

Seniors: many memorable experiences

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Squiemphen, she said, sacrifices a lot to have time to chauffeur the seniors.

As for his family (with four children and two grandchildren), Squiemphen said, "They've learned to share me with the rest of our people."

According to Squiemphen, "I do this because I love my elders."

"I enjoy watching them have a good time," he added.

Plus, Squiemphen said, driving the seniors on these trips is something that he knows is helpful to them in the long run.

"I know it keeps their minds active," he said. "That's good medicine for them."

And their minds aren't the only things active, Squiemphen said. "These elders, they sleep only four hours and they're ready to go again," he said with a laugh.

The stories are abundant and punctuated by laughter as the trio tells countless tales—like the time when Squiemphen accidentally brought a pair of his wife's jeans and tried to put them on, or when they bought a previous driver a birthday present.

One year the seniors even rented a van in order to travel to a Blazers game that took place on Honor Seniors Day.

"The Honor Seniors Day took second fiddle for the Blazer fans," Squiemphen said with a chuckle.

On one memorable occasion, Squiemphen said, all of the audience members received dolls that resembled player Bill Walton.



Maxine Switzler, Lawrence "Kunya" Squiemphen and Faye Waheneka (from left).

After the referee made a bad call, Squiemphen added, "All of the Bill Walton dolls went flying onto the court."

Waheneka said they have even attracted police attention.

"We got stopped for speeding—a busload of old people," she said with a laugh.

At one point, during a cross-country trip through 10-states, the bus was high-centered in the middle of the road.

For that they even garnered media attention and were featured on the evening news.

Waheneka jokingly explained, "We have to be noticed the minute we pull into town."

"Something always happens," Squiemphen said cheerfully.

During many of their trips, Switzler said, they do a lot more than just attend a sporting event.

"My favorite part is going out to eat because I don't have to do the dishes when I am through," Switzler said.

She added, "Some like to go

shopping on our trips and some go to the movies."

According to Switzler, "We go to places that if we depended on our families to take us, we'd never be there."

They always stop at a bead store, she said, or for other supplies.

On a trip to New Mexico, Switzler said, they were able to go into the villages to trade for silver and turquoise beads—something villagers are eager to do.

"We were even going to trade my brother off one time," she said with a laugh.

But for Switzler, she said, "I especially enjoy going to the games. I'm a sports fan of all kinds, I guess."

"It really makes me feel good to have the senior department make it possible for us," she added. "The senior program has really been a blessing."

The trips often include attending conferences, Waheneka said, where she finds a variety

of subjects that are of interest to her—like the decline of native languages or health issues.

For Squiemphen, what began as a job ended up becoming something much more meaningful.

Through his work with the senior program Squiemphen was able to reconnect with family members and get to know them on a deeper level.

In his opinion, "It's something that I think a lot of our young people need to experience."

The seniors are always sure to travel with poise as well, Squiemphen said.

He explained, "We do travel to represent our tribes."

"We always travel in dignity," Switzler said. "We always feel like ambassadors for our tribes."

As for their final thoughts on the subject, the three said in unison, "Go Blazers!"

All senior citizens are eligible to travel with the Senior Program. Just contact the Senior Program at 553-3313 or come to noon luncheons on Tuesday or Thursday to sign up to go. Seniors can also arrange to travel on their own.

Hatchery

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"The water was just sitting there instead of flowing through and getting oxygen to the fish, so they basically suffocated."

He said a worker checked the water tank before leaving and it looked good. Because of the installation, an alarm system that would have warned of the problem had been turned off.

The hatchery is co-managed by the tribes and the federal government. Located on the Warm Springs River, the hatchery supplies a majority of the hatchery spring chinook that swim that section of the river, said Rod French, district fish biologist for the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Department.

Once salmon leave a hatchery, the fish head to the ocean, where they will typically stay for two years.

Along the way, a number of factors—such as ocean conditions, river conditions and their ability to get past two dams—play a significant role in their survival. A good rate of return to the Lower Deschutes is 1 percent.

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