

Beards receive Garden Highlights recognition



Anne and Casey Beard won the annual Garden Highlights recognition for their rural home between Heppner and Lexington. —Photo by Kay Proctor

By Kay Proctor

Anne and Casey Beard's home and yard designed to blend into its rural, hillside settings has been honored by the Heppner Volunteers with their 2015 Garden Highlights recognition. This recognition is given just once per year to an exceptional yard outside Heppner city limits.

Located between Heppner and Lexington, the Beards have views of the Willow Creek Valley and beyond to Mt. Adams. Casey grew up in Outlook, WA in a rodeo family and Anne is from the Chinook Lake area. Casey's Army career took them around the world. Living in England in a 500-year-old home with a walled garden kicked off

their gardening interests.

A lot of thought, planning and hands-on work have gone into establishing water-wise plants for the windy, harsh, dry local climate. The undulating berms outlining the yard were designed to purposely follow the curves of rolling hills on the horizon. A dry, rocky creek bed meanders at the bottom of the berms leading to a dry pond. The house's gutter system drains into the grounds to provide moisture.

Graveled paths wander around plantings such as Gro-Low sumac, blue fescue grass, salvia, yarrow, Turkish speedwell, blanket flowers, cornflowers, Mexican Hat flower, fern bush, sage, Apache Plume tree,

Buffalo Berry, Missouri Evening primrose, Scarlett hedge nettle, hybrid Lydia broom 'Bangle,' creeping thyme 'Pink Chintz', gaura, blue flax, several varieties of lavender, silver sage Artemisia, Russian sage, mugho pines, threadgrass, Potentillas, daylilies, and prairie zinnias.

With such high country plants, a green lawn is not needed and is not missed, showing that careful plant selection can replace mowing.

Wildlife enjoys visiting. Bees are everywhere and hummingbirds especially love the agastaches and penstemons. Pheasants and partridges are seen. Returning robins and flycatchers have nested under the deep, wraparound porch. Casey and Anne provide birdseed for goldfinches and towhees. The combination of birds and



Some of the rabbits in the Beards' yard are real...and some are metal. —Photo by Kay Proctor

hardy plants means insects are not a problem.

However, gophers were a problem. To stop them, the Beards dug trenches around the entire yard and sunk 6' x 3' metal roofing

panels. Problem solved.

Wild, cotton-tailed rabbits are such frequent visitors that Anne acknowledged them with metal garden art depicting running rabbits staked throughout.

Irrigation is provided by a system of pop-up sprinklers that would also help in case of grassfire.

Off the back patio is Anne's herb garden with a Tarragon plant thriving to over 6' tall. Anne's favorite plants include the penstemons; Casey favors their exceptional Texas Red yucca.

The couple deeply commits to their life's interests; Anne now designs and builds furniture and in the past received the Western Fashion 'Design of the Year' award multiple times for her clothing art. After his Army career, Casey served as the CCSEP Manager for Morrow County until its completion, then took on the challenge of being the first full-time general manager of the Pendleton Round-Up/Happy Canyon. Their devotion reflects in the unique surroundings the two have created on their south Morrow County property.

The Garden Highlights recognition honors those with exceptional seasonal highlights, special outdoor projects or rural locations. For any suggestions for this annual recognition, contact Kay Proctor of the Heppner Volunteers.

Letters from Iraq

Editor's note: Sheena Christman, lone native and graduate of Lone High School, is volunteering with World Orphans in northern Iraq. She is sending home weekly updates to family and friends, which the G-T was lucky enough to also receive. We plan on publishing these updates as space allows. She writes:

1. A Yazidi Wedding.

It was a lot of fun to attend a Yazidi double-wedding celebration at Akoyan Camp on Thursday. While I was there, the Yazidis served a huge meal and took lots of wedding photos of the two couples. Unfortunately, there was no dancing—one of the Yazidi men told us that they cancelled that portion of the celebration because they are 'exiled from their homeland.' The Yazidis served chicken, rice, liver, beef, and salad to celebrate the weddings. I'm the only one who tried the beef, and I am the only

I'm staying with two American families, I get to eat a lot of American meals, but some of my favorite Kurdish meals include chicken and beef kebabs and falafel sandwiches.

3. **Making Bread.** The Yazidis built a 'stone oven' to bake their flat bread. To bake the bread, they place a piece of dough on a thick, round oven mitt; using the oven mitt, they slam the dough against the inside wall of the stone oven; the bread sticks to the inside wall of the oven and the coals in the bottom of the oven then bake the bread.

4. **Dental Clinics.** We hosted several dental clinics at the three refugee camps. Alan, a dentist working in Soran, offered to volunteer his time. Alan is from Makmour, a town between Mosul and Erbil. ISIS is within a few miles of Makmour, so he relocated first to Erbil, and then to Soran for safety.



