a paid position. Tribal member Ellen Fischer serves as Chairperson.

**MEMBERS:** Cheri Butler, Kimberly Campbell, Nancy Coleman, Ellen Fischer (Chair), Nancy Coleman, Claudia Leno, Kim-

berly Campbell, Ruby Bigoni and Charlene Hoover.

**ALTERNATES:** Joann Mercier, Penny Deloe, Bernice Jensen and Edward Haller.

**FUNCTION:** If ever a board or committee were vital to the Tribe, it is the Election Board, for they are responsible for overseeing the elections and keeping tabs on council candidates. In other words, they are the protectors of the democratic process here in Grand Ronde, assuring smooth-running, honest elections.

Maintaining democracy has them scrambling, beginning with their oath of integrity upon being selected to the board. All members must swear to do everything in their power to prevent fraud or abuse during elections.

The oath is just the beginning, from there on the nearly infinite duties proceed. As listed under the Election Ordinance, they are — posting notices of the time and place of nominations for Tribal Council elections, verifying that candidates meet qualifications, preparing ballots, publishing election dates, mailing absentee ballots and accepting or rejecting them, ensuring that ballots are distributed only to eligible voters, receiving all ballots cast and preserving them in sealed containers under lock and key for one (1) year from the date of the election or until any election dispute is resolved by the Tribal Court, whichever is later, counting votes cast for candidates and measures, excluding rejected absentee ballots, maintaining a secure location certified copies of the Signature Verification Forms provided by the Enrollment Office, maintaining accurate election records, including the poll book, conducting recounts of election re-

sults, reporting election results, examining and verifying petitions for measures, conducting elections for measures.

Those of course are just the duties of the board. Like any other committee or board, one thing the Election Board must endure through is being the recipient of numerous suggestions and ideas, often coming in the form of petitions. One notion circulating around these days is that of a primary, many members feeling that far too



Photo by Peta Tinda

many candidates run for Tribal Council year in and year out. Another is finding better ways to increase voter registration and turnout.

The Election Board, like Enrollment, relies on complete confidentiality. Thus unlike other boards, meetings can go into Executive Session, whereby nobody but board members are allowed to sit in.

Given that CTGR is a young democracy, the Election Board more than any other receives input from all sources, and since its birth, has undergone more fluctuation. Since 1985, the Election Ordinance has undergone 15 different amendments, the last one coming in 1999. ■

Enrollment Committee

**BACKGROUND:** CTGR was not even two years old when council passed the Enrollment Ordinance, a provision, which gave cause for the formal establishment of the Enrollment Committee (It must be noted however that a committee did exist prior to the ordinance).

**PEOPLE INVOLVED:** A nine (9) member panel staffs the Enrollment Committee. Members volunteer and are not paid. Tribal member Robert Schmid serves as the Chair (though Vice-Chair Louise Medeiros helped with this article).

**MEMBERS:** Arlene Beck, Sharon Hanson (Secretary), Cordelia Kneeland, Diane Lane, Dorothy Lawe, Louise Medeiros (Vice Chair), Margaret Provost, Robert Schmid (Chair), and Terri Wood.

**FUNCTION:** Ironically, the purpose of the committee is very simple — maintain and follow through with enrollment procedures. Yet that alone makes the job perhaps more contentious than even that of the Election Board, because ultimately they are charged with reviewing who can and cannot enroll to be a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. Though Council votes on admittance, and technically has the final say, the Enrollment Com-

mittee reviews the cases and their approval decides the outcome most of the time.

"Many people want in now since the money came," said Medeiros, in reference to member per capita distribution. "A lot of people find out about their heritage, and they're proud."

Between those two types of people, she said, roughly several hundred people per year apply for membership. Maybe one-fifth actually makes the grade, she said, mostly new births. Why the low percentage? Simple, very few people can provide enough evidence to prove their lineage.

"I'm sorry for some people," she said. "But we must have concrete evidence."

That evidence generally consists of a birth certificate and proof they are descended from one of the Tribe's first 850 enrolled members. That group of people is known as the Restoration Act Roll, and unless an applicant can trace their blood quantum through one of them, membership is highly unlikely. Applicants must also be the son or daughter of an enrolled member at birth.

Applicants turned down always have the right to protest. Within thirty (30) days of being turned down for membership, they may file protest, giving the committee the opportunity to re-

view the case and decide whether to recommend enrollment, or not.

Even with such carefully drawn out guidelines, enrollment rules do have exceptions. One viable scenario, according to Medeiros, was never even considered, much less thought of, up until the last six months. What about "lost souls," or those people whose lineage was lost through adoption or the loss or death of a Tribal parent?

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Louise Medeiros  
Vice Chair

Committee: Enrollment  
Meeting day: Twice a Year  
Location: TBA  
Time: TBA