

**NOTICE — Monthly Tribal Council Wednesday Meetings**

| DATE                     | TIME   |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Wednesday, Sept. 14..... | 5 p.m. |
| Wednesday, Sept. 28..... | 5 p.m. |
| Wednesday, Oct. 12.....  | 5 p.m. |
| Wednesday, Oct. 26.....  | 5 p.m. |
| Wednesday, Nov. 9.....   | 5 p.m. |

*Please note that these times and dates are subject to change if needed.*

**Letters**

**Dear Smoke Signals:**

I have just finished reading the recent Appeals Court decision, Val Alexander et al v CTGR, and I must say it is one of the most convoluted and nonsensical pieces of legalese I have ever had the pleasure to read.

Apparently, the Appeals Court does not believe our Tribal Constitution places any boundaries or restraints upon their decision-making process. If the Tribal members and our Tribal Council allow this decision to stand without questioning the decision's constitutionality, it will set a very dangerous precedent for the future of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

My first question is: Does the Appeals Court recognize that their decisions are limited by our Tribal Constitution? According to the court's own guidelines, the court must provide to the Tribe, Tribal members, lawyers and others a fair and prompt resolution of legal disputes. This means the decisions must be fair to the CTGR as well as to the appellants. Most important, the Tribal Court must interpret the Tribe's laws and Constitution in resolving these disputes. It is obvious that the Appeals Court simply chose to ignore our Tribal Constitution when they wrote the Val Alexander et al v CTGR decision.

Also, according to our Constitution's Enrollment Ordinance, Chapter 102, § (i), "The Tribal Court shall recognize the obligations of the Tribe and the board to uphold the requirements for enrollment under the Tribal Constitution."

The Appeals Court resorted to the doctrine of laches and completely ignored the clear language of our Tribe's Constitution. It appears to me that the Appeals Court has not only ignored our Constitution, they are literally attempting to overturn our Constitution.

Our Tribal Constitution is very clear regarding the requirements of membership: "Section 1. Requirements. The membership of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon shall consist of all persons who are not enrolled as members of another recognized Tribe, band or community and, (a) whose names validly appear on the official Tribal membership roll prepared under the Grand Ronde Restoration Act; provided, that such roll may be corrected by the Tribal Council with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior; or (b) who possess one-sixteenth (1/16) or more degree Indian blood quantum of a federally recognized Tribe or Tribes, are descended from a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, have filed an application for enrollment according to procedures established pursuant to Section 3 of this Article, and have been accepted as members in accordance with the Tribal ordinance adopted under Section 3 of this Article.

"For purposes of this section, descent from a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon shall include lineal descent from any person who was named on any roll or records of Grand Ronde members prepared by the Department of the Interior prior to the effective date of this Constitution."

These enrollment requirements are not difficult to understand, neither are these requirements difficult to prove if you are actually a member of the CTGR. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has records of the CTGR membership and their blood quantum that go back well over 100 years. There is absolutely no excuse for the Appeals Court to resort to the doctrine of laches to resolve any enrollment dispute.

This brings me to my second question: Why does the CTGR even have an appellate court? If our Tribe had a membership with hundreds of thousands, like the Cherokees or the Navajos, and we had several courts that might have conflicting decisions, I could understand why we might need an appeals court. Our Tribe is a small tribe and we are not rich, no matter what others may believe.

The CTGR needs an Appeals Court like we need an aircraft carrier. After reading the Val Alexander decision, I am firmly convinced that the Appeals Court is a waste of time and resources, not only for our Tribe, but for future appellants that believe they have a legal controversy with the CTGR.

I propose that our Tribe quickly dismantle and dissolve the Appeals Court, and I also strongly urge that the Tribal Council pass a resolution to ignore the Val Alexander Appeals Court decision because it is an unconstitutional overreach of the court's judicial authority.

**Michael Haller**  
Roll #903

See page 16 for more letters.

**Tribal Office Closures**

Tribal offices will be closing at noon Friday, Sept. 2, and closed on Monday, Sept. 5, in observance of Labor Day. Offices also will be closed on Friday, Sept. 23, in observance of National Indian Day.

**General Council meeting**  
**11 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 11**  
**Tribal Community Center**

**Smoke Signals**

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| DEADLINE DATE           | ISSUE DATE |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Tuesday, Sept. 6 .....  | Sept. 15   |
| Tuesday, Sept. 20 ..... | Oct. 1     |
| Wednesday, Oct. 5 ..... | Oct. 15    |

**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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