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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

Salmon Celebration honors 'relatives'

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

The second annual Salmon Celebration started in the rain at the Tribal fish weir at mid-morning on Friday, Dec. 7.

"Now, this is fish weather," said Kelly Dirksen, 17 years a biologist for the Tribe. Today, he is Fish and Wildlife Program manager in the Natural Resources Department.

The celebration remembers traditional ways of honoring the first fish caught each year. "Harvesting salmon in the sacred way," said Tribal Council Vice Chair Jack Giffen Jr.

Traditionally, when the first fish comes out of the water, said Brian Krehbiel, Cultural Education specialist, "It is consumed that day and the bones and remains are returned to the river (or in Grand Ronde, to Agency Creek), that same day," effectively thanking the fish by putting nutrients back into the water for other fish.

At the start of the ceremony at the Tribal fish weir, master of ceremonies Travis Mercier welcomed "our relatives home for the year." Toward the end of the dinner program in the Tribal gym, he encouraged more than 100 guests to save the remains from their salmon for return to Agency Creek.

Greg Archuleta and Jordan Mercier built the alder fire in the rain and prepared the ceremonial



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

The Grand Ronde Canoe Family sings during the second annual Salmon Celebration at the Tribal fish weir on Friday, Dec. 7.

Jordan Mercier fixes the fire as salmon is traditionally cooked to be served at the second annual Salmon Celebration at the Tribal fish weir on Friday, Dec. 7.



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Smithsonian archivist returns to Oregon



Photo by Michael McDermott/courtesy of University of Oregon

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

EUGENE — After four years as head archivist for the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., Jennifer O'Neal has come back home to Oregon.

Jennifer O'Neal is the new Corrigan Solari University Historian and Archivist at the University of Oregon in Eugene after having worked for four years at the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of the American Indian.

In June, she was selected Corrigan Solari University Historian and Archivist at the University of Oregon. In September, she got to work.

"I've always considered myself a native Oregonian," she wrote from her office in Eugene. Born in Eugene, she grew up there and in Wyoming. Her mother lives in Springfield and her father in Bend. "Eugene has always been home to me," she said.

While the National Museum of the American

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