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of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

Heppner

GAZETTE-TIMES

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For Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor MUST be signed by the author. The Heppner GT will not publish unsigned letters. All letters MUST include the author's address and phone number for use by the GT office. The GT reserves the right to edit letters. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

Garden highlight awarded to Kilkennys

By Kay Proctor

Continuing operations of a large family farm that began in 1914 in Heppner takes dedication. John and Diane Kilkenny have shown that same dedication used for farming when they created a home on top of a solid basalt rock rim near Lena Highway and surrounded it with greenery.

Their home was built in 1997 with views of the Hinton Creek Valley. It is the likeness of the original family farmhouse that once stood below and sadly was destroyed by fire while undergoing remodeling.

The surrounding greenery is not just for looks. Wanting to protect their home and buildings from fires by establishing a perimeter for a firebreak, plans were made for a large lawn to be kept green with automatic underground sprinklers. Needing a base for the lawn, an existing livestock pond was cleaned out and farm trucks hauled in 200 loads of rich soil to cover the rock on the home site.

Once the large lawn was established, planting began, using many varieties such as hostas, boxwood, roses, spruce and maple trees with lots of landscape fabric. Some white-bark birch trees are doing well. A row of flowering plum trees and pines lining the sloping driveway was a particular struggle to grow but are now finally established. Terracing, fencing and curbing have been done, driplines installed and part of the driveway paved to cover the rough basalt.

Over the years, rustic farm implements and yard decor have been added, including a porch light with the University of Oregon's logo, which is John's alma mater. Diane likes best the large Dr. Seuss type bird which she has named Dora that is welded entirely out of old farm tools, bits and pieces.

John mentions that he



Above: The Kilkenny property received the garden highlight award. Below: John and Diane Kilkenny. -Photos by Kay Proctor:



tries to do a new project each year and this summer's project has been expanding their patio and pergola. A shade cloth allows just enough sun in for the huge planters and hanging baskets of annual flowers below. Each year Diane likes to choose a different color for the annuals and especially liked the all-white flowers used last summer. Her favorite plant, a thriving dwarf birch tree, is on the patio's west side. John's favorite is the Norwegian Weeping evergreen tree, also by the patio.

Another year's project was surrounding eight 10' x 4' raised wood beds with

high fencing and using them for a vegetable garden. A large round stock trough sits in the middle filled with colorful flowers. Everything is irrigated by dripline. Being at 2800' in elevation means late frosts, so John designed a hoop system with frost cloth clipped on that can be removed easily as needed. Diane says that she "likes to work in my garden" and grows a lot of tomatoes and even artichokes. Gophers discovered the garden the first year, so the beds were emptied of soil, lined with wire at the bottom, then refilled.

Their patio is their fa-

As part of their soil and conservatory practice, the Kilkennys have worked with programs and planted about 30,000 trees across their acreage such as chokecherry, wild currant, elderberry and pine. Soil conservation was an important part of farming for John's father, too, the late Bob Kilkenny.

Fire protection is very much a priority. Each spring, controlled burns are done where needed around the farm. John purchased two large water tanker trucks and keeps them within easy access and ready to go. The fire-break that their established green lawn gives them is reassuring, but with the disastrous wildfires in Oregon this year, John is concerned when he sees yards with dried up grass lawns, especially when houses are near others and hopes consideration will be given to green fire perimeters for safety precautions.

Diane grew up in Kennewick and Richland, then graduated from OHSU. She has been an RN for 33 years, of which 20 years has been for the Morrow County Health Department. She began serving as Interim Public Health Director at the same time the COVID crisis and restrictions began. She and John met in Tri-Cities where he worked as a grain buyer, and they later joined the family farming business.

Besides cattle, hay and



vorite outdoor place but sitting in Diane's vegetable garden at day's end and visiting is a close second. Their loyal Lab, Erin, is usually close by.

Antelope used to visit but haven't been seen in recent years. There are deer, but there has been a large increase in elk with some even coming onto the lawn. Approximately 200 to 250 head move onto the alfalfa field behind the house for a while each fall and this year consumed an entire late cutting of hay.

wheat, the couple raised three children; Conor, Rory and Kathrine. Two grandsons with one on the way are a very important part of their lives now.

The Garden Highlight award is sponsored by MCGG/Green Feed and Seed and the Heppner Volunteers. It is given to those with exceptional seasonal features, special outdoor projects or yards that are outside city limits. To suggest a recipient, contact kayproctor@gmail.com.

MILL ZONE

-Continued from PAGE ONE

The mill site, which has been owned by the Port of Morrow since the Kinzua Mill shut down in 1998, is 85-90 percent in the Willow Creek flood zone, which prohibits business development. "There are a lot of hoops to jump through to develop in flood zones," said Cutsforth. One of the hoops is obtaining a flood plain map amendment from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Cutsforth asserts that the site mapping done previously is not correct, and that "The flood zone was far too expansive." Once a flood plain amendment has been obtained, the budget for bringing the site out of the flood zone will be adjusted down from the \$1,097,000, and that figure is a "worst case scenario... and it could be \$500,000-\$600,000," Cutsforth continues.

There is no electricity, water or sewer at the mill

site, and these three utilities must be present before a potential buyer will commit to the site. And, these utilities cannot be developed while the site is in the flood zone. "Two or three people are interested in the site," said Cutsforth. "This is a Field of Dreams... If we build it, they will come."

The port of Morrow has sent a conditional letter of map revision (CLOMR) to FEMA. FEMA is currently reviewing the CLOMR and has 90 days to review the letter and give a yes or no answer to the request for map revisions. The Port of Morrow has committed \$100,000 to the project. The Port of Morrow is responsible for the water and power infrastructure development and will require a contractor to address the water and septic development. Kim Cutsforth stated that she hopes the property will be usable within the next 18 months.

Alex Lindsay awarded scholarship

On behalf of the Beth Slottee Memorial Scholarship Fund, the board of the South Morrow County Scholarship Trust has announced that Alex Lindsay is the recipient of the 2020 scholarship. Alex will receive \$1,000 and was selected on the basis of academic achievement, chosen field of study and financial need.

Alex Lindsay is the son of Barney and Kimberly Lindsay of Lexington. He is enrolled at Oregon State

University studying history and education. He plans to become a secondary level history teacher. Alex has maintained high marks during his college career. He is an active member of FFA and received his American Degree which is the highest achievement in that program.

Ms. Beth Slottee was a teacher at Heppner Jr Sr High School in 1996 and passed away during her time there. Her family created the memorial scholar-

ship to help support college students pursuing a music major/minor or education major/minor in their junior, senior or graduate years at an accredited college. with preference being given to a music major/minor.

The Board of Directors include President Adam McCabe, Vice President Andrea Nelson, Secretary Brandi Sweeney, Treasurer Tricia Rollins, Martin Vito, Carri Grieb and Karen Holland. The Beth Slottee Scholarship was combined with The South Morrow County Scholarship Trust,

Inc several years ago with the purpose to expand access to higher education for students of Heppner and Ione High Schools by promoting a scholarship program, developing an operational structure, raising funds for student aid distribution and distributing awards on a fair and non-discriminatory basis. Tax deductible donations can be sent to SMCS Inc, PO Box 102, Ione, OR 97843.

DEADLINE:
MONDAYS
AT 5PM



We proudly endorse Joel Peterson for Morrow County Commissioner



- | | |
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