

Planning underway for voyage Packy's birthday celebration April 12

The 2003 Paddle Oregon canoe and kayak voyage will travel some 119 miles from Marshall Island Access outside Eugene, to Newberg. This year's event will take place from September 8-12, 2003.

Paddle Oregon provides all trip logistics, catered food, luggage shuttle, naturalists, guest speakers in the evenings, entertainment, and opportunities to learn how to paddle canoes and kayaks.

Paddle Oregon is an event of Willamette Riverkeeper, an organization that works on water quality and habitat in the Willamette River Basin. This is the third annual trip, and over the past two years, over 250 people have participated.

Participants camp on private land along the river, in county parks, and the wonderful Oregon State Park of Willamette Mission. Paddle Oregon provides a great opportunity to learn about the river and its wildlife, the Willamette's history, and allows participants to see the many parks and greenways along its route.

"We get people on the Willamette River to experience it, and to learn about it over five days. It is a fantastic opportunity for people interested in the river, and in paddling canoes and kayaks, to get out there," said Travis Williams, Executive Director of Willamette Riverkeeper.

Paddle Oregon is one of the only trips of its kind in the country. Paddlers need experience on moving water. Paddle Oregon has an emphasis on river education and experience. The cost for this year's adventure is \$425. This year's trip is limited to the first 150 people, so early registration is encouraged to ensure a spot.

For a registration packet go to www.paddleoregon.org or call 503-223-6418.

Packy, the Oregon Zoo's most famous elephant, will celebrate his 41st birthday Saturday, April 12 from 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with the help of zoo visitors, of course.

Several new events are planned for Packy's Big Day, including:

- From 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., keepers will share their insights about Packy, and demonstrate his training program.

- Elephant herd will share in Packy's celebration from 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

- At 1:55 p.m., the "girls" (Pet, SunShine, Rose-Tu and Chendra) will deliver Packy's birthday treats.

- The highlight of this social event will occur at 2:00 p.m. when keepers present Packy with his giant birthday cake. Packy's fans are invited to sing "Happy Birthday" while the prestigious pachyderm eats (or stomps on) his cake.

- At 2:30 p.m., the "girls" will celebrate with their own cake, then Rama will celebrate his belated 20th birthday cake at 2:40 p.m. in the indoor gallery. (Rama turned 20 on April 1.)

Packy's cake, baked by the

zoo's Chef Paul Warner, will be a 40-pound whole-wheat concoction topped with peanut butter frosting, apples, carrots, and celery. After Packy has finished his cake, everyone is invited to stop by the Albertson's canopy for a piece of the "people" cake. This is the 20th year that Albertson's Food Stores has created the 4' x 8' masterpiece.

Floppy elephant ears will be the fashion statement of the day, and enhance the fun of dancing the Packy Shuffle. Visitors can meet costumed elephants Eliza and Elliot while enjoying face painting and games, and the day wouldn't be complete without taking a moment to sign the BIG guy's birthday card.

Packy made international news on April 14, 1962, as the first elephant born in the West-

ern Hemisphere in more than 44 years. Gifts poured in, a song was written in his honor and a radio station sponsored a naming contest. Gresham resident Wayne W. French submitted the winning name.

Packy, the largest Asian elephant in the United States, is 10'3" at the shoulder and weighs 12,200 pounds. He is the father of seven calves, including 21-year old Sung-Surin ("Sunshine") and 20-year old Rama, both of whom currently live at the zoo.

Packy's Birthday is free with regular zoo admission. General admission is \$8 (ages 12-64), seniors (65+) are \$6.50, children (3-11) \$5, under 3 free.

The zoo opens at 9:00 a.m. daily. Additional information is available on the zoo's web site at www.oregonzoo.org or call 503-220-3687.

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