

## Letters

### Dear *Smoke Signals*:

I just wanted to put a special thank you into *Smoke Signals* for our meat donation for Coffee Creek's spring celebration. Without the help of our Tribal volunteers and our people, the people in prison would not get anything.

The women here at Coffee Creek are very grateful for the deer and salmon that was donated. We get hands-on with the meat and fry bread. It was an honor to help cook and prepare the food that fed our people.

Thank you to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde for helping us women in prison keep up our traditions.

**Kristie Jeffers**  
Roll #1896

### Dear *Smoke Signals*:

There is some confusion regarding the registration for the upcoming constitutional amendment election. Constitutional elections are administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They require a valid registration form of their own. If you are registered with the Tribe that will not count for the upcoming constitutional election. You will need to submit the new registration form you will be receiving from the BIA.

Please place the following dates on your calendar.

Registration and voting:

May 17 — Voter registration forms were mailed out.

June 7 — All registration forms must be returned by mail to the BIA. This date is extremely important. The forms must be in their office and postmarked received on this date. Plus, please note they are being mailed to Albuquerque, N.M., so I would allow at least a week for mail time. Get those registration forms back in the mail no later than June 1 please.

June 13 — Ballots will be mailed to all registered voters.

July 8 — Election Day. This is also an extremely important date. All voting ballots must be mailed back and in the Election Board's hands by this date to be counted. These will be sent to Grand Ronde. So, depending on where you are I would be getting these ballots in the mail ASAP. I would suggest no later than July 2. Don't miss your opportunity to make your vote count.

If you do not receive a voter registration form or a ballot within five days of the specified date, please contact Lori Anderson at the Warm Springs BIA office at 541-553-2439. She is the person coordinating the election.

Remember this is a constitutional election and it takes two-thirds of the voting members to vote in the affirmation to pass. We need everyone to reach out to their family members and make sure they vote.

**Adrainne N. LLaneza**  
Roll #1715

### Dear *Smoke Signals*:

#### Fairness to all Tribal members

The Constitution of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde belongs to each and every Tribal member: the membership.

This is why I feel this BIA election in the shortened version is not fair to all the membership. If just one Tribal member is eliminated from the election process because of a shortened time frame, we have taken a Tribal right away from them. Each Tribal member should have the same opportunity to voice their opinion with a vote.

Many of the older Elders do not have computers or the Internet. This will take that Elder population out of most of the education process of the election. Many of these Elders still have a vivid memory of a shortened BIA election that ultimately terminated this Tribe. Regardless of any political agenda, an election process should be fair to the membership.

Bundling of amendments is also not fair to the membership. They should be given the opportunity to voice their opinion on each amendment alone and on its own merit. This would be fair.

#### The right thing to do

I was a small boy before Termination. I witnessed the hardships and bad treatment our ancestors endured to give us the sovereign rights to everything we have and enjoy today.

I hold the highest respect for the ancestors and the Grand Ronde culture, wisdom and history they passed down through verbal teachings. The teachings made me aware of just how sacred each bloodline was to all of our ancestors who enrolled here at Grand Ronde.

I feel it is very disrespectful to the ancestors to add other blood from other Tribes that did not endure the hardships here at Grand Ronde.

In my opinion, the discussion should be how to elevate, promote and extend the bloodlines from our ancestors who were here and enrolled in the Tribe before Termination and did without. They are the members who give you the right to call yourself Grand Ronde, not someone from another Tribe.

**Jack Giffen Jr.**  
Tribal Council Vice Chair  
Roll #182

### Dear *Smoke Signals*:

I recently attended the constitutional amendment education meeting. I found it to be very informative and along with the presented materials we were allowed to ask questions to receive even more clarification.

Over the past several months there has been an aggressive smear campaign waged against the upcoming constitutional amendment, including attacks on the Tribal Council members who support it and loads of misinformation. Now that the education meeting has been conducted, I would like to share some of the information received and hopefully clear up some of the misinformation.

