

Letters

Dear Tribal members:

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves. We are a group of dedicated Tribal members from all walks of life. Many of us are part of those "split families" who you may have read or heard about. Also, a number of us are family to that large group of children who were kicked out of the Tribe in recent years.

As you can tell, the constitutional amendment of 1999 had a very adverse and negative impact on many of our lives. Our goal is to correct that.

To be completely honest, we don't disagree with the intent of 1999 constitutional amendment. Like any other Tribe, government, business, organization or community, you must grow at a rate you can cope with and administrate. We understand fully why the 1999 amendment was brought forth for a vote of the membership.

However, like any major decision, there are always unintended consequences. In our case, the new requirements for enrollment divided our families, leaving some of our children able to enjoy life as Tribal members, and some of their siblings unable. We believe this scenario to be very unjust, and if many of you were in the same situation, you would probably feel the same way.

Like many of you, we don't want to see the floodgates to our Tribal membership opened. The new proposed amendment does not do that. It corrects the unfair situation for us and for many other Tribal families. While the amendment may loosen our requirements a little, it also includes a provision to limit growth so as to be more manageable. So if you are worried about a flood of new Tribal members and huge drain on services like per capita, think again.

The question we ask then is, if something costs very little to you, but would make a world of difference in the lives of others, would open up numerous educational and financial opportunities for the next generation of Tribal children, what possible reasons could somebody have to not support that? We can't think of any.

We would like to see the new amendment pass. It is the right thing to do. It corrects a situation without putting the Tribe as risk and having little impact on everybody else.

Please join us in voting "yes" on the 2011 constitutional amendment.

Hayu Masi

Dee Edwards

Roll #2929

Dell Dickison

Roll #3139

Marta Clifford

Roll #3907

Monty Parazoo

Roll #2620

Wendy Weston

Roll #2982

Carrie Hawkins

Becky Weston

Roll #2981

Jennifer O'Neal

Roll #4050

Julie Stokes

Roll #4166

Stephanie Boteilho

Roll #2621

Michelle Cooper

Kyle Dickison

Roll #3141

Eli Dickison

Roll #3140

Sarah Guinard

Roll #4136

Shannon Green

Roll #4298

Travis Parazoo

Roll #3185

Michael Parazoo

Roll #4299

Dear Tribal members:

My name is Steven Soderberg. I speak out once in a while, and this is just the second letter I've written to *Smoke Signals*. But right now the time seems right to say something.

I've now sat through one of those informational meetings on the enrollment amendment. The presentations they have given us are pretty straightforward and easy to understand. Members asked some good questions, and I feel staff and Tribal Council have done their best to answer them.

Facebook is loaded with lots of conversation on this topic. Some of it has gotten downright ugly, and I am not sure anybody has changed their minds. I think a lot of people have had their minds made up for years now.

Although I haven't been asked, I would like to share my own view of the matter. In 1999, we had a constitutional amendment which Tribal Council saw as necessary because they were worried about the Tribe growing too quickly. That amendment had some effects that were underestimated. Now we've got these odd enrollment situations, where you have the split families and the people who suddenly can't pass on their blood because of when they or an ancestor were enrolled. None of these situations are fair, but they've existed and we've known about them for 12 years.

The amendment before us fixes those problems, but doesn't open up the rolls too much. In reading Facebook it seems like a lot of people are worried about the "flood" of people. In fact I've read some "sky is falling" comments about how our Tribe is going to go broke and what not. I don't understand this because the amendment puts a limit on growth, plus during the last amendment three years ago we were informed only 300 or so new people would be able to enroll. I guess people will believe whatever they want, or those who want this to fail will say whatever it takes.

The information we've been given seems unbiased and reasonable. I think if we want to undo some of the 1999 amendment, we have to accept that doing this will loosen our requirements and allow more people to

enroll. I don't think you can correct some of the problems caused by the 1999 act without opening the door a little, so I don't see why people who are making a big deal about it are acting as if there is some sort of magical alternative. I don't think there is.

I just think if you have a parent who is a Grand Ronde Tribal member and their blood quantum when passed to you is at least 1/16th, you should be able to enroll. It should be that simple. Right now, it's not. When it comes to whether or not our descendants can enroll, not all Grand Ronde Tribal members are equal. Not according to our present requirements.

I am voting "yes" because it is the right thing to do. We should all be equals in this Tribe.

Steven Soderberg

Roll #1415

Dear Tribal members:

Let me begin by saying I felt a compelling need to let you know my opinion on the upcoming constitutional election on enrollment. I would like to make several points.

Probably every Tribal member has noticed that per capita isn't what it used to be. There are numerous reasons for that, but regardless the amount has gotten progressively lower. I have always believed that per capita should be a high priority and 45 percent at the minimum 25 percent as it is the only benefit this Tribe provides that is equal for each and every Tribal member, regardless of your age, where you live and, most important of all, especially in Grand Ronde, your last name. Lastly, per capita, along with the Tribal health plan, is one of the few benefits we give to every Tribal member.

When Council was debating how to proceed with the constitutional amendment, there were several Council members who had issues with changing the definition of Grand Ronde blood, which is one of the major changes. I do not understand why, as the proposal would make how Grand Ronde blood gets passed on equal for everybody. It seems weird that any Indian person would object to equality given our struggles historically, but truth is always stranger than fiction and that seems doubly true when it comes to Tribal politics. There appeared to be a lot of support for the "parent on the roll" language, which according to statistics provided us during the 2008 language would open up the rolls and allow five times as many new people to enroll. The exact numbers if anybody is interested was 249 new enrollees for "parent on the roll" changes, and 49 for the proposed definition of Grand Ronde blood. That is a ratio of 5 to 1.

Both numbers have probably increased since then, but the fact remains that just changing the "parent on the roll" language alone would mean hundreds, I repeat hundreds, of new Tribal members eligible to enroll immediately.

This would have a huge impact on the services we provide, would drastically affect our plans for the endowments and probably a reduction in per capita of several hundred dollars every year permanently from here on out.

We had to consider this when looking at how to address the enrollment dilemma and that is one of the main reasons why Council agreed to bundle the language, including the enrollment "cap," the limit on the number of people who can enroll every year.

I am writing this because our motivations for bundling the amendments have been questioned, when in fact the reality is Council agreed to the bundle to lessen the impact of the "parent on the roll" language, which would allow hundreds of new enrollees, as opposed to dozens for the new definition of Grand Ronde blood.

Anybody who believes Council was more worried about the few dozen people who could enroll with the new definition of Grand Ronde blood as opposed to the hundreds that would enroll due to changing "parent on the roll" needs to study a concept called logic and, for that matter, math.

I don't have any immediate family members impacted by this amendment. I already have an ancestor on the Restoration Roll, so really, I don't benefit at all from this amendment, other than knowing that I am helping to heal some of the damage done by the 1999 amendment. For me ultimately, this is about righting a wrong, but also doing it in a way that accounts for the concerns of many Tribal members about opening up enrollment, which is a legitimate concern.

Who knows when we'll get another chance to put all these issues away. So I am voting "yes" on this amendment. I don't think you will find a more balanced solution to our enrollment problems.

Kathleen Tom

Roll #817

Zumba held in gym

Zumba, an easy-to-follow, Latin-inspired and calorie-burning dance fitness party, is held from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday in the Tribal gymnasium. The first class is free and \$6 thereafter for drop-ins, or \$5 if participants purchase a punch card. For more information, contact Tribal Recreation Coordinator Alton Butler at 503-879-1369. ■