

Chance encounters: Colorful character slings fish in Hermiston

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
Community Editor

Through my work as a journalist, I get to meet all types of unique and colorful characters. And recently, I came to know Captain Jonny.

My first contact with Captain Jonny Rush was this past April as he was getting ready to come to Eastern Oregon for a Cinco de Mayo Seafood Circus in Milton-Freewater.

The first thing I learned about Captain Jonny is that he's quite the talker. Rush, AKA Carl Trentadue, is an eccentric fishmonger.

He sells salmon, halibut, sea bass, ling, shrimp and whatever else is biting out of a bus named Red Dog. More than a fish market on wheels, the 1974 GMC Thomas bus also serves as a traveling billboard and catchall for artwork, souvenirs and memorabilia from Rush's mu-

sic career.

I heard the captain's familiar voice last week when he called to tell me he was coming to Hermiston. Parked next to C&C Secondhand, 30654 Baggett Lane, which is located off Highway 395 between Hermiston and Umatilla, Rush is hawking fish in the area as long as he can stand the heat.

Rush says he moves with the tide.

"The freeway is my ocean and the beaches are my rest area," he said.

The captain isn't exactly sure how long he'll be in Hermiston during this trip, but likely at least through Sept. 10. It depends on how quickly the fish moves, he said. However, he's offering a Red, White and Blue Labor Day special during his entire stay. He plans on giving away samples of salmon to people that stop in. If you have a few minutes to chat,



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Captain Jonny Rush travels throughout the Pacific Northwest selling fish out of a unique bus he named Red Dog. The colorful fishmonger is in Hermiston through the Labor Day weekend and beyond.

you can call him at 503-860-1851 to make sure he hasn't drifted with the tide.

Rush began slinging fish

nearly 20 years ago. An opportunity to make some money fell into the longtime Washington resident's lap when he was in

Rapid City, South Dakota.

"Captain Jonny had a van and one freezer. Broke and didn't have a dime, he sold 15 cases of shrimp and that's how he learned how to do it," Rush said, referring to himself in the third person.

For some photo opportunities and interesting conversation — and maybe pick up some fish — drive along Highway 395 and look for the red bus. You can't miss it with the flashing lights. Also, it's covered with everything from masks and flags to statues, corks and nets. In addition, there are signs advertising a variety of fish.

"It's a sight to see," Captain Jonny said.

Indeed it is.

Tammy Malgesini is the community editor. Her column, Inside my Shoes, includes general musings about life. Contact her at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539.



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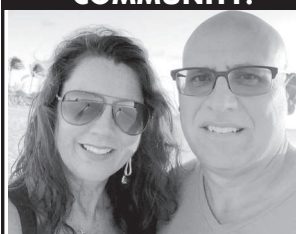
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