Oregon Zoo will celebrate Packy's 44th birthday on April 8 and 9



Oregon Zoo is throwing an elephant-sized party to celebrate the species that made it famous. Elephantastic, which is sponsored by Haggen Food & Pharmacy, is a two-day celebration of Asian elephants. The event is slated for April 8 and 9, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to coincide with the zoo's most famous elephant's (Packy) birthday.

"We decided that, since Packy and the rest of the herd are so well loved, they needed not just one but two days to celebrate," said Oregon Zoo Director Tony Vecchio.

Both days will be filled with activities such as games, crafts and the ever-popular fashion accessory, elephant ears. A special trunk show featuring the elephant artist Rama is also planned.

The highlight of the event will be Packy's 44th birthday party, Saturday, April 8, at 2:00 p.m. Between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. guests can enter their name in a drawing

to be one of four lucky winners to help keepers deliver Packy's giant birthday cake. Packy's fans are invited to sing "Happy Birthday" while the prestigious pachyderm eats (or stomps on) his cake. Packy's party, which is the longest-running event in zoo history, has become a great family tradition. And the day wouldn't be complete without taking a moment to sign the BIG guy's birthday card.

Packy's cake, baked by the zoo's own Chef Paul Warner, is a 40-pound whole-wheat con-

coction topped with frosting, apples, carrots and celery.

All guests are invited to share free birthday cake beginning at noon, courtesy of Haggen Food & Pharmacy.

Packy, the first elephant born in the Western Hemisphere in more than 44 years, was born on April 14, 1962, making international news. Gifts poured in, a song was written in his honor and a radio station sponsored a naming contest. Gresham, Oregon resident Wayne W. French submitted the winning name.

Packy is the oldest and largest male Asian elephant in the United States; he stands 10'4" at the shoulder and his average weight is 14,020 pounds. He has fathered seven calves, including 22-year-old Sung-Surin ("Sunshine") and 23-year-old Rama, both of whom currently live at the zoo.

On Sunday, April 9 at 1 p.m., Rama takes center stage as the zoo celebrates his birthday (belatedly) with a special cake in the indoor gallery (Rama's birthday is April 1).

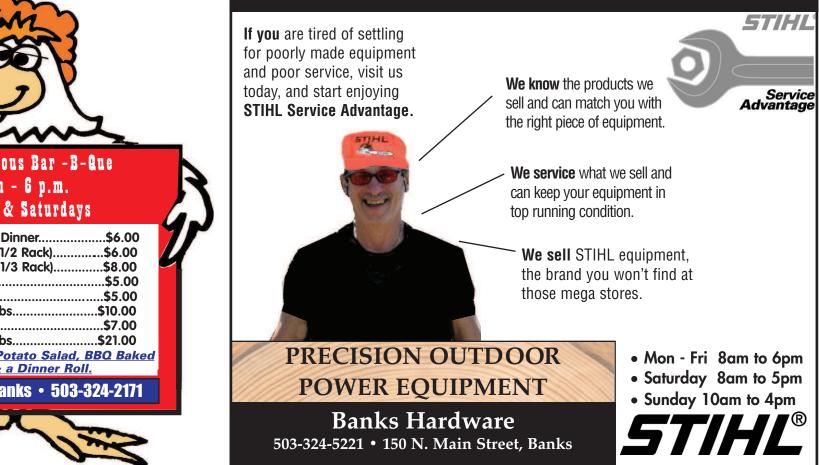
Elephantastic is free with regular zoo admission. For more information on the event, visit http://www.oregonzoo.org /Events/elephantastic.htm

The zoo opens at 9:00 a.m. daily and is located just off Highway 26. The zoo is also accessible by MAX light rail line. General admission is \$9.50 (12-64), seniors \$8 (65+), children \$6.50 (3-11), and infants two and under are free. A parking fee of \$1 per car is also required. Additional information is available at www.oregonzoo.org or by calling 503-226-1561.

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