

HERMISTON

Santa’s elf refurbishes, donates thousands of stuffed animals

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

Polly Van De Brake has been busy corralling animals in preparation for the holiday season.

The Stanfield woman is in her 15th year of refurbishing stuffed animals for the Hermiston Police Department Christmas Express. She began the project as a way to deal with the grief of losing her husband of 47 years.

After Clifford died, Van De Brake started volunteering for the Good Shepherd Medical Center Hospital Auxiliary. It was there she came up with the idea to refurbish and distribute stuffed animals to children.

“It’s been a lifesaver for me and it’s also been helpful to the community as well,” Van De Brake said while surrounded by dozens of stuffed animals of all shapes and sizes. “It helped me when my husband died — it kept my hands and heart and



Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini

Polly Van De Brake of Stanfield is surrounded by a few of the 500 stuffed animals she refurbished for the Hermiston Police Department Christmas Express.

mind busy.”

Van De Brake noticed that children visiting with family in the hospital would appear bored when she entered a patient’s room. The children, she said, would ask the adults when they

were going to leave. Van De Brake thought offering a child a stuffed animal might

help settle them down or keep them entertained.

Over the past 15 years, the 82-year-old estimates she has refurbished and donated 20,000 stuffed animals — even having to replace her washing machine to handle the loads. Some of the animals were in pretty sad shape — she swears by Tide laundry detergent and Oil Eaters, a heavy-duty cleaner.

“I was able to bring these stuffed animals back to their original condition,” she said.

Gathering the animals has come through a variety of resources — from organizations such as The Salvation Army, Agape House, Hermiston Elks, The Hermiston Police Department, as well as yard sales and personal friends. However, it’s been a one-woman operation as far as washing, fluffing,

hanging to dry, re-stuffing and mending the animals.

Except for one year, Van De Brake has donated 500 stuffed toys each December to Christmas Express. Instead of giving to local kids in 2005, she sent 600 to Louisiana and the surrounding areas to be distributed to children impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

“The adults were being taken care of by the government,” she said. “But I thought the kids needed something.”

In the past, she has also donated animals to St. Anthony Hospital and Domestic Violence Services.

“When I first started this, I didn’t really pay attention to how many I gave out — if the need was there, I’d give them out,” she said.

Van De Brake said she knows stuffed animals

don’t always compete with the latest toys or electronic gadgets. But, at least it was something new and different for a child in need, she said.

She loves hearing stories of how children react to getting to choose a stuffed animal. Margaret Schoen, a longtime Christmas Express volunteer said when families came to pick up their Christmas boxes, children were directed to a pile of stuffed animals in the corner of the room.

“She said they would take off their tennis shoes and climb to the top of the heap and pick out a stuffed animal to take home,” Van De Brake said. “I would love to see that.”

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Wednesday Morning

	STATION		6 AM	6:30	7 AM	7:30	8 AM	8:30	9 AM	9:30	10 AM	10:30	11 AM	11:30
FOX	(11) KFFX	11	AgDay	Hot In	Good Day Spokane				Paid	Brain	Steve Harvey		Crime Watch Daily	
	KPTV	3	Good Day Oregon		Good Day Oregon				Good Day		The 700 Club		Rachael Ray (N)	
CBS	(19) KEPR	2	News	News	CBS This Morning (N)				Harry		The Price Is Right		Young & Restless	
	KOIN	19	KOIN 6 News at 6		CBS This Morning (N)				Let's Make a Deal		The Price Is Right		Young & Restless	
NBC	(25) KNDU	6	WakeUp North		Today Ben Affleck, Megan Mullally (N)				Today Show II (N)		Today Show III (N)		Million?	Million?
	KGW	8	KGW News		Today Ben Affleck, Megan Mullally (N)				Today Show II (N)		Today Show III (N)		Portland Today	
ABC	(42) KVEW	4	News	News	Good Morning America (N)				Live! With Kelly (N)		The View		Paid	Middle
	KATU	5	KATU News		Good Morning America (N)				AM Northwest		The View		Live! With Kelly (N)	
PBS	(31) KTNW		Stretch	Yoga	SplashB.	Jet Gol	Cat	Peg Cat	D.Tiger	Thomas	Sesame	DinoT	SplashB.	Sit Fit
	(59) OPB	13	Power	Jet Gol	Cat	George	D.Tiger	D.Tiger	SplashB.	Sesame	DinoT	Peg Cat	SuperWI	Thomas

