

NOTICE — Monthly Tribal Council Wednesday Meetings

DATE **TIME**
 Wednesday, Dec. 22.....4 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 Smoke Signals:**

With all due respect, my name is Mrs. Tina Butler Villareal. First and foremost, I feel the need and purpose to apologize for my actions and behavior to anyone that I might have offended, annoyed or maybe even caused a headache to. I truly do apologize.

I have to admit I was coming off of drugs and acted in a manner in which was not myself. I've apologized to a few deputies willingly on my own. However, I am willingly writing this to make sure my voice is heard because I know that this is a workplace for you. So please find it in your hearts to forgive me and the nature of my stupidity, immaturity and disrespect. God bless you and your families. Thank you for your time.

I also must say that I am a very mature, happy, respectful individual. That is who I am naturally. However, I am open for advice as well as constructive criticism if you feel that I need some and that I can learn from it. Please, I am a very approachable individual. Today, I am about living and learning. Knowledge is power.

Tina Butler Villareal
 Roll #2729

Dear Smoke Signals:

I wrote to *Smoke Signals* quite a few months ago, asking for support during this difficult time in my life. I have been incarcerated since Oct. 27, 2009, and now I am preparing for release in 66 days. I want to thank everybody for their letters and support, and for loving me and having faith in me until I could do so for myself. Support has come in during the entire time I have been here.

I want to send my apologies to my family and friends, who I wasn't able to reach out to because I was too afraid of being rejected, abandoned and my biggest fear — losing my children. In the end, I lost my children anyway. I am currently fighting the state of Oregon and the Tribe for one last opportunity to parent my little girl, who has been so brave during this time.

Unfortunately, my children have endured the most from my addiction, as have friends and family. Today, I am a different woman than the broken one who showed up here. I truly believe I deserve one last opportunity to be the mother I know I was meant to be. The Creator, whom I choose to also call God, didn't give me my children for no reason. I have come to the realization and understanding of the reality of my addiction, the price so many have paid.

I also have had the unique opportunity to do what sadly statistics are against, which is to recover. So I ask for continued support and prayer for continued strength and courage to continue to ask for help and, again, I thank my family, especially for their support and if there is someone reading this article today that can rally up support for a reunification plan for me and my little girl, please advocate for us. We are out of time.

For folks who don't understand addiction, it never "goes away," and we addicts face other obstacles like employment, credit, housing, our children and feeling hopeless and like failures. I know I am worth another chance and I will strive to make amends to my Tribe, the community, my family, my friends and my children through correct day-to-day, clean and sober living, and by helping others who struggle as I have.

There is no way I can go back and erase my past mistakes, but I can acknowledge them and I can acknowledge how they have caused so much harm to myself and others, and make sure I don't continue those behaviors. I can stop making excuses or justifications and face them for what they are/were.

What else I know from my own personal demons is that when at all possible every effort should be made to reunite a child with their parents because otherwise the child faces abandonment and addiction, and the cycle continues. I was that little girl, born Tonia Yvonne George, separated from my Tribe, adopted out and name changed to Michele.

While being adopted probably saved me, it also scarred me. I am so happy to have my biological family today. Thank you Angie Blackwell, Shelley Hanson, Steven and Connie Bobb, Liz Leno and my sister Tracy for not giving up on me.

Michele Chrestensen
 Roll #890

See page 16 for more letters.

Tribal Office Closures

Tribal offices will be closing on Thursday, Dec. 23, at noon and closed on Friday, Dec. 24, in observance of Christmas. Offices also will be closing on Thursday, Dec. 30, at noon and closed on Friday, Dec. 31, in observance of New Year's Day.

General Council meeting

Sunday, Jan. 9 — 11 a.m.
 Tribal Community Center

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DEADLINE DATE	ISSUE DATE
Monday Dec. 20	Jan. 1
Wednesday, Jan. 5.....	Jan. 15
Thursday, Jan. 20.....	Feb. 1
Friday, Feb. 4	Feb. 15
Friday, Feb. 18	Mar. 1

Editorial Policy

SMOKE SIGNALS, a publication of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, is published twice a month. No portion of this publication may be reprinted without permission.

Our editorial policy is intended to encourage input from Tribal members and readers about stories printed in the Tribal newspaper. However, all letters received must be signed by the author, an address must be given and a phone number or e-mail address must be included for verification purposes. Full addresses and phone numbers will not be published unless requested.

SMOKE SIGNALS reserves the right to edit letters and to refuse letters that are determined to contain libelous statements or personal attacks on individuals, staff, Tribal administration or Tribal Council. Not all letters are guaranteed publication upon submission. Letters to the editor are the opinions and views of the writer. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of **SMOKE SIGNALS**, Tribal staff, Tribal administration or Tribal Council.

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2010-11 Tribal Council

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