

— NOTICE —

All requests for members of the Grand Ronde Honor Guard are to be made in writing and sent to Steve Rife, Chairman, Veterans' Special Event Board, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR 97347. For questions, call Rife at 503-917-1084.

NOTICE — Monthly Tribal Council Wednesday Meetings

DATE	TIME
Wednesday, Sept. 10	5 p.m.
Wednesday, Sept. 24	5 p.m.

Please note that these times and dates are subject to change if needed. Call Dakota Whitecloud, Tribal Council Relations Coordinator, at 503-879-1309 to confirm.

Letters

Dear Tribal Members,

In reading what different people have had to say about the legendary Leno letter that kicked off our campaign season this year, I would like to offer my own two cents on the matter, if anybody is interested.

To start, I happen to know some, but not all, of the people named in the letter. They are qualified to do their jobs, and would have probably gotten the positions regardless of whether or not there was some sort of political influence being thrown around. I am pretty certain of that. Admittedly, had a similar letter come out against me and my family, I would be upset as well. But conversely, I would respond to the heart of the allegations without hesitation. Unfortunately, being on Council what I had to witness was less a willingness to address the accusations, which I think one should do, and more a fixation on rooting out the responsible party and for lack of a better phrase, making them pay. That in itself is disturbing. When a simple yes-or-no question, as was asked July 2, is answered with a search-and-destroy mission towards the person whose actions raised the issue in the first place, I would say there are some serious, and larger, problems afoot. It is no wonder the person who wrote the letter chose to do so anonymously.

If there is any good to come of the letter I think it lies in the opportunity for Tribal members, especially those who like to be vocal and active politically, to reassess what they would like to see in their political process. Because quite honestly, the Leno letter is a product of our political environment, as clichéd as that may sound. This kind of crap has been going on for years now. The most vocal people who have cried foul in response to the letter have been responsible for some of the most mean-spirited mudslinging, much of it public, that I've ever seen in Tribal politics. Like I said July 2 at the Council meeting, some of you who expressed outrage have sat and applauded (or even took part in) attacks when they were launched at me, or Angie Blackwell, or Kathleen Tom, or Buddy West, or Wink Soderberg. Come to think of it, going back five years, has any member of the Council ever endured what Ed Pearsall did his last two years? I really doubt that. For those of you like me who keep every political letter and frequent the multiple Tribal Web sites and message boards, does any recent year compare with 2005 for sheer nastiness? If you can think of a worse year, please let me know and bring proof.

The point I am trying to make is that this kind of stuff will continue until all of us say "We're not gonna tolerate this, period. We don't care who it happens to!" It is far too easy to let these kinds of tactics slide when they are lobbed at those who we oppose and dare I say despise politically. But that kind of action only feeds the mentality that spawns letters in the first place. There is no doubt in my mind that the person who wrote that letter probably convinced themselves what they were doing was OK because it happened all the time.

I have watched both the Obama and McCain campaigns this year publicly denounce actions and comments which were supposedly on their behalf. Although both have allowed their respective sides to lapse somewhat in terms of avoiding attacks and negativity, they have at least made efforts to let their supporters know when the line has been crossed. I dream some day of when we will start to see that kind of leadership and responsibility exercised not only in the Tribal political efforts, but among the Council themselves. Far too often I have witnessed accusations made toward individual Council that were baseless. Far too often I've known that everybody on Council knew the accusations were baseless, but said nothing, not even just to let people know the truth. I stuck up for our vice chair on July 2, even though for the duration of my time on Council we have been continually at different ends of the political battleground. I did that because regardless of our differences, these kinds a tactics like the Leno letter are hard to defend. When the next line of BS attacks comes my way, maybe he or one of his political allies on or off the Council will stick up for me. If that ever happens, you will know we as a Tribe are undoubtedly headed in the right direction. When Council really is that united and professional, stuff like the Leno letter will be a distant memory, if even remembered at all.

Sincerely,
Christopher G. Mercier
 Roll #1821

See page 11 for more letters.

General Council meeting

Sunday, Sept. 7, 2008 — 11 a.m.
 Tribal Community Center

Smoke Signals

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DEADLINE DATE	ISSUE DATE
Friday, Sept. 5	SEPT. 15
Friday, Sept. 19	OCT. 1
Friday, Oct. 3	OCT. 15
Monday, Oct. 20	NOV. 1
Wednesday, Nov. 5	NOV. 15

Editorial Policy

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2008 Tribal Council

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