

Shoebox presents share gifts, love of Christ

National Collection Week is Nov. 12-19

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

Most kids in the United States wouldn't be very excited if they opened a Christmas present and found a toothbrush. However, children in countries beset with war, poverty, natural disaster, famine or disease are often thrilled when they receive such gifts through Operation Christmas Child.

Each holiday season shoeboxes are filled with personal hygiene items, toys, clothing, school supplies and more by a ministry of the international relief organization Samaritan's Purse. The gifts are distributed to needy children across the globe. Barb Wattenburger, the area drop-off location team leader, has heard stories about kids having to share personal hygiene items in orphanages in third world countries. Something as basic as a toothbrush, she said, can bring a smile to the face of a child.

"They received a box and it included toothbrushes. The kids were just ecstatic because they had their own toothbrush," Wattenburger said. "You can't even understand that in this country."

As National Collection Week approaches, area churches, businesses, service clubs and individuals have been busy gathering items and packing shoeboxes. Dave and Dorothy Smith, owners of O So Kleen in Hermiston, have turned the project into an employee team-building activity.

While involvement isn't mandatory, Dave Smith said all of his employees participated this year. Earlier this week, the O So Kleen got together for breakfast and packed boxes.

"We had an hour of food, fun and fellowship before we went to work for the day," Smith said.

The Smiths initially got involved with Operation Christmas Child while



Employees at O So Kleen in Hermiston show off the shoebox gifts they packaged for Operation Christmas Child, which provides presents to needy children across the globe.

Operation Christmas Child

National Collection Week drop-off sites

Pendleton

•Calvary Chapel, 1909 S.W. Athens Ave.

•Nov. 12-13, 15-17; 4-6 p.m.

•Nov. 14, 19; 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

•Nov. 17; 7:30-9 a.m.

•Nov. 18; 1-3 p.m.

Denise Skeen, 541-443-

2882, 541-377-2103, denise@ccpendleton.com

Hermiston

•New Hope Community Church, 1350 S. Highway 395

•Nov. 12-17, 19; 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

•Nov. 13, 15; 5-7 p.m.

•Nov. 18; noon-2 p.m.

Barb Wattenburger, 541-626-3159

Milton-Freewater

•Milton Adventist Church, 1244 N. Elizabeth St.

•Nov. 12-16; 5-8 p.m.

•Nov. 17; 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

living in Richland. Children at the church that the couple attended helped in increasing awareness and enthusiasm for the project — presenting the shoebox packages in front of the church before they were sent to the collection center for shipping.

"It impacted me seeing that the children were the ones giving to other kids," Dorothy Smith said.

When the couple moved to Hermiston, Dorothy served as the children's ministry director at New Hope Community Church. While the church had been involved in the shoebox gift project, Wattenburger said it soared when kids got involved with helping.

Wattenburger said her interest in the program is

centered around reaching out to children — to let them know they are loved. It opens the door to share about Jesus Christ, she added.

"A gift is a tangible way that shows that we love them and that God loves them," Wattenburger said. "There are people in the community that follow up with the kids. They aren't just throwing a box at them and driving up to the next place."

After gifts are distributed, local ministry partners in many of the countries invite the children to enroll in "The Greatest Journey," a 12-lesson discipleship program. The idea is to establish longterm relationships with the children and their families.

Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has deliv-

ered 157 million shoebox gifts to children in 160 countries. This year's goal is to reach another 11 million kids, said Cassie Roberts, a media relations associate with Samaritan's Purse. In 2017, Wattenburger said 1,871 boxes were collected in the Hermiston area and 1,092 in Pendleton.

A donation of \$9 is requested to offset shipping costs. Wattenburger said money is available if people can't afford that. For more information about Operation Christmas Child, including guidelines for shoebox gifts and an option to virtually "Build a Box," visit www.samaritanaspurse.org/occ.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com.

Wife faces felony charges for allegedly assaulting husband

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Natasha Mable Watson of Pendleton faces felony charges for allegedly assaulting her husband during a two-week span.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts said officers are familiar with Watson, and her arrest the night of Oct. 26 led to the revelation of multiple assaults.

Roberts said Watson's husband used Facebook Messenger that night to tell a family member his wife assaulted him, and he sent a digital photo of his injuries. The family member called police.

Watson was reluctant to let officers inside the apartment, Roberts said, and after she did, they saw where she slapped her husband on the face. Roberts said the victim "minimized" the severity of the pain, so police arrested Watson for the misdemeanor domestic violence charge of harassment.

"For assault, we have to prove substantial pain," he said.

