

Smoke Signals welcomes intern

Smoke Signals welcomed on Monday, Feb. 6, its first college intern in at least 10 years. Bethany Bea will be working for the Tribal newspaper for five weeks to fulfill the final requirements of receiving a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Montana.

Bea grew up in Seattle and moved to California after high school in search of warmer, drier weather. Unsure of what she wanted to pursue for a career, she enrolled at Santa Barbara City College. After taking a news reporting class, she said she had found the perfect way to combine two of her favorite things – writing and talking to people.

Despite the almost constant sunshine of California, Bea said she decided on a different place and climate in which to pursue a journalism degree. A 2009 road trip with friends took her through Missoula, Mont., and as she drove past the University of Montana's "beautiful" brick-and-ivy campus, she decided that was where she wanted to attend college.

Bea began classes at the University of Montana in 2010 and in November of that year she experienced her first-ever zero degree temperature. She said she also learned that if you park your car in deep slush overnight, it can freeze in place. Fortunately, Missoula is small and flat, so walking was never a problem, she added.

The University of Montana journalism school is more than 100 years old, as well as the smallest of the schools and colleges at the university. Classes were rarely larger than 26 students, which meant help was always available and expectations were very high, Bea said.

The university has between 12,000 and 15,000 students, with a quarter attending from out of state. Montana's mountains and plains attract people from all over, which is how Bea met Grand Ronde Tribal member Torey Wakeland. He moved to Montana in 2011, looking for cowboy culture and a wildlife biology degree. The two met in September 2012 and recently cel-



Bethany Bea

ebrated four years of being together.

One year for spring break, Wakeland and Bea drove from Montana to the Oregon coast, stopping for a tour of Grand Ronde along the way. Wakeland showed her landmarks and told her stories about summers fighting fires for the Tribe. Though they were enjoying life in Montana, they knew eventually they'd be back to the Pacific Northwest, she said.

In 2015, the opportunity to move to Oregon arose. Bea took a temporary position as a project coordinator with the Coquille Indian Tribe in Coos Bay. Soon after, the Coquille Tribe hired Wakeland as a biological technician.

From the moment they arrived in Coos Bay, however, they knew it would be temporary. The coastline near Coos Bay is pretty, Bea said, but it still felt far from friends and family as Coos Bay was only one hour closer to Seattle than Missoula.

Bea's parents still live in her childhood home in the Green Lake neighborhood of Seattle, and her sister and brother-in-law live four blocks from them. Wakeland grew up in Salem and most of his friends still live there.

In November 2016, Wakeland was hired as the aquatic biologist for the Grand Ronde Natural Resources Department and they moved again, settling in West Salem.

Though she grew up in the Pacific Northwest, Bea has never lived in Oregon. During her internship with *Smoke Signals*, she said she is looking forward to using the skills she gained at the University of Montana, as well as developing new ones, all while learning as much as she can about the Grand Ronde Tribe and this part of the country.

Bea can be contacted via e-mail at bethany.bea@grandronde.org or by phone at 503-879-1461 through Friday, March 10. ■

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9615 Grand Ronde Rd
Grand Ronde, Oregon

TIME: 5:30-7:30 PM

TEL: 503-879-1461 FAX: 503-879-1462

VR Drum Classes

Grand Ronde
2-7 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 22
10 slots available

Portland
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Please contact
Lisa Archuleta
503-879-1881
to sign up

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