

Postal worker humble about rescue

By Denise Ruttan

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Susan Herrmann, a relief carrier with the U.S. Postal Service, is the first to tell people that what she did for Bud Albus earlier this month was not heroic.

"I helped someone. I didn't put my own life at risk," Herrmann said. "To me the real heroes are the people who are fighting to keep our country safe."

Wilfred "Bud" Albus, 81, lives in the 600 block of Third Avenue. The week of Aug. 3, Herrmann was covering for Kelly Henderson, the regular carrier for the downtown route.

"You get to know people's routine. You pay attention when you're a carrier," Herrmann said. "Mr. Albus was really on top of picking up his mail on a daily basis."

On Monday, she noticed Albus's mailbox was full. When she returned on Tuesday, she had a bad feeling.

Herrmann knocked on the front door, but did not hear anything. So Herrmann called the Stayton/Sublimity Police Department and asked for a welfare check. Then she thought she heard something, went back and started knocking hard.

Herrmann pressed her ear against a window pane and this time heard mumbling.

"I called the police back and said he's in there and there's something wrong," she said.

Herrmann climbed the side of the house, pulling herself up by a water spigot into the kitchen window.

James Loftus, co-owner of the Gardner House Bed & Breakfast, a neighbor, came over to help.

Loftus said he checked the side door and saw Albus on the floor, emaciated and jaundiced. Loftus covered him with a blanket.

Herrmann said Albus had fallen and injured himself. He had been on the floor for three days, she said.

Loftus said Herrmann "deserves significant recognition" for her awareness of the situation.

"This was an extraordinary circumstance. She prevailed and saved somebody's life," Loftus said. "To her this was just another day."

Later, Herrmann checked on Albus at Santiam Memorial Hospital.

"Mr. Albus looked at me and said, 'There you are, God bless you,' " Herrmann said. " 'If it wasn't for you, I'd still be on the floor.' "

Award Ceremony

The Stayton/Sublimity Police Department will recognize Susan Herrmann with an Outstanding Citizen Award at the Sept. 21 Stayton City Council meeting, Acting Chief of Police Rich Sebens said. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. Monday, Sept. 21 at the Stayton Community Center.

Albus was treated at Santiam Memorial Hospital and transferred to Salem Hospital, where he was in stable condition as of Friday, according to Salem Hospital spokeswoman Shannon Priem.

For Herrmann, helping people is part of her routine. She especially looks out for the elderly and children.

"It's just who I am," Herrmann said. "I look at it as what I would hope my neighbors would do for me. We need to take time to look out for one another."

Herrmann has worked for the postal service since 2001.

Michelle Means was Herrmann's supervisor while postmaster Jami Goodpastor was on vacation. She said Herrmann's Good Samaritan act is not surprising.

"Susan is very much like that. She always pays attention to what's around her," Means said.

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