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# Smoke Signals

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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

## Tribe to celebrate Wawa dictionary

By Dean Rhodes

*Smoke Signals editor*

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde will celebrate the publication of a new Chinuk Wawa dictionary at the Sunday, March 4, General Council meeting being held in the Tribal Community Center, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, at 11 a.m.

The dictionary, running almost 500 pages, includes about 1,000 core words and about 3,000

compound words documenting the Northwest Indian trade language as it was spoken by past generations of Grand Ronde Indians.

The new edition is one-third larger than the working dictionary the Tribe's Cultural Resources Department created in 2001, said Henry Zenk, an anthropologist who first started working with the Grand Ronde Tribe in 1978.

Zenk's thesis for a Ph.D from the University of Oregon documented the Chinuk Wawa language,

which was rapidly adopted by treaty-signing Tribes that spoke different languages once they were moved to the Grand Ronde Reservation in the 1850s. The language also was adopted by most of the newcomer settlers to the region.

The new dictionary includes sections on the language's local speakers, the alphabet, a pronun-

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# Lyon hearted

## Tribe's eldest Elder celebrates her 100th birthday

By Ron Karten

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

The Grand Ronde Tribe's eldest Elder, Pearl Langley Lyon, weighed 2.5 pounds when she was born on Feb. 20, 1912, at Bay City Hospital in Tillamook.

Family members put her in a shoebox along with a warm brick to get her started.

"A modern day incubator," said her daughter, Janet Phillips, also a Tribal Elder.

The oldest of three sisters, Pearl remains close to her siblings, Tribal Elders Bernice Jensen and Ruby Bigoni, to this day.

All three partied together on Tuesday, Feb. 21, one day after Pearl's 100th birthday in the Elders' Activity Center. Dozens of friends, relatives and well-wishers celebrated with the family.

"One of the kindest individuals I know," said Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy. "You've set a very high bar for the rest of us."

"I have deep respect for you," said Tribal Council member June Sherer, and then on another level, she added, "You don't look a day over 99."

Pearl's grandfather, Andrew Zuercher, came to the Tillamook area from Bern, Switzerland, when he was a young man, Pearl says. He bought a regis-

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Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Elder Betty Bly wraps Tribal Elder Pearl Lyon in a Pendleton blanket that the Culture Committee gave to her for her 100th birthday during a birthday party at the Elders' Activity Center on Tuesday, Feb. 21. Looking on to the left is Lyon's daughter-in-law, Tribal Elder Anna Hannan. Lyon turned 100 on Monday, Feb. 20, and is the Tribe's oldest member.

### Tribe's eldest members

According to the Tribal Member Services Department, the five eldest Elders are:

- Pearl Lyon, 100, born Feb. 20, 1912;
- Opal Davidson, 96, born April 19, 1915;
- Dessie Snyder, 96, born Dec. 18, 1915;
- Josephine Towers, 95, born Aug. 28, 1916;
- Floreine Ray, 95, born Feb. 10, 1917.

Nora Kimsey, who walked on at age 102 in 2011, held the distinction of being the Tribe's eldest Elder for many years.



Tribal Council Secretary Jack Giffen Jr., right, shows Tribal Elder Pearl Lyon, left, one of the 100 \$1 gold coins given to her on behalf of Tribal Council. Tribal Council member June Sherer looks on.