Officers later questioned the husband, who told them Watson punched him in the face some days before in front of their two young children, according to Roberts, and before

that she punched him three times in the face while she was driving and he was the passenger. Roberts said Watson bloodied her husband's nose that time.

Police also interviewed neighbors, Roberts said, and virtually all of them said they witnessed Watson punching her husband. He said one even recounted Watson holding a child and delivering a blow to her husband's face.

Roberts described the situation in the home as "volatile" and said Watson's alcohol use and abuse plays a role.

The district attorney's office presented evidence in the case Wednesday to a grand jury, according to court records, which issued an indictment with the following charges: one count of misdemeanor fourth-degree assault, two counts of felony fourth-degree assault and three counts of harassment, also misdemeanors. The state alleges the crimes took place on Oct. 13, 17, 18 and 26.

Watson remains in the jail. She has an arraignment on the charges Monday.

You can find local information and help with domestic and sexual violence at <https://www.ocadsv.org/find-help/by-county/umatilla>.



Watson

Hermiston man dies in motorcycle crash

East Oregonian

A Hermiston man died in a motorcycle crash early Thursday morning.

Oregon State Police Sgt. Seth Cooney said the driver was Michael James Wilson, 62, of Hermiston. Although there were no witnesses, Cooney said officers think around 1:55 a.m., Wilson drifted off the roadway and drove into a ditch where he struck a culvert and was ejected from the motorcycle.

Wilson was traveling southbound on Highway 207 when the wreck happened at Milepost 19, near Buttercreek Road.

Cooney said that area is known for being a high-traffic area for deer crossing, and there have been other crashes there due to deer.

Cooney said about 10 minutes after the crash another driver came by and saw a headlight on

in a nearby field from the motorcycle, but it took a bit longer to locate Wilson.

Wilson died at the scene. Oregon State Police received help from Morrow County Sheriff's Office, Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, Ione and Boardman fire departments, Umatilla County Fire District and Oregon Department of Transportation.

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HUNTER KILLER (R)

1:20* 4:00 6:40 9:20

HALLOWEEN (R)

12:10* 2:30* 4:50 7:10 9:30

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VENOM (PG13)

7:20 10:00

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Hermiston FFA brings home medals

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Four Hermiston High School students attended the Future Farmers of America national convention last week, competing against students from 43 other states.

The competition was in Indianapolis, Indiana, and featured students from all around the nation, testing their skills in a variety of subjects.

Hermiston's Veterinary Sciences team consisted of Kennedy Baker, Adriann Stewart, Isel Tejada Urenda and Jenna Wallace. Baker took home a gold medal, Stewart and Wallace got silvers, and Tejada Urenda received a bronze medal. Overall, the group made the silver team.

"With FFA, once you compete at the national level in a certain category, you're never allowed to compete in it again," said Baker, a junior.

Tejada Urenda, a senior, said each state's competition is structured differently, and Oregon follows a layout similar to the national level. The challenge, she said, is that the state and national competitions are almost a year apart.



Photo courtesy of Hermiston School District

Kennedy Baker, left, Isel Tejada Urenda, Adriann Stewart and Jenna Wallace won medals at the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis last week.

Baker and Tejada Urenda said there are many tasks and categories in which students have to compete. In the identification component, students have to be able to identify 43 parasites, around 130 tools, and 150 animal breeds, and will be quizzed on them at random.

There's a math section, where students have to solve problems, such as how much medication to give an animal based on their weight. A written por-

tion asked students to discuss opioids and how veterinarians have to consider human abuse of the drugs when administering them

to animals.

There was a multiple choice test, a practicum portion, and an extemporaneous speaking portion. In the latter, students had to work in a group to prepare a presentation about "fear-free feline medicine," which discusses the ways vets can reduce stress and anxiety for animals going to the veterinarian. That anxiety, in turn, leads to longer recovery times for animals.

Though not all of the students want to become veterinarians, some hope the skills they're learning in FFA will transition to their desired careers.

"I'd like to be a ruminant nutritionist," said Tejada Urenda. "Developing feeds for cattle, lambs, anything with a four-chamber stomach."

Baker does want to be a veterinarian, and has started looking at colleges.

"This is what I want to do with my life," she said.

Crafts show fills TRAC Center

PASCO, Wash. — Hand-crafted items, original artwork, specialty foods and more offers people a chance to find unique Christmas gift items.

In its 23rd year, Custer's Christmas Arts & Crafts Show is Friday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday from

10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the TRAC Center, 6600 N. Burden Blvd. It's located off Interstate 182 Exit No. 9, Pasco. It features more than 150 vendors. The entry fee is \$7, which includes admission all weekend. Children 12 and under are free.

For more information, call 509-924-0588 or visit www.custershows.com.

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