

Tribal Canoe Family begins journey to Campbell River

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Grand Ronde Canoe Family and Tribal support staff began the annual Canoe Journey on Saturday, July 29, by leaving Grand Ronde and driving to a campground near Blaine in northwest Washington.

They were wished a safe trip during a Canoe Family dinner held the night before in achaf-hammi, the Tribal plankhouse.

On Sunday, July 30, the Canoe Family crossed the U.S.-Canada border and caught the Tsawwassen ferry to Duke Point on the eastern shore of Vancouver Island.

On Monday, July 31, they put their canoes in the water and began the scheduled five days of paddling that will take them from Nanaimo to Campbell River at the northern end of the Strait of Georgia. Stops are scheduled to occur at Nanoose Bay, Qualicum Beach, Comox and Miracle Beach along the route.

This year's Canoe Journey is

hosted by the We Wai Kai and Wei Wai Kum First Nations and has the theme of "Standing Together."

Protocol is scheduled to begin on Sunday, Aug. 6, and run through Thursday, Aug. 10.

Cultural Education Specialist Brian Krehbiel is the skipper of this year's Canoe Family.

General Manager David Fullerton said about 30 people are participating this year because of the almost 500-mile trip and having to cross the international border.

Grand Ronde's Canoe Family first participated in the 2005 Canoe Journey, which landed on Hollywood Beach in Port Angeles, Wash. The Canoe Journey started in 1989 and was designed to familiarize northwest Tribes with the trade routes used by their ancestors and to promote drug- and alcohol-free lifestyles.

People can follow the Canoe Family's progress by visiting www.canoejourneymaps.org or www.arcg.is/2vkvfro on the Internet. ■



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Grand Ronde Canoe Family girls dance around the gifts that the Canoe Family brought with them on this year's Canoe Journey to Campbell River, British Columbia, during the 2017 Canoe Journey blessing of gifts and Canoe Family send-off dinner held at achaf-hammi, the Tribal plankhouse, on Friday, July 28. The gifts included beaded necklaces, homemade jam, compact discs and cedar hats, just to name a few. The gifts will be given to Tribes that the Canoe Family stops at along the journey and the We Wai Kai and Wei Wai Kum First Nations, which are the hosts of this year's journey.

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Map created by George Valdez

Making gifts



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tammy Chavez picks out dentalium to use in a necklace she's making during the Canoe Journey Gift Making Event at the Tribal Community Center on Thursday, July 27. The event also was held on Wednesday, July 20, and all necklaces made during it will be given as gifts by the Grand Ronde Canoe Family when they are on this year's Canoe Journey, which they began on Monday, July 31. Also making necklaces are Yvonne Robertson, middle, and Nick LaBonte, back.

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