AFTERNOON

	STATION		12 PM	12:30	1 PM	1:30	2 PM	2:30	3 PM	3:30	4 PM	4:30	5 PM	5:30
FOX	(11) KFFX	11	Paid	P. Court	Divorce	Divorce	Judge Mathis		The People's Court		2½Men		Mike&M.	
	KPTV	3	12 O'Clock News		Wendy Williams		The Dr. Oz Show		TMZ Live!		Judy		Judy	
CBS	(19) KEPR	2	NameG.	Bold & B.	The Talk (N)		Let's Make a Deal		Dr. Phil		Judy		Judy	
	KOIN	19	News		The Talk (N)		The Doctors		Dr. Phil		KOIN 6 News at 4		News	
NBC	(25) KNDU	6	WildVet	Voyager	Days of Our Lives		HotBench		HotBench		Wendy Williams		E.DeGeneres (N)	
	KGW	8	News	Paid	Days of Our Lives		T.D. Jakes (N)		E.DeGeneres (N)		KGW News		News	
ABC	(42) KVEW	4	The Chew		General Hospital		The Doctors		Rachael Ray (N)		Minute		Minute	
	KATU	5	The Chew		General Hospital		Harry		Afternoon Live		KATU News @ 4		News	
PBS	(31) KTNW		Charlie Rose		Mexican		F&Porter		Stretch		George		Speaks	
	(59) OPB	13	Paint		Cooking		Charlie Rose (N)		Cat		B.Build		Cat/ Hat	

EVENING

	STATION		6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
FOX	(11) KFFX	11	Modern Family "iSpy"		Modern Family "The Feud"		2 Broke G. "And the Soft Opening"		2 Broke G. "And the Blind Spot"		Empire Cookie attempts to navigate the cut-throat masses & win the mayoral bid.		Star Three talented singers navigate the cut-throat music business on their road to success.	
	KPTV	3	6 O'Clock News		Family Feud		Family Feud		Empire "A Furnace for Your Foe" (N)		Star "Pilot" (P) (N)		10 O'Clock News	
CBS	(19) KEPR	2	Action News at 6 p.m.		Inside Edition		The Big Bang Theory		Sims. "Married to the Blob"		Gen X Twenty castaways are separated into two groups by their generation. (SF) (N)		Survivor The 20 castaways meet for one last time & reminisce about the game they played.	
	KOIN	19	KOIN Local 6		Evening News		Extra		Ent. Tonight		Survivor Twenty castaways are separated into two groups by their generation.		Survivor "Reunion" (N)	
NBC	(25) KNDU	6	Local News		Family Feud		Wheel of Fortune		Jeopardy!		Penta. A capella group Pentatonix performs a variety of holiday songs from their albums.		Saturday Night Live Christmas Take a look back at the comedy show's holiday-themed sketches from past years. (N)	
	KGW	8	KGW News at 6:00 p.m.		Live at 7		NBC News		Pentatonix C'Mas (P) (N)		SNLChrist. Take a look back at the comedy show's holiday-themed sketches from past years.		KGW News	
ABC	(42) KVEW	4	Extra		Local News at 6:30		Entertainment Tonight		Goldberg "Han Ukkah Solo" (N)		Speech "C-H-O-I-R" (N)		Modern Family "Snow Ball" (N)	
	KATU	5	KATU News at 6		Jeopardy!		Wheel of Fortune		Goldberg (N)		Speechless (N)		Modern Fam (N)	
PBS	(31) KTNW		PBS NewsHour		World News		Wealth-Track		Nature "Legendary White Stallions"		Nova "Mystery of a Masterpiece"		Secret Dead "Van Gogh's Ear" (N)	
	(59) OPB	13	Journeys in Japan		Business (N)		PBS NewsHour		Nature "Legendary White Stallions"		Nova "Mystery of a Masterpiece"		Secret Dead "Van Gogh's Ear" (N)	

