

POWWOW

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of Salem.

"[Dancing] is a way of prayer for us, it's our way of prayer," Heidi Webb said.

"You're dancing for the creator," she said, "not for yourself."

Webb, 15, is a princess who represents the Bow and Arrow Culture Club in Portland. She said she has spent most weekends traveling to powwows across the Pacific Northwest to dance and present Native American culture to children during class presentations. During her reign she has been to more than 100 powwows.

"We bring people in and show them our ways," Webb said.

She is a traditional dancer, adorned in a dress of buckskin. The dress weighs 80 pounds on the hanger, and in the warm temperatures last weekend she was almost burning up.

Her friend, Shawna Hinton, wore a dress adorned with

Copenhagen smokeless tobacco lids, to represent 365 days of sobriety. She is a jingle dancer, and when she walks the lids on her dress make noise.

At the age of 12, Hinton said her mother taught her and her sister how to dance, it is a tradition that she plans to continue. "Each of our dresses we want to pass on to our children," Hinton said.

The spring powwow marked the biggest event the Native American Student Union sponsored this year. "This is where all our effort and money goes," said Dezbah Stumpff, a member of NASU.

Stumpff was among the members of NASU who had little to no sleep on Friday night, as they were busy cooking dinner to be served to powwow enthusiasts on Saturday.

The free meal included salmon, deer, elk, meatloaf, salad and cake, and it was given as a gift, Stumpff said, as it would be against the way of the Native American people to charge money for it.

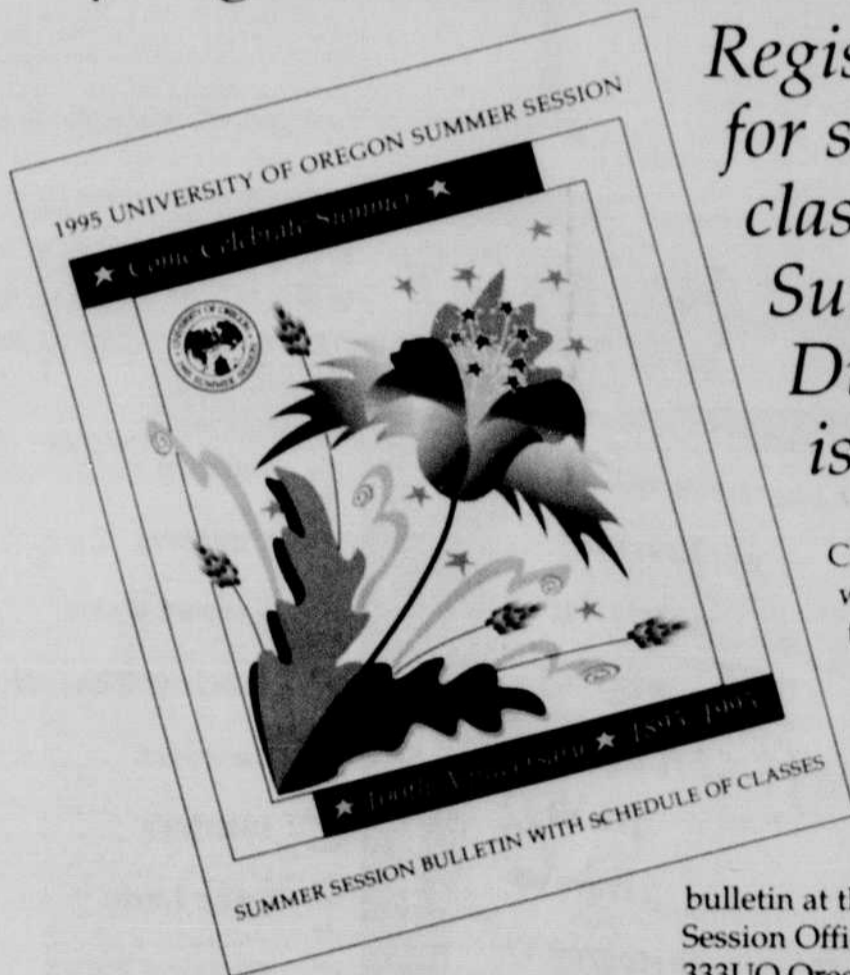


Dancers gather for an all tribal performance at the Powwow Festival organized by the Native American Student Union. A few hundred people attended the powwow last weekend at McArthur Court.

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