

Bonnors Ferry Herald, Thursday, March 12, 2007

Ruth Hittle Wheeler, 86

Ruth Hittle Wheeler, 86, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2008.

Services will be held 11 a.m. March 22, 2008, at Free Methodist Church in Bonnors Ferry with burial at Grandview Cemetery.

Ruth was born April 29, 1921, in Collbran, Colo., to Milton J. and Matt McKee Branson.

She attended school in Collbran and worked on the family's sheep and cattle ranch in the Plateau Valley.

On Sept. 6, 1938, Ruth married Orval Lee Hittle in Glenwood Springs, Colo. He ran Hunter Ranch, and during that time, their four children were born.

In 1946, the family moved to a farm north of Moyie Springs, where Ruth helped Orval harvest and sell cedar posts and Christmas trees. Ruth cared for and moved the family, following Orval as he cleared rights-of-way for power lines throughout North Idaho and Eastern Washington for about 6 years.

The family moved to Wilder in 1954 where Ruth and Orval ran the Little Green Grocery Store. They sold the store in 1956 and moved to the Round Prairie area in Bonnors Ferry.

Ruth drove a school bus until 1964. They moved to Arlington, Ore., for 11 years where Ruth took painting classes and became very good.

In 1972 Orval was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and they moved to the Deep Creek area. Ruth was determined to give him the very best care possible.

During this time, she not only cared for Orval, she worked in Phoenix at Pioneer Park, a living museum. Ruth dressed in period clothing and gave tours. She also took classes to learn wood carving.

Ruth took Orval to Arizona for winters for 8 years, and for the last 5 years, he was bedridden.

She cared for Orval at home until his death in 1994.

Ruth married Leslie V. Wheeler on Jan. 24, 1995, in Phoenix. They only had a short time together, but they were very happy.

For the last 10 years, Ruth spent summers in Bonnors Ferry and winters in Phoenix with her loving companion, Tom Cheek. They were very happy caring for their garden, yard and being home together spending time with family and socializing with friends.

Ruth was like a second mom to her younger brother and sister and many nieces and nephews that spent their summers at her house growing up, where there was always an abundance of love and laughter.

She was passionate about her family, gardening, art and living life to the fullest. Ruth was a woman who exhausted those much younger than her. She needed much more than 24 hours in a day to accomplish all that she did.

Ruth was preceded in death by her parents; husbands; sister Addah Severson; and granddaughter Darlene Pederson.

Ruth is survived by her longtime companion Tom Cheek; children Evelyn Smith and her husband, Ron, Ray Hittle and his wife, Marj, of Bonnors Ferry, Helen Pederson and her husband, Ken of Charleston, Ore., Milt Hittle and his daughter, Lorraine, of Slidel, La., and Wilma Wallace and her husband, Larry; a brother, Bill Branson of Bonnors Ferry; a sister, Fern Shriver and her husband, Cliff, of Cedaredge, Colo.; 13 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; nine great-great-grandchildren; many nieces and nephews; and a multitude of friends.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to Parkinson's Disease Research at O.H.S.U. Foundation, 1121 S.W. Salmon St., Suite 200, Portland, Ore., 97205.