Yazidis baking bread in their stone oven. —Contributed photo

one who got really bad food poisoning. It was awful!

2. Living in Soran—

Food. Town Center is the first western-style supermarket in Soran. It opened approximately two years ago and offers local shoppers a chance to buy everything they might need at just one store. Traditionally, however, people in Soran have bought their groceries at shops that 'specialize' in a particular good (e.g. if you want chicken, you go to the butcher; if you want fruit and veggies, you go to the fruit and veggie stand; and if you want cheese, you go to the dairy shop). Many (perhaps most) continue to shop for groceries from store to store to store. Since

5. **Meet Yusra.** Yusra is a 35-year-old Shabuk Kurdish woman from Bartella, Iraq. She married when she was 15 years old, which is when Shabuk women marry, according to Yusra. Yusra has three daughters, two sons, and one grandson. She currently lives with her family at Camp Kawlokan.

6. **Camp Basirma.** On Sunday, we visited Camp Basirma. Camp Basirma is a UN refugee camp located between Soran and Erbil. It was established two years ago for approximately 5,000 Syrian refugees. An American couple (Paul and Wendy) from Arizona teach English language classes twice a week at Camp Basirma.

OSU Master Food Preservers answer questions statewide

CORVALLIS, Ore.— Oregon State University's food preservation and safety hotline returns for its 35th year beginning July 13.

With a renewed interest occurring within food preserving, the statewide hotline is as important as ever, according to Nellie Oehler, who helped create the OSU Extension Service's Master Food Preserver program. The program trains volunteers to answer questions on the help line, as well as at events like farmers markets and county fairs.

For many of the people who sign up for the eight-week course, food safety is one of the major reasons for their commitment to the 48

hours of class time and 40 to 70 hours of volunteering, said Oehler, coordinator for the program in Lane County. In 2014, more than 250 people were certified or recertified as Master Food Preservers and they gave back more than 25,000 hours.

"It's so important because there's so much misinformation on the web," she said. "For canning recipes, it has to be research-based or it can be lethal."

Correct information is all the more relevant today because at least a generation has grown up without anyone in the family to pass down their experience and knowledge, Oehler said.



Jacqui Richardson, a Master Food Preserver for Oregon State University's Extension Service in Douglas County, answers a question about preserving and food safety on the statewide hotline. —Contributed photo by Barbara Anderson

"The biggest learning curve was throwing away what you know—or think you know—and us-

ing tested recipes," said Ruby Moon, who came to the once-a-week class in Linn County from Siletz. "In the Master Food Preserver classes you learn precisely what to do. This has changed the way I can."

The hotline (800-354-7319) runs through Oct. 16 and again during the Thanksgiving holiday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. When the hotline is closed, callers can leave a message. Additionally, many Extension offices offer free pressure gauge testing.

Moon, Martin and other Master Food Preservers in 20 of Oregon's 36 counties share their knowledge at events, while those trained in Douglas and Lane counties staff the hotline that gets thousands of questions a year—3,040 in 2014.

"You name it, we've been asked it," said Roseburg volunteer Rayma Davis, who is serving as hotline coordinator for the second year. "There was one lady who called in and wanted to know if she stacked 10 pounds of books on top of her pot, would that give her 10 pounds of pressure in her canner. We explained that wasn't the way it worked."

Davis and other hotline volunteers refer to thick binders of recipes and research-based information vetted by the U.S.

DA's Report

Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson has released the following report:

-William Richard Brooks, 58, was convicted of Harassment, a Class B misdemeanor. The sentence of 90 days jail time was waived and the defendant sentenced to 18 months bench probation, to include

20 hours of community service, no offensive physical contact with the victim, and completion of anger management evaluation and any recommended treatment. An additional count of Assault IV—Constituting Domestic Violence was disposed without conviction. Fines, fees and assessments totaled \$60.

Department of Agriculture. The answers aren't always obvious.

"It's about critical thinking," Davis said. "Someone might ask what's the time required to can pickled fish. Well, you can't can pickled fish. A new volunteer would probably not know that, so they'd have to know how to look it up. It's kind of a trick question. We get them all day."

Not all questions cause serious concern, though. Second-year volunteer Jacqui Richardson of Roseburg still chuckles about a call she got last summer.

"The woman asked if she could put salsa in jelly jars," Richardson remembered. "I paused and said, 'You know, I think you could.'"

Most commonly, people ask about preserving salsa, tomatoes and tuna. OSU Extension offers publications on each: Salsa Recipes for Canning, Canning Seafood and Canning Tomatoes and Tomato Products.

Master Food Preservers focus on safety, but they are also excited to learn about canning, pickling, drying and other forms of preserving food for themselves and for sharing with others. The camaraderie they find with the fellow volunteers is important, too.

"We have this thing that connects us," said Moon. "It's my favorite part of the week. I go home and say, 'Guess what I did in canning class?' It's like Christmas."

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