

Keithleys earn yard of the month Former Heppner, Ione teacher retires

By Kay Proctor

Recognition for June's Yard of the Month goes to a hard-working couple, Jay and Kelly-Jo Keithley at 475 Linden Way.

The family moved into the home in October 1989 after purchasing it through a bank sale and right away had to put on a new roof. That was just the beginning of their home improvements that resulted in almost rebuilding the house from the inside out. Their latest work has been new siding and other repairs to damage done to their house from a next-door house fire.

As things turned out, the Keithleys ended up with that same next-door lot less than a year ago. They immediately started work by tearing down the charred house, filling in the basement and sawing down a burnt birch and four locust trees. While cutting up one of the locusts, they found a horseshoe dead center that the tree had grown around, perhaps from a livery stable that was there years ago.

The late Clarence Baker and Clarice Baker had lived in the now burnt-out home for years, so during clean-up, Keithley's made sure the Baker family got the kids' old swing they used to play on from the backyard. Kelly-Jo saved and shared some of the plantings and was able to move poppies, peonies, iris and yucca to new spots.

New gravel created extra parking space on the front of the lot while grass was seeded on the back half. The original basalt rock terracing put in by Clarence years ago was cleaned up and Kelly-Jo has had fun filling the terraces with plants and flowers. Large rocks and rustics are scattered throughout the landscape.

Kelly-Jo's gift for Mother's Day sits at the top of the terrace; an antique seeder that she filled with colorful annual flowers. Because of regular visits by Heppner's own herd of deer, she tried to use deer-resistant plants. Behind the seeder are two 20-plus year-old Rose-of-Sharon shrubs that were badly burnt but are doing well after Kelly-Jo transplanted them. Nearby is a sculpture Jay made of old barrel hoops. They have plans to build a fence along the property line in back.

Behind their own home, Jay terraced the slope to give them parking above and a flat fenced backyard. Their back patio has stamped concrete that Jay



Above: Kelly-Jo and Jay Keithley stand next to the antique seeder filled with flowers. Below: A bench placed on a terrace above the houses gives them a private view of the hills. Next to the bench is the sculpture Jay made from barrel hoops.



did and is cool and peaceful. Kelly-Jo has filled the beds with plantings such as honeysuckle, clematis, a profuse white rose, and her favorite, a large, old-fashioned bleeding heart. Tomatoes and peppers are grown in pots.

They both have the same favorite place in their yard which is a large bench that Jay installed at the top of their new lot that gives them a nice private view out to the hills, but they still enjoy their front porch.

Jay has lived in Heppner all his life while Kelly-Jo's family moved here to own and operate the Wagon Wheel Restaurant and Bar on Main Street. Jay works for Silver Creek Contracting and Kelly-Jo is employed at CCS-Lakeview Heights. They share their home now with a cute kitten named Rona, as in 'Corona,' but raised their three children here. Daughter Blair lives in Hermiston with her husband and two children, son Sloan is in Arizona and has a son and Baillie is in Silverton and recently became engaged. Their basketball cement pad and hoop are still in the backyard though and birdhouses made as kids

are filled with nestlings and still hang in the front yard crabapple tree.

The Keithleys' goal for their yard is to keep it as low maintenance as possible. Both like to have a nice green lawn and appreciate the curb appeal a nice yard adds to a home. Jay points out that the monthly city water bills have a flat, minimum rate for a certain amount of gallons of water, so why not water a yard enough to use all the water a person is paying for anyway?

Yard of the Month is co-sponsored by the Heppner Volunteers, MCGG/Green Feed Store, and the City of Heppner.

Former Heppner, Ione teacher retires

By Bobbi Gordon

Former science teacher, Sarah Carlson, hung up her lab coat on June 5, retiring from her teaching career that began 37 years ago. Carlson, who is a Morrow County resident at the Carlson homestead at Valby, began teaching seventh-grade life science and eighth-grade physical science at Heppner Junior High in September of 1983.

Carlson enthusiastically said, "Teaching science at Heppner Junior High was fantastic. There were truly great staff and students. The science room was a former high school science room which was well equipped with classroom space, lab space, science prep area and dark room. I offered a yearbook/photography elective one year where I taught the students how to process black and white film and prints. My favorite science lab was to make peanut brittle with the students at Christmas. I also enjoyed teaching computer skills and LEGO LOGO programming."

Her career consisted of teaching science in Heppner from 1983-1995 and Ione from 2003-2004. Carlson worked at the Hermiston Agriculture Research Center from 2005-2007 as a lab manager for the Riparian Entomology Lab where she trained students in entomology (the study of bugs). Next, she taught middle and high school science at Oregon Connections Academy from 2007-2010. Carlson ended her teaching career teaching high school sciences and art at Condon High School from 2010-2020.

Sarah Carlson was born and raised in Medford, OR where she graduated from Medford Senior High in 1979. She then attended Oregon State University in Corvallis, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Education in 1983. Graduate school at OSU provided



Sarah Carlson is pictured in front of her science classroom at Condon High School. -Contributed photos.



Sarah Carlson, one of three 2019 Oregon state finalists for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science teaching, is pictured with her husband, Clint; daughter, Julianne; and son, Alex after receiving her award at the Oregon Science Teachers Association Conference in Eugene.

her with her Master of Science in Education degree in 1987.

Carlson's parents are Dr. Robert Wilcox, DVM, and Joanne Wilcox. She married her husband, Clint, after they graduated from OSU in 1983 and moved to the Carlson homestead. They have two children who both graduated from the Ione Community School. Their son, Alex, is currently in his final year of his MD PhD program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Daughter, Julianne, is currently an account manager for Expeditors International in Portland, OR.

Carlson told the Gazette that she worked as a lifeguard and water safety instructor in the summers during her college years in Medford and later was the pool manager/swim instructor/lifeguard trainer at the Willow Creek Waterpark in Heppner and a swim instructor and lifeguard trainer at the Ione pool. She was also the area coordinator for the Hands-On Science Outreach program which provided pre-K through

sixth grade recreational science after school and summer classes in Morrow, Umatilla, Gilliam and Wheeler counties.

When asked how it feels to leave her career, she said, "It feels a bit surreal. I'm not sure where the time has gone." She noted, "It's time to start a new adventure."

She continued, when asked what she will miss, "I have really enjoyed the friendships that I have made with staff and students over the years. I will miss getting to know the incoming freshman and helping the seniors navigate their senior year of high school. I will miss the camaraderie and collaboration with colleagues."

Her plans for retirement will include "reading a lot" as she has a three-year appointment to the Children's Book Council and National Science Teaching Association selection committee for Outstanding Science Trade Books. She reported, "I am very interested in mentoring novice science teachers." She hopes to find time to travel to visit friends and family also.

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Mrs. Carlson, top left, is pictured with her first class of eighth grade students at Heppner Junior High, 1983-84.

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