

Letters

Dear *Smoke Signals*:

What a delightful surprise to see my photo in the last *Smoke Signals*.

Some of you are probably wondering who this Anna Hyde is. Well, I was born and raised in Grand Ronde in 1925 (I just gave my age away); daughter of Edwin and Alvina LaChance; many of you may know I was called "Tudy," a nickname given to me by my older sister.

I was so proud to win the honor of being queen. At the time, I was too speechless to let everyone know what it meant to me. I will treasure all the gifts that were bestowed on me. Thank you to all who made the day so special. The dinner was so very good.

I also enjoyed the jam session. They were great and the person whose name I missed, I loved the bags you made to fill the treats in. Thank you much from a very proud member of the Grand Ronde Confederated Tribe.

Anna Hyde

Roll #286

Dear *Smoke Signals*:

We would like to thank so many for helping us make this year's Elders' Honor Day a wonderful success.

We would like to extend special thanks to all those who generously donated gifts for the drawings, Wellness staff for preparing and serving the meals and beverages, our emcee for the day, Pearl Mekemson, Noreen Bolton, and Facilities and Housekeeping for their time and labor.

We would also like to thank Royalty, our hard-working teens that kept the beverages going, and so many others for taking the time to serve our Elders on that special day.

With so much appreciation,

Elders' Honor Day Committee

Dear Tribal members:

I noticed in the last issue of *Smoke Signals* that people are still concerned about the infamous "Leno letter." Having been the target of more attacks than I can count, both verbal and written, I feel qualified to weigh in with my own take on things.

First off, I can't say I liked the letter. I happen to be good friends with some of the people named in that letter, and was upset for their sake. Had it been my own family, I'd be rightfully angry, but eventually I would calm down, realizing that smear campaigns are nothing but endemic to politics, especially Tribal politics.

The shock to me has been the (over)reaction by the Tribal Council. I attended the July 2 council meeting and was appalled at the outrage directed at this letter and its author. You'd have thought there had been a murder. I found that puzzling considering that some of the people who spoke were themselves the authors of negative letters attacking people. For example, the anonymous letter mailed out to our membership in September 2005 falsely saying that Chris Mercier, Buddy West, Wink Soderberg, Kathleen Tom and I would be cutting per capita and numerous other payments. One speaker at the council meeting in 2005 had even admitted to possessing confidential documents on Kathleen Tom and her sister. Come to think of it, 2005 set a precedent for ugliest election ever. Remember the letter by a sitting council member mailed out in January of that year? Then there was the letter by a Tribal Elder blasting Wink Soderberg and Kathleen Tom during the election. To top it off, there was the letter by half the sitting council calling Kathleen Tom a liar. Last but not least, there were the fliers placed on people's windshields during the October 2005 General Council meeting that targeted none other than Kathleen and myself.

My point is that this kind of thing has happened before and will happen again. In the past, there were no demands for investigations to determine how someone obtained the mailing list or to identify an anonymous author. Quite frankly, many of the people expressing disgust at this letter have no problem with these kinds of tactics when they are aimed at the council members on the other side of the political arena. Once the mudslinging begins on one side, it is only a matter of time before the other side starts, too.

My main concern prompting me to write is that I've been told that the council circulated a committee sheet with "highest priority" ordering executive staff to get to the bottom of this letter. The council isn't supposed to be in the business of revenge, much less using Tribal resources to exact that revenge. I know some council members have endorsed our vice chair for this election, but I sincerely hope that isn't your top priority right now. I can think of a lot more important things the council could be doing.

For instance, you could devote your time to stopping the bleeding of our Tribe's portfolio, including Elders' pension and kid's trust funds. You could also make sure our health plan is sustainable and get Grand Ronde Road completed. Above all, please make sure our endowments are what they were when I left office: fully funded.

If anything, the lesson I've learned from watching this spectacle unfold is that we need two policies right now. First, a policy that deals specifically with these kinds of situations so council members are not picking and choosing when they want to conduct "investigations" on incidents that have riled them. Second, I hope our Tribe will look into some sort of whistleblower protection policy so Tribal members don't feel the need to send anonymous letters.

