

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2021

CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

(USPS 032480)

SINGLE COPY: 75 CENTS

VOLUME 105, NUMBER 3

Dr. Sheppard retires after 47 years

Local legend’s
last day was
June 28th

The following story - written by publisher Mike Wendorff - appeared in the June 24, 2021, issue of The Callaway Courier and is reprinted here with permission.

Dr. Ronald Sheppard had every intention of slipping quietly into retirement after nearly 47 years of medical practice at Callaway District Hospital and Medical Clinics.

Friends, colleagues (past and present) and patients he has cared for all these years were having none of that. The Board and Administration of CDH put together an intimate celebration and send-off for the legendary doc, age 75, who for so many years was the only MD and later with the help of Physician Assistants Bill Hinman and Stan Schied, among the first in their profession.

Hinman was his last patient in Callaway on Monday afternoon. He was at the Arnold Clinic Tuesday and then he was done.

“I’m ready to hang up my stethoscope,” Sheppard said during an exclusive interview with the *Courier* on Monday.

He had reduced his practice to three days a week in recent years with a select few patients. Sheppard said he has no fear of “doing nothing” thoroughly enjoying solitude and reading an eclectic variety of books for pleasure.

“I hear people say, ‘I’m so bored’ but I don’t get that way. I can al-



Photo courtesy of The Callaway Courier

Dr. Ronald Sheppard visits with Nancy Willis and Barb Neth at a retirement party thrown in the longtime local doctor’s honor on June 28.

ways do something and do nothing. I can absolutely do nothing with nobody and be very happy.”

Sheppard has also been commuting nearly three hours a day from his home at Calamus and while he didn’t mind it, he said he won’t miss it.

Dr. Sheppard was recruited to Callaway in 1974 where he opened practice in a trailer house next to the new hospital and medical clinic was under construction. His last day will be June 28 and says he feels

good about it.

“I think I’m leaving the practice in very good hands,” Sheppard said. “I’m confident about all of these providers – I’m not blowing smoke – I really mean it. I would be very disappointed if after all we went through things started to collapse because I don’t believe one person could be, or should be, that important.”

Dr. Robert “Mike” Chaloupka had closed his clinic after 22 years in 1973. The old hospital was near death and the com-

munity desperately needed a medical doctor to take over.

Sheppard said he was the only student in his medical school class of 96 who wanted to be a general practitioner. The pressure was to become a specialist.

“I think I was important for coming here because no one else was doing it,” he said of those early years but quickly jumped back to the present.

“I like this group, I really do,” he said. “I think they practice good medicine, they care about their patients. They’ll make mistakes but, hell, we all do. I really feel good about it. I feel no regrets about quitting now.”

Sheppard said he believes every aspect of the hospital and clinics from administration and providers on down is poised for success. He wouldn’t want to walk away if it wasn’t.

He said he won’t miss the 24/7 worry about a diagnosis he wasn’t sure of or a prognosis he didn’t like.

He said with all the data at his

disposal there might be a correct diagnosis but he prefers making the right one.

“Not the correct diagnosis but the best one,” Sheppard mused. “And the patient will go with that and the patient comes in and says, ‘Hell, I’m not getting any better,’ well then let’s look at something atypical here because you can’t be chasing weirdo diagnosis every time, we call them red herrings, and there are doctors that do that. ‘Well we’re going to do every test known to man and we’ll come up with something’. And, yes, you will always come up with an abnormality. Whether it’s important or not, you order enough tests on any patient and something will be wrong.”

“I can’t count the times I said, ‘Let’s not order this right now because if it’s positive, whether it’s important or not, you’re in the system, your heart is going to be studied, you know, they’re

See Doctor Sheppard, Page 2

Activities Planned for 4th of July

Free swimming at the pool, an open house, and a public fireworks display are on the schedule for the 4th of July.

Manager Shavonne Schacher said the pool will be offering free swimming from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. From 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., the Arnold Fire Department will be hosting an open house at the fire hall. Department members will be offering stroke handouts, hands-on CPR handouts and a demonstration, blood pressure

checks, blood sugar checks, and a tour of the fire department. The new ambulance will also be available to view. S’mores will be served at 8:30 p.m.

The public fireworks display will begin at dusk at Old Mill Park. Gunther Fireworks will be setting off the display, which will start with Posting of the Colors by the American Legion and V.F.W. Westbrook Audio will be providing music to enhance the show.