	STATION	PEN	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
CABLE	A&E	52	The First 48		Duck Dynasty	Duck Dynasty	DuckD. (N)/:05 Duck D.	Duck Dynasty	Duck Dyn. (N)	Going Si-ral (N)	Wahlburgers (N)	Duck Dynasty	:05 Duck Dynasty "RV There Yet?"	
	AMC	60	☞ The Goonies A group of kids are swept up in adventure after discovering a treasure map in an attic.				☞ Home Alone 2: Lost in New York A boy finds himself all alone in New York City & sets out to foil two bumbling burglars.				☞ *** Home Alone 2: Lost in New York Macaulay Culkin.			
	ANPL	24	Too Cute!		Too Cute!		2Cute (N)	Too Cute	Too Cute!		Too Cute!		Too Cute	Too Cute
	CMT	43	☞ *** Zookeeper Kevin James.				☞ *** Zookeeper ('11, Com) Rosario Dawson, Kevin James.						Rose.	Rose.
	CNBC	72	Jay Leno's Garage		Leno Garage (N)		Jay Leno's Garage		Jay Leno's Garage		Jay Leno's Garage		Paid	Paid
	CNN	68	A. Cooper 360		CNN Tonight		CNN Tonight		A. Cooper 360		A. Cooper 360		CNN Tonight	
	DISC	51	Bush People		Bush People		Bush People		Bushcraft (N)		Croc Gold (N)		Bush "Protection"	
	DISN	26	Montana	Montana	Bunk'd	Bunk'd	☞ *** Happy Feet Robin Williams.			Mickey	:25 Girl M.	:55 Jessie	Bunk'd	
	ESPN	33	NBA Basketb.	NBA Basketball Boston Celtics at San Antonio Spurs Site: AT&T Center -- San Antonio, Texas (L)				SportsCenter		SportsCenter		SportsCenter		
	ESPN2	34	30 for 30	SportsCenter		SportsCenter		NFL Live		Ftsy FB	J & J (N)		NBA Basketball	
	FNC	66	The Kelly File	Hannity		The O'Reilly Factor		The Kelly File		Hannity		On the Record		
	FOOD	61	Holiday Baking		Holiday Baking		Kids Sweets (N)		Cooks vs. Cons (N)		Cooks vs. Cons		Cookie Challenge	
	FREE	32	☞ National Lamp...		☞ *** Arthur Christmas James McAvoy.				☞ *** The Santa Clause Tim Allen.				The 700 Club	
	FX	65	☞ *** Christmas With the Kranks				☞ *** The Santa Clause 2 Tim Allen.				☞ *** The Santa Clause 2 Tim Allen.			
	GOLF	88	PGA Golf		PGA Golf Valspar Championship						PGA Golf Arnold Palmer Invitational			
	GSN	76	Feud	Feud	Feud	Feud	Feud	Feud	Feud	Feud	Feud	Feud	Baggage	Baggage
	HALL	87	☞ Christmas Incorporated				☞ Looks Like Christmas Anne Heche.				☞ A Dream of Christmas Nikki Deloach.			
	HGTV	62	Property Brothers		Property Brothers		Property Brothers		New Orleans (N)		H.Hunt	House	Property Brothers	
	HIST	50	American Pickers "Daredevil Duffey"		American Pickers "Time Warp"		Vikings "The Vision"		Vikings "Two Journeys" (N)		Real Vikings "Viking Women" (N)		:05 Vikings "Two Journeys"	
	LIFE	29	Little W. Dallas		Little W. Dallas		Little W. Dallas		Women Dallas (N)		Little W. Dallas (N)		Little W. "Man UP"	
NICK	27	H.Danger	H.Danger	H.Danger	Thunder	Thunder	GShakers	F.House	F.House	F.House	F.House	Friends	Friends	
ROOT	37	NCAA Basketball Nicholls State at Texas Tech Site: United Supermarkets Arena (L)				Halls of Fame		Game 365 (N)	In Depth (N)	Mark Few (N)	Seahawk Press	Access (N)	UEFA Soccer Champions League	
SPIKE	42	☞ *** Varsity Blues		Lip Sync Battle		Lip Sync Battle		Lip Sync Battle		Lip Sync Battle		Lip Sync Battle	☞ *** R.I.P.D. ('13, Act) Ryan Reynolds.	
SYFY	67	☞ *** Volcano			☞ *** G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra				Incorporated (N)		☞ Final Destinati...			
TBS	59	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Conan Keegan Michael Key		
TCM	56	☞ *** Sudden Fear Jack Palance.		☞ Dial M for Murder When a man suspects his wife is having an affair, he plots the perfect murder.				☞ The Two Mrs. Carrolls A artist paints impressions of his wives as angels of death before killing them.				☞ *** Experiment Perilous		
TLC	49	Long Lost Family		My 600-lb Life		My 600-lb Life		My 600-lb Life "Marla" (N)		SisterW. 600-lb Life "Marla"				
TNT	57	Special		Grinch		Grinch	☞ *** Fred Claus ('07, Com) Paul Giamatti.		Movie					
UNI	21	Includo	Noticiero	Rosa Guadalupe		Despertar contigo		Vino el amor		Color de pasion		Impacto	Noticie.	
USA	58	NCIS		NCIS "Leap of Faith"		WWE Tribute to the Troops (N)		☞ A Madea Christmas						
WE	118	CSI "Sunblock"		CSI: Miami		CSI: Miami		CSI: Miami		CSI "Cyber-lebrity"		CSI "Inside Out"		
WGN		Salem		:05 Salem		:05 Cops		:35 Cops	Salem		:05 Salem		Parks	Parks
STZ ENC	644	☞ McFarland, USA		:15 ☞ *** High Plains Drifter		☞ *** True Lies ('94, Act) Jamie Lee Curtis.		Movie						
HBO	518	☞ *** Cast Away				News		St. Play	Divorce	:05 ☞ Eddie the Eagle Taron Egerton.		Fight (N)	M.Castro	
HBO2	520	☞ Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justi...				☞ How to Be Single		:50 ☞ *** Old School Luke Wilson.				Divorce		
HBO3	521	☞ *** Ted 2		:55 ☞ *** Everest Jake Gyllenhaal.		☞ Joy ('15, Com/Dra) Jennifer Lawrence.		:05 ☞ Mr. Right						
MAX	549	☞ *** Road House Patrick Swayze.				☞ *** Magic Mike XXL				☞ *** Trainwreck Amy Schumer.				
SHOW	578	☞ Zero Days ('16, Doc) David Sanger.				☞ *** Fargo				:45 ☞ *** Casino Royale ('06, Act) Daniel Craig.				
STARZ	621	☞ The Fifth Ele...		:15 ☞ *** Nine Months		Hugh Grant.		Blunt		☞ *** The Night Before		:15 ☞ I Saw the L...		