

## Letters

### Dear Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Family:

As many of you know, my boys and I have lost our most valuable earthly possession, Nick Faas was everything to us. He was the rock for our family. He was the cement that held our family together and close. He was a valuable support to me and a father figure to his brothers. In fact, in my last conversation with him (10 minutes before his passing), he stated these facts to me. I told him that he didn't have to put that on himself but he told me that that is who he wanted to be. He was a very loving and selfless young man, not only to our family, but he felt that way towards his family here as well.

His loss is devastating to us. It's hard to know how to go on. However, I cannot begin to find the words to express my love and gratitude for all that this entire community has done for Nick and our family. It is so overwhelming to me to grasp all that people have done. I would say that whenever I thought that people couldn't do any more, they would do more. I was so devastated that I couldn't do things and many people worked to do these things for me. I only know of what was done on our behalf and I am awestruck by the love and generosity we've been shown.

Nick was so proud of his Native American heritage. He loved this community, especially these children. He worked hard to help them get a good education, but also feel loved and understood. He wanted to get his master's degree and come back and continue helping this Tribe and their children. He talked about all of these kids with such warmth and love. He could be gentle yet firm. Nick and I had many conversations expressing how lucky we were to be a part of this family. Even though he was a full-time student and a part-time worker, he made time to be involved in as many cultural events as he could.

Last year, our entire family, including his grandfather Larry Cole, was able to be a part of the Canoe Family and join in the journey. He was so proud of his family. He stood on the shore the last day of the journey and he yelled so loud for his brother that Zack was able to hear his voice in a crowd of over 10,000. Being Native and being with his family meant everything to him.

That being said, it shows how much we appreciate the way that he was treated during his passing. Bobby Mercier, Eirik Thorsgard and others were there every day to dress him, sing to him and lead him on his way to the other world. His funeral service and burial were totally traditional. There isn't a higher honor that you could have given Nick and our family. I prayed for days that our Creator would allow him to see what our Tribe was doing for him. I believe that that happened.

I will never be able to thank everyone enough for all that you have done for us. I am in awe of everyone. I will do my best to give back to this family as soon as I am able. I love you all from the bottom of my half heart.

**Kathy Cole**  
Roll #4800

### Dear Smoke Signals:

I would like to express my thanks to our brave members who spoke at the meetings concerning the building of a casino in the Gorge. Further, I can't express how proud I was to be a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and how proud I was of our council. For those of you who were unable to attend, the arguments were convoluted.

Although Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy was booed and jeered, she once again showed remarkable leadership. A face of classic profile; a frame nervous but yet self-controlled. At one point, I personally felt pervasive anger and I believe that anger was shared by all CTGR Tribal members. I believe our feeling was if you insult, boo, degrade the members of our council, you incited a degree of anger to all CTGR members.

Not one council person stepped out in front and took credit for what someone else did, not one ego had to be stroked, not one stood alone, but they stood together for the members of our Tribe.

For me to see each and every council person working in one accord on one common goal, which was for the members of their Tribe, was by far one of the most uplifting events I have experienced. It was a pleasure to see! There is strength in unity. Val Sheker, along with Cheryle Kennedy and Ann Lewis, were above the standard speakers.

The sad part of all this is the Warm Springs Natives are being lured in by false promises and hopes of big money, and told this is a done deal. When it doesn't go through, the bureaucrats, attorneys, consultants and developers will conveniently blame the CTGR, which will further fuel their anger toward us. Warm Springs Natives are being taken on a political ride to the tune of \$24 million and counting.

I still feel that building a casino in the Gorge would be tragic, on many levels. I feel compassion for our fellow Natives. Their suffering is so insidious, it rattles my soul. They need help, they need our prayers and they need better leadership. They need to invest in programs for their members. This is why, as members, we have a responsibility to elect leaders who are honest, have wisdom and integrity, and are of good character. Not leaders who have a "Let them eat cake" response to pertinent issues. Not people who at their core are self-serving and self-promoting.

My hope is that our council can benefit from this experience. Recognize that when you make critical decisions it always affects the people on the lowest socioeconomic level the most. Every society is judged by how it treats its least fortunate amongst them.

How far we go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the weak and tolerant of the strong, because someday in your life you will have been all of them. (George Washington Carver).

**Adrainne Llanezas**  
Roll #1715

### Dear Tribal Members:

To the Tribal members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde who donated our sacred food, we thank you.

As a member of the Grand Ronde Tribe, I was humbled and blessed. Our ceremony was beautiful.

I would ask any of you to try and find time to volunteer for sweats, smudge our one-time-a-year event powwow and to remember there are many of us here as well as other nations. Trish Jordan would be our contact person outside and Chaplain E. Brault inside the facility.

Items like spring willow, red cloth medicines, teachers overseeing proper instruction on distribution of the nature of bird of prey feathers.

Release housing arrangements, schooling children reunited and employment — all of this is necessary no matter what our last name is.

Personally, I vow to donate half of my timber money to help pay for gas and lodging for the Elders who travel to sing. They do two ceremonies in one day over in minimum and in medium.

I also would like to challenge any member to meet or beat my bequeathed money. And I also would like to donate my salmon allotment and tags issued in my name for game.

Together we are as one, and cannot be divided.

**Melanie Sage Bear Schmid**  
Roll #2581

Oregon Department of Corrections, Coffee Creek Correctional Facility  
No. 5992221  
P.O. Box 9000  
Wilsonville, OR 97070

### Dear Smoke Signals:

This is my first letter to your paper and to the Tribe, but there are a few suggestions I would like to make.

The meeting set up for May 5 at 5 p.m. was a disaster as far as I'm concerned. Trying to get to Tacoma during a work day, from my direction, is impossible. Traffic starts backing up at 3 p.m. Most of us work until 5 p.m. Some may even have PTA, evening staff meetings, kids to practice, etc., to do after work, and therefore unable to attend. Please try to set up meetings in Washington area for Sunday.

Even though I appreciate the fact that the casino has restarted bingo, I find it totally unfair to have this event on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Most people come from out of town usually are at the casino during this time. All my family loves bingo, but has no alternative but to head to Lincoln City to play bingo. I realize the casino personnel would like to have concerts on weekends, but they won't be having them every weekend. Why not put bingo available when there is no concert on weekends? I'm sure many other bingo players would like to see this, too.

Lastly, I want to thank the Tribe for sending a delegation to New York. I was one of the Elders who were able to attend this wonderful event. It was so moving and spiritual, words cannot explain. Since I don't live in the area, but come down to Grand Ronde at every opportunity, meeting new people was also an excellent opportunity for me to get to know a lot of the Elders, and I had a great time getting to know them. A special thank you to Siobhan Taylor, who took care of all of us, keeping us on schedule, getting taxi or limousine service and an all-around hard-working individual. She did a wonderful job. Thank you, Siobhan.

Thank you, *Smoke Signals*. You do a good job of letting us know what's happening.

**Arlene Kautz**  
Roll #188

**COMMUNITY-WIDE YARD SALES**

**The Elders, Grand Meadows & Family Housing**

**will be having community yard sales!**

**Come join the fun and see what**

**treasures you can find! One man's junk**

**is another man's gold!**



**July 5, 6 • Aug. 2, 3 • Sept. 6, 7**

**TRIBAL COMMUNITY YARD SALES**