Old Creamery Remembered With Historical Marker

A historical marker has been placed at the old cooperative creamery - currently owned by Lisa and Mitch Geiser. A project of Arnold Rotary, Berni Crow is in charge of compiling the information for the signs. The park marker reads as follows:

Arnold Co-operative Creamery and Butter Factory – 1928

In 1928, it was apparent that the growing village needed a creamery. (Prior owners of the real estate, as early as 1883, and up through 1928 where the Creamery now stands, were Lovira and Richard Allen and Mrs. William Stimson. Edner L Hardin was the owner in 1928.) The need was soon met when “Arnold Co-operative Creamery and Butter Factory” celebrated its opening May 1, 1928. This “cooperative” business sold shares around the area; a “co-op” was born. The president of the newly formed co-op was Linn Downing. Alvah Worrell was the first manager of the creamery and butter factory. The new business was very productive until the “war years” came around. On opening day, one hundred farmers brought in cream, eggs, and chickens. A thousand pounds of butter was churned that day. The following Saturday a new record of 3900 pounds of butter was churned. Thirty-eight cases of eggs and 500 pounds of live chickens were also brought in by the farmers. However, the record was set when 5000 pounds of butter (from one day’s cream) was churned the following summer. ~ In 2021, butter that sells for \$4.59 a pound would have sold for 45 cents a pound in 1929. ~ The owners of the creamery offered a prize for the best name for their butter, which ending up being split six ways. Lewis Nansel, Mrs. George Cunningham, Vivian Will, Herbert English Jr., Guy Gunther, and Kenneth Steele had all chosen the name “Prairie Gold”. So the \$10 prize had to be split six ways. Garland Woverton had brought his cream the longest distance (41 miles) and Hans Johnson brought in the most cream. As for many people, the dry years of the 30s spelled de-

spair. Farmers were operating more with tractors, working longer hours, and spending a lot less time milking cows. The following numbers indicate why the creamery was forced to close around 1951. The creamery shipped \$52,000 worth of produce in 1930 and \$23,000 in 1932. In 1943, prices rose and they shipped \$156,000, but in 1946, it dropped to \$136,000. Small cream stations suffered as well and closed their doors also. For a while, the creamery changed methods trying to sell “pasteurized milk” for 17 cents per pound. Margarine was becoming popular at that time too selling for 25 cents a pound while a pound of butter sold for 62 cents a pound. From 1930 to 1946, Andy Nielson worked the longest stint at the creamery, first as a butter maker and then as manager his last eight years. Ed Rasmussen, Jud Schoenthal, Florence Shaw, Paul Hartman, K.R. Solt, Ab Chesley, and Paul Martin also worked at the creamery at various times through the years up to 1951.

Ab Chesley bought the Creamery building June 27, 1951, calling it “Chesley’s Dairy”, then changed it to “Chesley’s Feed and Seed.” Charlie Leach purchased it eight years later, then sold it to Eddie Waites of Tryon. By 1966, during Waites’ ownership, Tom Watson managed the feed store. When the feed store closed, it was used for a while as a Community Center. Larry Smith took ownership on November 10, 1975; it was then used as a Weight Watchers meeting area.

The building stood vacant for several years until Don and Judy Henriksen bought it circa 1982. Judy said, “It still smelled like sour milk!” Don used the back part of the old creamery building for his construction business, stating that he thought Knoeffler Honey Company used the building prior to their purchase. Judy converted the front part of the old creamery into “Corner Cuts” for her hair dressing business. Gail Reed worked at “Corner Cuts” for about a year and half. Barb Gunther worked a year at Judy’s shop and ran it herself



Courtesy photo

Lisa and Mitch Geiser stand beside the new historical marker placed on their building south of the post office.

during Judy’s maternity leave. Barb stated, “It was a large space for a two-chair salon.”

In 1988, Althea and Arvid Weist first rented the front two rooms of the creamery from Don Henriksen who continued to use the back rooms for storage. The building was transformed once again when Althea Weist turned the hair salon into “Pretty Petals” floral shop that spring. ~ When Henriksens moved, they sold the whole building to Weists, for the same price they had paid for it, \$5,000. Althea recalled a story about her sidewalk greeting sign in front of the flower shop... One Thanksgiving, the sign said, “KISS THE COOK”. Althea relates, “Bobbie Smith came in and gave me a kiss asking, ‘aren’t you the cook?’ Her husband Arvid remembers that to this day!

On July 3, 1996, the building changed hands again. Weists sold the building and the established floral business to Lisa

and Mitch Geiser. The Geisers were determined to improve the front room by transforming it into a display area and an office - consultation room, thereby enhancing the space and operation of the business. By removing walls, raising the floor level, and installing a ramp at the front entrance, the building became more accessible to patrons. The center section of the building was refurbished and used for floral arranging, designing, and space was allotted for coolers and storage. Some of the original creamery tables were repurposed for use and Lisa said, “At times when wet, the tables would still have the smell of sour milk.” More remodeling was accomplished while the Geisers kept the store open. Construction materials were removed, and a ‘new roof’ replaced a ‘fire damaged’ roof, keeping the rain and moisture out. Mitch and Lisa kept the business going for about 12½

years. While running their “Pretty Petals” business, the Geisers served the community providing floral arrangements for community events, weddings, funerals, holidays, and other special occasions. At these times, six to eight employees were required.

After closing the floral shop in February 2009, they rented the building to Roger and Shar Peterson for their bookkeeping and feed business. The Geisers shared that the building is presently being used as storage, but have plans for doing something with it in the future. The village is fortunate that Mitch and Lisa are considering the continued use of this historical building.

(Some information for this marker was taken from the book, “One Hundred Years On The South Loup” by Norene Hall Mills”. Written and prepared by Berni Crow 6/29/20.)