

## Skaggs recognized with last Yard of the Month award

By Kay Proctor

Frank and Janice Skaggs have received the last Yard of the Month recognition for 2008 from the Heppner Garden Club.

The Skaggs reside at 230 W. Baltimore in a charming home built in 1910. The name

D.O. Justus is stamped in the front sidewalk. Its second story was lost to fire years ago, but the original wraparound porch is used by the Skaggs as a gathering place for "coffee hour." Close by is the pleasant sound of a running waterfall and Frank's "sturgeon pond" one of the many outdoor projects done by the busy couple.

One of those projects was adding a large wood deck to the back of the house with a

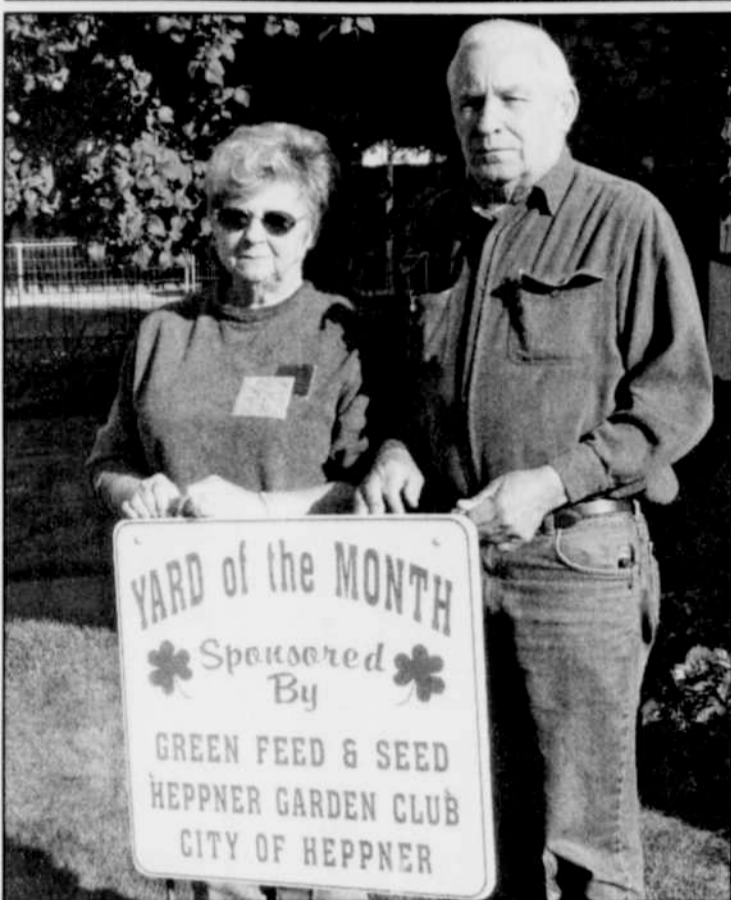
Barbecue grill setting on a brick paved area nearby. Adult children, Kim, Rob, Donna and Brian gather there often with family making it the Skaggs's favorite part of the yard.

At move-in time four years ago, buttonweed had taken over the lawn. With work, the current yard has become a thick, green carpet. The soil is good and they have found some "old marbles" in it. Frank does the mowing and fertilizing, but credits Janice as being the "boss."

A bare spot in the backyard was turned into a rock garden with statuary and low growing perennials. The Skaggs prefer river rock as mulch for their flowerbeds.

A towering evergreen in the front yard was identified by a forester as an older "Port Orford" Cedar, a rare find in Eastern Oregon. Other older plantings include Oregon grape, quince a gnarled lilac, and three unidentified, old-fashioned perennials close to the house.

Frank and Janice have added their own plantings such as roses, heather,



Frank and Janice Skaggs were awarded the final Yard of the Month award for 2008. -Contributed Photos

cleomes, weigelia, Campanula, snow on the mountain, cotoneaster, variegated grass, a variety of sedums, lemon balm, dahlias, gladiolas, Joe Pyes, rue, ferns, hostas. Hummingbirds are attracted to the sweet pea and clematis vines growing near the back fence.

The Skaggs began their married life in Joseph, Oregon 53 years ago. Before arriving in Heppner, they lived in Sunnyside, Washington and Boardman and gardened in every one of their homes. Both remember as children working in their family's large vegetable gardens; Janice in Joseph and Frank in West Virginia.

Upon being asked

what his gardening advice is to others, Frank jokes "Don't start; it's a lot of work," but quickly changes that to "Plant something!"

Janice serves as the Executive Director of Neighborhood Center of South Morrow County while Frank is a retired mechanic. They share their home with Muffin, their 17-year-old guard dog, and Frisky, Brian's 17-year-old cat. They share their love of family, home and gardening with each other.

Yard of the Month recognition is co-sponsored by the City of Heppner, MCGG-Green Feed, Heppner TV and the Heppner Garden Club.

## FSA offers increased loan limits

Larry Frey, SED of USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Oregon, announced that effective October 1, 2008, the maximum loan limit for FSA's guaranteed loan program will be \$1,094,000. The previous loan limit was \$949,000.

Earlier, it was announced that the new Farm Bill also raised FSA's direct loan limit to \$300,000, up from the prior \$200,000 limit. These increased guaranteed and direct loan limits reflect the rising input costs affecting farmers and ranch-

ers. "In these difficult financial times, our state's lenders and borrowers will appreciate these higher Guaranteed Loan program lending limits. It responds to the increasing credit needs of the state's farmers and ranchers," said Frey. "In the same way, our direct loan program's higher loan ceiling raises capital usage options for producers who obtain their loans directly from us."

