

# Chase St. home wins yard of the month



The September Yard of the Month goes to Ruby Crosthwaite and her son Cole at 215 North Chase Street. Landscaping with a fun mix of rustic collectibles and colorful annuals lit up the corner lot of the charming historic home. Heppner's Yard of the Month recognition is sponsored by the Heppner Volunteers, MCGG-Green Feed and Seed and the city of Heppner. -Photos by Kay Proctor.

# Local aviator Barbara Van Arsdale nominated for prestigious Wright Brothers Master Pilot award

*"Flying is my life"*

By April Hilton-Sykes

Local aviator Barbara Van Arsdale, Lexington, has been nominated for the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award, "the most prestigious award a pilot can get." "I couldn't believe it," said Barbara. "It's just an honor to be nominated." "Flying is my life," she said. "I don't know how to do anything else."

VanArsdale was an infant still in diapers when she first flew with her father, Ken McKinney (pictured above). Her father did heavy construction and the family moved a lot, but then settled down in Newhall, CA, where Barbara grew up. He had been a pilot for most of his life and later managed the John Day airport before his retirement.

Barbara obtained her private license in August of 1962 and has been flying ever since. She first soloed in 1965, got her commercial license in February of 1969, her instrument license January 6, 1972, her Certified Flight Instructor certificate in March of 1972, her Airline Transport Pilot license in April of 2001 and her Seaplane license in April 2004. She had logged more than 18,000 miles by 2005.

After her marriage to first husband, Bill Murray, they moved to Kernville, CA, where they started the Sierra Air Service. From 1975-1978, they extended their air service, managing an airport at Susanville.

"That led to contracting with the Forest Service for fire surveillance in the Sierra Mountains," according to an article in "The Ruralite" by the late Merlyn Robinson. "That's when I really learned how to fly—hopping around over that rugged terrain," says Barbara. "In those days it was up to the pilot to direct the ground fire crews."

"She also counted wild horses for the Bureau of Land Management and surveyed big game for the

Fish and Wildlife Department," continued the article. Barbara flew on the BLM's air attack platform as the Aero Commander 500 Shrike from the BLM air attack base at the Lewistown Municipal Airport. She had flown fires all over the west, but said she found the Lewistown air attack base staff to be one of the most professional she ever worked with.

After Barbara and her

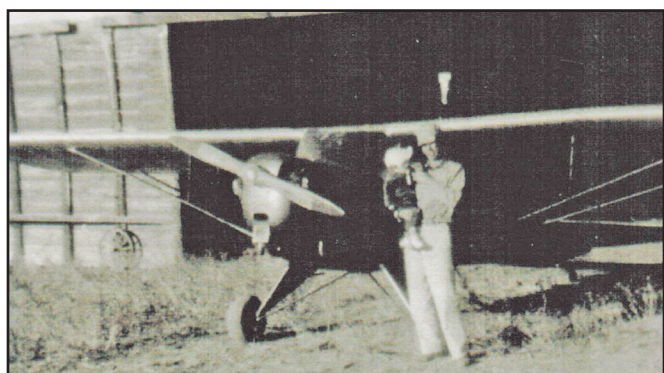


Barbara Van Arsdale

first husband divorced, she moved to Baker, OR to be closer to family and "escape the congestion in California." At Baker she mainly did contract work for the Forest Service. She met Guy Van Arsdale there in 1983, when he flew into the Baker airport. They connected over their love of airplanes and flying. At that time she flew for a commercial and charter service as a senior pilot with the highest number of logged hours.

She and Guy were married in 1984 and then moved to Lexington, OR, where they mainly did fire patrol for Kinzua, the State Department of Forestry and some Forest Service work. She flew an Aero Commander twin engine in 2000, "strictly air attack for the Forest Service on big fires."

Barbara also held an airplane mechanic rating and was an authorized airplane maintenance inspector. In addition, she had become an advanced ground instructor and a certified flight instructor.



A 1945 photo with baby Barbara McKinney Van Arsdale held by her dad, Ken McKinney. "I have been flying all my life," she said.

According to Robinson's article, Barbara flew all over the Blue Mountains looking for fires for the State Forestry Department and Heppner's then Kinzua Mill Corporation. Robinson said that Barbara also went "crow hopping" to pick up parts for the former Van Arsdale Construction and Logging business, operated by her and Guy. At that time she also did the bookwork for their business.

Barbara's sister, Linda Nave, her sister's husband, Denny Nave, and her son from her previous marriage, Chris Murray, also have pilot licenses. According to the "Ruralite" story, her son was "only hours old" on his first flight, when he and Barbara were flown home from the hospital after his birth. Chris soloed when he was just 16 years old. Barbara says Chris, now of Overton, NV, and daughter

JoLynn Vernon of Driggs, ID, "practically grew up in an airplane." So it's no surprise that Chris is now a pilot. Sister Linda Nave and her husband Denny are also pilots, operating Columbia River Air Repair in Hermiston. Barbara has five grandchildren and one great-grandson.

In addition to her many flights, and a few close calls, Barbara tells of an interesting anecdote about meeting and becoming friends with the actor Harrison Ford, who is also a pilot.

Barbara officially retired on January 4, 2003, selling the Van Arsdale Air Service. She now owns Sequoia Aviation and is doing some instruction and flight reviews. She is still flying her Cessna 185F and her Piper Super Cub and has now accumulated over 18,848 hours of flight time.



Barbara Van Arsdale, along with her sister and brother-in-law Linda and Denny Nave, Heppner, and JoyceKay Hollomon, Heppner, recently painted the taxi way at the Lexington Airport. Van Arsdale reported that it took 22 gallons of paint to finish the job. The paint was furnished by Morrow County Public Works. Van Arsdale has painted the runways for numerous airports over the years. Her late husband, Guy, along with other local pilots, built the Lexington Airport up to specs on land donated by the late Pat Cutsforth.

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