Some of the points made in the letter were questioned at the July 2 meeting, and while I mean no disrespect to our vice chair, the answer given was basically, "I won't talk about that here in public, but you're more than welcome to come back to my office and chat."

Why not just set the record straight for all of us?

Angie Blackwell

Roll #1089

Dear Tribal members:

Most of you have already received these letters from people I believe that has been trying to take over and run our Tribe for years.

These ones are not running for Tribal Council this year, so how are they getting our confidential and private information (our personal names and addresses)?

If this confidential information is being passed around like the telephone book, then should not all members have the same right to our private information as they have so that we can send out letters to everyone and tell them who we want them to vote for and as well spread rumors just to get the votes for the ones we want in.

I believe and feel that these certain ones who are sending out these letters (that has no right to have our names and addresses, unless they are running for Tribal Council) are only doing it because they want ones that they can control and be able to tell them how to run our Tribe.

So the members need to be careful of who they are voting for and who they are listening to, so seek within yourselves and vote for the ones who will do their best for our Tribe.

Tribal Elder Delores Knight

Roll #340

Dear *Smoke Signals*:

Another letter regarding the Leno family.

First, to the individual(s) that sent me the attempted slanderous letter on the Leno family: Take me off your mailing list and throw away the address. I don't want your mail. You're misinformed and/or obviously have personal grievance with this family. Whatever your vendetta, it now appears you have offended many people. I hope they find out who you are and how you came to have the names and addresses of the voting membership. Maybe if you're made an example of something good will come of this and we won't have to repeat in the future.

For now, enough with the smear campaigns!

It saddens me to read letters like the one printed in the Aug. 1 edition of *Smoke Signals* where a respected Tribal Elder stated, "If none of the information is true, then the Leno family has nothing to worry about." No disrespect, but if it was your family, how do you think you would feel? It's unfortunate that some people don't want this travesty to end. I ask myself why they keep it going.

To the rest of the Tribal membership: Every year it gets worse. When do we ourselves say enough is enough! This year most of the nominees are standing on the "Ethics & Integrity" bandwagon. Well, it's not enough to say the words, folks. Believe it or not, you have to actually stand behind them. So far, I'm not impressed.

Totally disgusted.

Tammy Garrison

Roll #1669

Dear *Smoke Signals*:

Sorry it has taken me so long to respond. I would like to thank *Smoke Signals* and staff for getting me in touch with a friend that I have not seen for 50-plus years. Ruth Rickard and her first husband were our good friends for several years, traveling, boat racing and just plain fun times.

When her first husband was killed, she went one way and us another. Thanks to an article in *Smoke Signals* about Ruth, the paper and staff were able to give me a phone number, plus other help later. Ruth and I have talked on the phone a few times now and then.

When I was finally able to drive that far, her phone had been disconnected. I went to McMinnville for a family gathering and then on to Tillamook to visit. When I got to Grand Ronde, I wanted to know what happened to Ruth. After talking to maintenance people, road crews and then into some of the offices, I found the right place where she had lived.

I was helped by many wonderful, helpful people and you have a great community. I found that Ruth has moved to Portland to live with one of her daughters. I am now still talking to Ruth on the phone, but I found her.

I am 80 so may never get to see her, but we can talk on the phone and I thank your community for helping me through all of this.

I enjoy your *Smoke Signals* paper very much. Thanks to everyone.

Lois Shafer

Ashland, Ore

Recycle center hours

Due to misuse, the recycle center will be open during the following hours only: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 8 a.m. to noon Saturdays. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause you, but we have found it necessary to put tighter control on this service. **NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO DUMP PERSONAL GARBAGE OR YARD DEBRIS AT THE SITE.** If you see someone abusing this privilege, contact Mike Larsen at 503-879-2407.

Youth Canoe Club

Every Friday 4-5 p.m. — Youth Education Building

Contact Lisa Leno at 503-879-1171 or Travis Mercer at 503-879-2143 for more information.