

HISTORY OF 2012 “BREAKING OF THE DAWN...ARRIVAL OF A NEW DAY” POTLATCH

“In the Pacific Northwest and regions of Alaska, the formal act of giving is a ceremonial, social event known as a POTLATCH.” In other areas, the event is known as a “giveaway”. There is always a theme...whether it’s honoring a deceased, celebrating a birth, or a naming. The history given below will give the theme of “Breaking of the Dawn...Arrival of a New Day” Potlatch.

In interior Alaska, traditionally potlatches were done primarily if a person passes away. To have a potlatch outside of traditional reason had to be explained by a Chief. A speech on the purpose of a potlatch to *Honor the Creator* was given by the family of declining Rev Chief David Salmon in 2007.



Reverend Chief David Salmon (1912 –2007), an Alaska native and Episcopal priest, was also a Gwich’in elder known for his traditional tool making skills and work ethic. He was born in Salmon Village and raised in Chalkyitsik and chosen as Chief of Chalkyitsik at the the age of 29. He was elevated to First Traditional Chief for the Athabascan people of the Interior in 2003. This position was nonpolitical and honorary and held in high esteem by the Athabascan and other indigenous Alaskan peoples. In honor of this man, a building in Fairbanks was named for him. When the Rev Chief passed away in 2007, Governor Sarah Palin ordered all Alaskan flags be lowered to half-staff in honor of Salmon. Palin stated “Alaska has lost a true treasure”. People in Alaska and the lower 48 mourned his passing.

It was from this chief that the *Honoring the Creator* Potlatch in Fairbanks, AK 2007 was birthed. Rita Pierce of Battle Axe Ministries hosted the first potlatch.

From Fairbanks, *Honoring the Creator* Potlatch was passed to Ketchikan, AK in 2009 and hosted by Sonya and Norman Skans of Kee Ya Aa Ministries. This time the potlatch was called “Celebrating Creator”.

From Ketchikan, the potlatch was passed to Gary & Pat Walker of Firestarters Ministries for the State of Washington to host the next potlatch to *Honor Creator*. “Breaking of the Dawn...Arrival of a New Day” Potlatch will be August 17, 18, 2012 on Muckleshoot Reservation at the Pentecostal Church in Auburn, WA.

Prayer revealed the purpose: *“The event is not political but spiritual for the native people. It’s calling them forth to Rise up as the Host People of this land; to claim the authority creator has imparted to them; to embrace their spirituality as believers; to declare blessings upon them. The potlatch is an awakening; it’s spiritually equipping; it’s calling forth the hidden and speaking what has not been into being. It’s a time of gathering, of unity, forgiveness and acceptance. Invitations extended to all native people. The heart of the potlatch is the heart of the Creator...one of love, giving, and blessings. No man can give a greater gift than the greatest gift given to us...Creator JESUS.”*

Vision revealed invitations: *A picture of Washington State with Mt Rainier as the focus. On the east side of the mountain were tee pees and on the west side were longhouses representing the tribes of the state. There was darkness in the sky but over Mt Rainier was the sun rise breaking up the darkness ...”Breaking of the Dawn” bringing the “Arrival of a New Day” for the people. (invitations sent to all WA State tribes for representation and participation) Spiritually the potlatch will announce a new beginning for the people.*

***Breaking of the Dawn...Arrival of a New Day Potlatch/Washington State/August 17, 18, 2012
Muckleshoot Reservation at the Pentecostal Church, Auburn, WA***

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