

Britts receive 'Garden Highlight' recognition



Rita Britt stands in the large planting bed in the Britts' backyard, next to a fountain drilled in an Opal Creek boulder. Roger Britt opted out of the photo, stating that Rita was the "yard person" and deserved the recognition. -Photo by Kay Proctor

By Kay Proctor

Creating a neat and tidy country yard has earned Rita and Roger Britt the Garden Highlight recognition for 2017.

The Britts purchased the old "Ham's place" in 2001. First improvements were pastures and fences for the Brahmas Roger raised for breeding and sell-

ing for rodeo stock. A few of the older Brahma cows are left, replaced by Black Angus. Their chosen home site had never had a house on it before, so ground was leveled and a new home put in place. The Britts moved to their new address of 56574 Upper Rhea Creek Road in 2002.

The home and yard

sit on about 1,200 acres of pasture, alfalfa fields and CRP with Rhea Creek running through it. Roger was a rodeo bull rider for years, and that is captured with two steel silhouettes of a bull and rider flanking the graveled driveway leading to the home and its green lawn.

The lawn and beds are entirely edged in concrete and the house is surrounded by smooth, wide sidewalks. Roger sprays the property for weeds, but Rita keeps the yard weed-free. She walks it several times a week with a ready-to-use weed killer spray bottle to keep weeds at bay "before they get a stand."

Rita uses a riding lawn mower and has always loved to mow, stating she would do so every day if the yard needed it. She enjoys having a "neat, tidy place with a fresh look." Her favorite plants are petunias and purple fountain grass. Automatic, underground sprinklers keep everything green.

A breezeway connects the home to the garage and provides privacy as an outdoor room. Comfortable chairs, tables, a ceiling fan and family mementos all make this Rita's favorite place in the yard. They found an old fashioned 'Home Comfort' wood cook stove on Craigslist,

installed it in the breezeway and now Roger cooks



One of the distinctive features of the Britts' home is this working wood cook stove found on Craigslist; Roger Britt cooks sourdough pancakes on it every Sunday. -Photo by Kay Proctor

sourdough pancakes every Sunday.

From there, they can look out to the large planting bed in the middle of their backyard where deciduous and evergreen trees are mixed with large boulders hauled in from the Opal Creek area. One has been drilled, plumbed and turned into a fountain with water cascading from the top.

Chukars, pheasants and killdeer visit, but "deer aren't too bad." Gus, their border collie, might help keep the mule ear and white tail deer away. This past

winter's weather brought in lots of elk to the area, though. There was a surprise visitor one holiday: Rita had set a turkey carcass in a roasting pan on the breezeway table to cool. When she returned later, a raccoon was sitting at the table enjoying the traditional Thanksgiving feast, "just like he was invited."

Rita grew up in Heppner and met Roger when he moved here. He has also lived in Spray and Madras. During their 47 years of marriage, they lived in Pilot Rock for a while, but mostly around Heppner where they raised their two sons, Russell and Jason, who live in the Sacramento area and work for the same electrical co-operative. The Britts' have a 15-year-old granddaughter and a 13-year-old grandson in California, too.

Roger owned and operated a logging truck for years, then switched over to gravel trucks and septic service. Rita was the bookkeeper and they sold the business in 2014. Also working as a hairdresser and secretary in the past, Rita has retired recently from 28 years employment with the Morrow County School District, first as a school bus driver and then as a teacher's aide. She states she will "really miss the kids" this fall when school starts.

Garden Highlights recognition honors yards with exceptional highlights, special outdoor projects or rural settings and is sponsored by the Heppner Volunteers and MCGG-Green Feed & Seed. Contact Kay Proctor for further information or suggestions.



This steel silhouette, one of two that flanks the Britts' driveway on Upper Rhea Creek, is reminiscent of Roger Britt's days as a rodeo bull rider. -Photo by Kay Proctor

COUNTY COMMISSION

-Continued from PAGE ONE several choices would be to hire an administrator, or divide the duties among the three commissioners. He said hiring the administrator was a smart decision and he wanted to continue on with that.

Commissioner Jim Doherty said he was also in favor of a full-time administrator. "We give direction of where the county is going to the administrator and he carries that vision out," Doherty said. He said going the way of the commission handling the duties would result in fragmented bosses for the county staff.

Commission chair Melissa Lindsay said she had talked to most of the county department heads and they all felt some form of chief of staff or administrative officer was important for a smooth-running county government.

Through consensus the commissioners decided to start the search for a new replacement administrator, and then went on to decide whether to hire an interim or have one of the commissioners do the job until the position is filled. Commis-

sioner Doherty asked Russell if he would be willing to take on the administrator job in the interim.