FSA's guarantee loan programs allow lenders to offer agricultural credit to

farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. FSA provides loans programs for beginning farmers and limited resource producers, and provides lenders such as banks, Farm Credit System offices and credit unions with a guarantee to cover up to 95 percent of the loss if a loan goes into default.

There are two types of guaranteed and direct loans: Farm Ownership (FO) and Operating (OL). FO Loans may be made to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings and other fixtures, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation, or to refinance debt.

OL Loans may be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance, and other operating expenses. Operating Loans can also be used to pay for minor improvements to buildings, costs associated with land and water development, family living expenses, and to refinance debts under certain conditions.

Farmers and ranchers interested in FSA guaranteed loan programs may contact their lender or their local USDA Service Center or FSA office for more information. To find your nearest FSA office you can visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) or call 503-692-3688.

## Armato ranks in top 2% for test scores



Maggie Armato was recognized for ranking in the top 2% for the state of Oregon in pre-SAT scores for the National Merit Scholar Program. She was one of 200 students from Oregon who placed in the percentile. -Photo by Autumn Morgan

## Groups act to protect public health, environment

Call for Boardman coal plant to clean up its act

A coalition of environmental groups took action today to force Portland General Electric (PGE) to clean up its Boardman coal-fired power plant in Boardman. The Boardman coal plant is the largest stationary source of numerous air pollutants in Oregon-emitting harmful levels of asthma-causing soot and smog as well as high levels of toxic mercury and carbon dioxide pollution.

The coalition, which includes the Sierra Club, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Northwest Environmental Defense Center (NEDC), Columbia Riverkeeper and the Hells Canyon Preservation Council, filed suit against PGE for failing to install modern pollution controls at the Boardman plant.

"By law PGE was required to update the Boardman plant's pollution controls when it upgraded other parts of the facility," said PEAC attorney Aubrey Baldwin. "PGE failed to do so and as a result the plant has been pouring illegally high levels of harmful pollution into our air for years. The company also has been violating the terms of its state-issued air quality permit for the Boardman plant."

Oregon has a wealth of natural resources that can be used to meet the region's energy needs without any of the negative side effects of coal. Energy efficiency and renewable energy can more

cleanly and safely keep the lights on, while creating new jobs and saving the environment.

Dan Ritzman, regional director with the Sierra Club, stated that "PGE's plan to burn coal until the year 2040 takes Oregon and the northwest in the wrong direction. We need to look beyond coal. We already have cleaner, safer, readily available ways to power our future through efficiency and renewable energy. Oregonians deserve a coal-free clean energy future."

Respiratory illness, asthma, chronic coughs and birth defects are just a few of the harmful health effects caused by the pollution from the outdated Boardman plant. Pollution from the plant also reduces visibility and causes acid rain and fog in more than 10 protected parks and wilderness areas, including the Columbia River Gorge, Mount Hood, Mount Rainier, and Hells Canyon.

"Our parks and wilderness areas are an important part of our heritage, and our economy. We need to clean up the Boardman plant now to protect our national scenic treasure, the Columbia River Gorge, and our other special places so that future generations can enjoy and explore these magnificent areas too," said Michael Lang, Conservation Director for Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

"Pollution from the Boardman plant is harm-

ing our health and hurting our environment," said Mark Riskedahl, executive director of NEDC. "Coal-fired power plants are the nation's largest sources of smog, soot, and mercury, the pollutants that lead to asthma, cancer, and other illnesses. Old-fashioned coal combustion has no role in a clean energy future for our state."

Mercury pollution in the Columbia River from the Boardman plant was raised as a key concern by the coalition, and PGE is now asking to further delay installation of mercury controls at the Boardman Plant. "Mercury contamination in our water is cause for alarm," said Brent Foster, executive director of Columbia Riverkeeper. "Children and tribal members are particularly susceptible to serious neurological damage from eating mercury-contaminated fish."

Brian Kelly, Restoration Coordinator for Hells Canyon Preservation Council, said, "Continuing to burn coal at the Boardman plant without installing the best controls to protect Oregonians and our environment isn't right. Hells Canyon and the alpine peaks of the Wallowa Mountains deserve clean air-not pollution and haze. PGE needs to clean up its act."

The coalition is represented by the Pacific Environmental Advocacy Center (PEAC) at Lewis and Clark Law School in Portland.

## Heppner Head Start takes field trip



The Heppner Head Start visited Heppner Family Foods on September 24 for a field trip. The children were given a tour of the store and had the opportunity to meet the employees that work there. They were given a treat bag that included healthy snacks, such as an apple, yogurt, and cheese. Additional apples were purchased by the class to make applesauce in their classroom. -Contributed Photo

## Ione kicks off speech and debate season with success

The Ione High School Speech and Debate team started its 2008-2009 season on Saturday, September 27, at Silverton High School. This was a novice tournament, featuring students who have never competed before.

Ione took five new speech team members: freshman Steven Holland competed in Extemporaneous Speaking; freshmen Jordan Peterson competed in Poetry Reading and joined freshman Christine Raible in Dual Interpretation; and freshman Jeremy Coleman joined his brother, senior Matt Coleman in Public Debate.

The Coleman brothers finished the tournament with a 2-2 record, but Matt was recognized as Top Individual Speaker among all debaters. Also receiving recognition were Peterson and Raible, who took third place in Dual Interpretation.



Jordan Peterson and Christine Raible receive their trophy at the Silverton Speech Tournament. -Contributed Photo

Experienced team members, sophomore Mary Gates and junior Mikey Raible also traveled with the team to help the new members and to judge rounds of competition.

The team's next

scheduled tournament is at Willamette University in October. If you would like to know more about speech and debate, or would like to help support the team, contact Coach Jim Raible at the school.