

# Wienermobile visits last Blockbuster

By KYLE SPURR  
The Bulletin

Two cultural icons converged in Bend on Saturday when the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile parked in front of the last Blockbuster video rental store on Earth. The Wienermobile, the rolling orange and yellow symbol of Oscar Mayer hot dogs, pulled into the Blockbuster parking lot off Third Street to a crowd of about two dozen people taking pictures and singing, “I wish I were an Oscar Mayer Weiner.”

Some people were busy picking out movies inside the Blockbuster and were startled when the 27-foot-long hot dog on wheels parked outside.

“I saw it pull up through the window, and I just started yelling and ran to the window,” said Esty Pittman, who was visiting from Salt Lake City with her boyfriend, Jacob VanOteghem.

Pittman, 31 and VanOteghem, 30, stopped Saturday to visit the Blockbuster and had no idea the Wienermobile was scheduled to visit.

It was a flashback to childhood for Pittman, who remembers singing the Oscar Mayer song in the grocery store with her mother and looking for the Wienermobile on road trips with her family.

“My mom used to push me around the grocery store, and I would sing the Oscar Mayer song,” Pittman said. “This is my ‘90s dream come true.”

Blockbuster was the third out of four stops in central Oregon for the Wienermobile. Last week, the traveling hot dog made an appearance at Fort Rock Park in Sunriver, in downtown Bend and was set to travel south again to the Village at Sunriver on Sunday.

The Wienermobile has been on the road since 1936. Today, six Wienermobiles travel around the country at all times.



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

**Ruby and Brewer Mottern with their dogs ‘Griz,’ behind cutout, and ‘Luna,’ as their mother, Jody Mottern, takes their picture while visiting the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile at Blockbuster in Bend.**

The Wienermobile that came to Bend travels the West Coast and averages about 500 miles per week, said Tommy Derken, a “Hotdogger” who drives the Wienermobile.

Derken graduated from the University of Southern California in May and hit the road in the Wienermobile in June.

Driving the Wienermobile is the perfect job for a recent college graduate, since it’s good public relations and marketing experience and a good way to see the country, Derken said.

“And you are a celebrity everywhere you go,” Derken said.

Derken and another Hotdogger, Nina LeBrun, spent Saturday handing out stickers and Wienermobile whistles to the crowd. The two Hotdoggers also took families’ pictures, signed autographs and helped children pose behind cardboard cutouts of hot dogs.

No food was served during the event, which is a common misconception, Derken said.

“We don’t sell hot dogs,” Derken said. “We just look like one.”

Bend resident Helen Guerrero-Randall came early Saturday and could not contain her excitement as she watched the Wienermobile park in front of Blockbuster.

Guerrero-Randall, a retired medical librarian for St. Charles Health System, always loved the old advertisements for Oscar Mayer on TV, but never had a chance to see the Wienermobile in person.

“I didn’t know they still had this going around,” she said. “They are actually still doing promotions. I’m thrilled.”

Guerrero-Randall enthusiastically sang the entire Oscar Mayer song, took a picture with the cardboard cut out and got Derken’s autograph.

She soaked in the nostalgia of Oscar Mayer and Blockbuster, where she still has her membership card to rent movies.

“It’s nostalgic in a really good way,” Guerrero-Randall said. “It’s that positive nostalgia. The endorphins are flowing.”

# Mother-in-law kept out

**Dear Annie:** My daughter-in-law could probably have written the letter about the person trying too hard to please their disapproving mother-in-law.

The reality is that there are always two sides to every story. Mine is that at some point, I did or said something to hurt my daughter-in-law. But I am not allowed to know what that was. So, any apology seems empty, although I have tried.

She now treats our entire family with complete apathy. We try. We send cards and acknowledge birthdays, anniversaries and holidays, despite having received no reciprocation for years. We offer to visit cross-country but are told it is a bad time. We offer to video chat but are often rejected. Our son does contact us with the grandchildren on occasion.

We would love to be a part of our grandkids’ lives, but rejection gets harder and harder with time. We are blocked from Facebook posts and are not allowed to know our granddaughter’s cell number. It is all very sad indeed.

Our daughter-in-law is loved and cared for, but her perception is that she is not. Please encourage others to forgive and reconcile. Life is too short to allow bitterness to fester and relationships to be destroyed.

A bright note is that our son’s in-laws treat us with love and respect, and they are thankful that they have us in their lives.

— *Two Sides to Every Story*  
**Dear Two Sides to Every Story:** Thank you for this different perspective. Forgiveness is a gift for you to give yourself as well as your daughter-in-law. The problem with her seems

to be caused by her issues, not yours. But keep trying. Her parents’ kindness is reason for hope.

**Dear Annie:** My brother lives next door to my parents and me and is driving me crazy. He refuses to get vaccinated despite my parents being in their 60s, and we have an immune-compromised family. He lives with a pregnant nurse, and she refuses to wear a mask or get vaccinated.

They still come into our home and to small family events, and they don’t follow requests to mask up properly or socially distance. They also recently came over to our home and tried to diagnose my nephew with autism. He sees a team of professionals, including doctors, who have all stated that he is not autistic.

I tell my parents this is unacceptable behavior that crosses the line. Unfortunately, they do not agree with me, and it’s causing conflict.

I understand that I cannot control my brother’s actions, and I have voiced my concerns about our safety to him directly, but he brushes me off. What else can I do? — *Living Next Door to Peter Pan*

**Dear Living Next Door to Peter Pan:** It sounds like your parents side more with your brother, though I’m not sure why they would. Start by ironing out the rules of the house and letting them be known to all, including your parents. If you want guests — including family — to wear masks and socially distance, then they must wear masks and socially distance. As far as your brother attempting to diagnose your son, tell him to MYOB and that you are relying on professionals.

**DEAR ANNIE**



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