1) No change to 1/16th minimum blood quantum requirement.

2) Will only help descendants of Grand Ronde Tribal members. This will not open the floodgates for members from other Tribes.

3) Relinquishment from another Tribe for a minimum of five years will remain in effect. Basically, no Tribe hoppers (sorry I personally do not care for this term).

4) Grand Ronde Tribal members enrolled prior to 1999 included all Indian blood. The 1999 amendment changed that to "all Indian blood from a direct ancestor on the Restoration Roll only." The proposed amendment will allow descendants of a direct ancestor on the Restoration Roll through the date of the 1999 amendment to claim all Indian blood and not only fixes the split family problems but creates equality for our membership.

5) A slide presentation was given during the meeting (I believe the Tribe will be posting this presentation on its website). Page 18 titled "Statistics: Net Membership Applications Denied by Reason for Denial September 1999 to March 21, 2016." I wish I could include a copy of this page, but that is not allowed per *Smoke Signals* policy. Penny Deloe (Enrollment Department) and the legal department compiled the data utilizing denied enrollment applications for the past 17 years in an effort to give some idea how many people we are actually looking at. Deneen Aubertin Keller (Tribal attorney) stated the majority of these are children.

Please note: There were seven different line items included. When I questioned Ms. Aubertin Keller about which statistics listed on the graph actually pertained to the proposed constitutional amendment, she replied the third one from the top covers Definition of Grand Ronde blood with 113 denied applications and the one at the very bottom covers parent on the roll at the time of your birth with 176 denied applications. Hardly the floodgates that some would like us to believe. However, they made it very clear that there will be more and they can't be sure exactly how many, but these are actual applications they have denied due to the 1999 amendment over the past 17 years.

The others statistics listed will not be affected by the proposed amendment. This amendment in no way helps anyone who meets zero requirements. Really have no idea why they even included the other statistics.

I hope this helps clear up some of the misinformation that has been spread for the past few months.

Please vote "yes" for this upcoming constitutional amendment. It has been 17 years. This amendment is not about floodgates. This amendment is about equality. This amendment is about healing our split families. This amendment is about who we are as Native people.

**Ann K. Lewis**  
Roll #3983

### Dear *Smoke Signals*:

I'm writing this letter to let other Tribal members know exactly why I am voting "no" on the proposed constitutional amendments on enrollment requirements.

First off I want to say that I agree split families need to be fixed. My concern is changing the definition of Grand Ronde blood. I don't feel that it is right to "increase some individual's Grand Ronde blood quantum" page 29 from the educational meetings handout prepared by our Tribe's legal team. It's pretty simple: Grand Ronde is Grand Ronde blood; it is not Chippewa or Navajo or any other blood.

Another concern I have is timing. Rob Greene, in our presentation, made it very clear "there is a short window here"; he repeated it several times. At the educational class I learned that the BIA was not ready for this proposal so it literally sat there for a few weeks. Also this proposal is bundled together which adds to the challenge of understanding it all. There were only three educational classes. Seven tribal members at the Portland meeting, 30 in Grand Ronde and about 15 in Eugene. My guess is that is about 1 percent of the membership or somewhere close. A lot more members need to know about this and not just read opinions from Facebook posts. I'm really disappointed at the turnout. I am also concerned that because of this short window, not all Tribal members will be able to vote.

My last concern is that "we don't know" was repeated many times in my educational class with regard to how many people this will affect. Page 18 from the handout clearly shows that 428 applicants were denied. I don't know why we can't take our time, do an impact study and provide answers to what would happen with this much increased membership to our programs and budgets. There is no plan to deal with this because again "we don't know" how many people this will affect. There are too many unknowns for me to give a "yes" vote.

I want to fix split families, but I am not in favor of increasing individual blood quantum by using blood from other Tribes so applicants can qualify.

Let's find another way to fix these split families now and together!

**Rich Colton**  
Roll #1234