"I ran a business with 90 employees and I would consider taking on the interim admin," Russell said. He added that he would only do it if it lasted for no more than three to four months. Both Doherty and Lindsay also said they would consider the job if Russell declined. Russell said he would have an answer by the Aug. 2 commission meeting. The commission also agreed to form a search committee at this meeting. The committee would be made up of Doherty, Karen Wolff, Jerry Sorte, a lay person from the community and one department head.

In other business at a previous July 26 meeting the commission voted to appoint county finance director Kate Knop to the position of county auditor. The position has not been filled since the 1990s and the commission wanted to make sure it got filled. County treasurer Gail Gutierrez objected to the position being filled saying that the ordinance said the

auditor "may" be appointed not "shall."

"What is the purpose and reason for this?" she asked the commission. "Is it necessary and is it needed?" she wanted to know. Gutierrez said the commission was moving forward without knowing the financial impact of appointing the position. She also wanted to know who was going to do the financial analysis of filling the position. Assessor Mike Gorman also objected to the appointment, saying that most of the duties of the auditor were already being carried out by other departments.

"It's (the auditor position and ordinance) there and to ignore it would be inappropriate," chair Lindsay said. The commission then voted unanimously to appoint Knop as auditor.

In other action, the commission voted to buy a new road grader for public works. They accepted the low bid of \$210,000 from Rowand Machinery in Pasco for a 2012 John Deere grader with a 2013 Henke -way folding plow and a 60-inch benching snow wing.

In other business, the commission heard a report from Morrow County Sheriff's Office Administrative Lieutenant Melissa Ross, who went over several incidents around the county in the past month, including the following:

South County
7-6 Accident. MP 10 Willow Creek Road. Pickup truck reported off the road, on the creek side, folded up with broke windshield, rolled. Located driver at nearby residence. Ambulance responded, patient refusal. Transported POV back home to La Grande.

7-15 Citizen Assist. Resident ran away from Lakeview Heights and was swimming near the dam. She would not come out of the water. Worker called back to advise they convinced swimmer to come out of the water and back to Lakeview.

North County
7-5 Agency Assist/Benton County, WA. Three subjects left on a jet ski about 6:30 p.m., been gone about hour and a half. One subject was found three miles west of Crowe Butte about 1/4-mile off the Oregon side.

A 40-year-old male and three-year-old female still missing. Unknown if they have life jackets. MCSO Marine Deputy was called out, headed to marina. Benton County called back and said to disregard, but thanks. They found all subjects alive.

7-6 Lost Child. Boardman Eastbound Rest Area. Nine-year-old male came out of the restroom and his family had left without him. From Montana. Able to make contact with parents on the road. They came back to pick up son. He had been in the third seat row in the Suburban and no one saw him get out and go into the rest area. They thought he was still asleep in the back.

7-21 Fire Started in Gilliam County, was reported to MCSO by someone on

the freeway, by county line about 1:40 p.m. Boardman Fire went out to check, in Gilliam County and they were aware of situation and had crews working fire. At 5:12 p.m., Ione FD was paged out to respond to MP 9 on Highway 74 to protect structures from wildland fire that got away from Gilliam County. Our fire crews headed back to station about 1 a.m..

7-21. Excessive Speed. Three drivers driving in excess of 90 mph on the freeway were issued citations within one-hour period.

7-22. Excessive Speed. Five drivers driving in excess of 90 mph on the freeway were issued citations within 1-1/2-hour period. (Two citations earlier in month were in excess of 100 mph.)

WEATHER

-Continued from PAGE ONE Normal highs for Heppner during August are 85.5 degrees and normal lows are 53.5 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 0.39 inches.

The National Weather Service is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department.

"Our Roots Run Deep in Morrow County"
August 19-20, 2017

Fair Admission: Ages 8 & Up \$4 daily or \$10 week
7 & under FREE (must be with Adult)
Rodeo Admission: 13 & up \$10
7-12 yrs. \$6
6 & under FREE

Fair: www.co.morrow.or.us/fair

Wednesday 16 th	Thursday 17 th	Friday 18 th	Saturday 19 th
The Reptile Man Kid Fun Zone Scarecrow Contest The Junebugs Ice Cream Social 4-H Food Contest 4-H/FFA Small Animal Showmanship 4-H Fashion Revue RDO Tractor Pull Cory Peterson Band 	The Reptile Man Kid Fun Zone Old Time Fiddlers Talent Show FFA Floral Design Murray's Wine Tasting Featuring: Joe Lindsay Nate Botsford OTPR/NPRA Slack	The Reptile Man Kid Fun Zone 4-H/FFA Showmanship Ballet Performances 4-7 yrs. Master Showmanship Adult Showmanship Greased Pig Contest OTPR/NPRA Rodeo 	The Reptile Man Kid Fun Zone Parade FFA Awards Buyers Luncheon Livestock Auction OTPR/NPRA Rodeo Sunday 20 th All Exhibits Released Morrow County Rodeo

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