

# The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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## Dahlia Valley Ranch Moves Into Storefront

By Janet Larreau

Since rural Arnold resident Lisa Nelson began growing and selling flowers in 2021, her business, Dahlia Valley Ranch, has changed and grown substantially; so much, that she made the decision to move into a storefront in Hotel Custer. The official opening was on October 2.

“I have had customers ask if I had a storefront where they could shop. At the time I wasn’t sure how I could man a store and grow flowers. However, after looking further into it, I found a way to open a store and not have to be tied to it daily,” she said. “Many flower farmers sell through a farm stand or small building all the time and are successful. Opening the storefront also al-

lows me to have a place in town that can be a place for customers to pick up their flowers instead of coming to the farm, or me having to drive into town several times to deliver.”

Dahlia Valley Ranch’s flowers and products are becoming very well known in a wide area.

Last year, Lisa began selling at local farmer’s markets, including Arnold and North Platte. This year she added Broken Bow market on the square. She gained more bouquet subscriptions and started selling flowers through BrewBakers Coffeehouse & Gifts, Fresh Season’s Market in Gothenburg, and the Stapleton grocery store. She also added weddings, funerals, and other local flower deliveries. She started doing Sip ‘n Sips

this year and plans to do more next year. These are weekly events where a small group of a dozen or so bring their favorite drink and for \$25.00 they can walk through and cut their own flowers and arrange them on the farm.

A new, very popular product is Sola Wood Flowers. The flowers are made from the Shola Tree grown in Asia and the core is used to make the flowers. Lisa receives the flowers already formed and then dyes them whatever color she wants, adds stems, and then arranges them. She said they are a great alternative to fresh flowers because they last for years, with no maintenance required. Just recently, she added photos that she has taken of her flowers, and they are for sale in the shop, too.



Lisa Nelson, owner of Dahlia Valley Ranch, has expanded her business to include a storefront in Hotel Custer. - Debbie Connelly photo

In the near future, Lisa will have local producers bringing their products into the shop to sell, also. Things to expect are local honey, baked goods, and produce. Lisa will still

offer weekly flower CSA’s (flower subscriptions) and local deliveries.

The downtown shop is open Monday through Saturday, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and has a

self-serve, honor system. Customers are able to grab what they need and pay via Venmo, check, or cash. Lisa’s phone number is available if there are ever any issues.



Nebraska Humanities speakers Gary Zalud and Dan Holtz will be at Arnold Schools on October 18.

## Public Invited to Hear Humanities Speakers October 18 at School

Nebraska Humanities Speakers Gary Zalud and Dan Holtz will present the program “Heroism on the Plains: Story Songs of Courage and Determination from Improbable People and Places” October 18 at Arnold Public Schools. The hour-long program will be open to the public starting at 10:00 a.m.

Accompanied by guitar and harmonica, Zalud and Holtz celebrate and commemorate people, places, and events in Nebraska history through original songs and the

stories and background behind them. The songs’ subjects range from an African-American, born a slave, who came to have the largest landholding in early-day Nebraska; to a legendary sod house photographer; to a tribute to Susan LaFlesche Picotte, the first Native American woman to become a medical doctor; to a native Nebraskan who was the only Japanese American to fly in bombing missions over Tokyo in World War II; and more.

Everyone is invited.



Members of the Leadership Custer County program recently took a tour of duplexes that are going up in town, along with other locations that covered topics they are learning about. - Courtesy photo

## The Neighborly Thing to Do

### Familiar team and wagon are something to admire again

By Janet Larreau

As you drive around the streets of Arnold, the ornamental team and wagon in Mick Preston’s front yard could be considered a landmark of sorts. It’s older than you think. The team came first and the wagon was hooked on in the late 70s or early 80s. It’s gone through some hard times, but this summer it’s as good as new again thanks to a neighborly deed.

“Wayne started to build the wagon with a couple of wheels, but that’s about

as far as it got. Then he spotted this wagon at a business that sold lawn ornaments. He bought it and brought it home,” said Mick.

As the years went by, the wagon began to rot. Wayne set out to redo it, taking it apart, cutting out all the parts for a pattern, and sawing all the new parts. He then became ill and couldn’t finish it. Sadly, he passed away on New Years Eve, 2015. Wade finished the job for his dad.

After several coats of paint that Mick put on, the wagon lasted a pret-

ty long time, but then it started to rot again. A potted geranium and the cute fisherman sitting in the bed of the wagon didn’t help any.

“Wayne had wanted it and he got it. There’s a sentimental feeling there. I didn’t want it to be gone,” said Mick. “I knew my neighbor Tony Hall was pretty good at carpentry, so I asked him to fix it. He graciously said he would, being the good guy that he is.”

Working nights and weekends, Tony did exactly the same thing that was

done in 2015 and recreated the wagon.

“Tony said it was quite a puzzle when he took it apart. He put on more coats of sealant and it looks better than it did when it was brand new. I paid him, but not nearly enough for all the work he went to,” said Mick. “Wayne used to store the wagon in the garage in the winter, but since he passed it has just sat outside. Tony has offered to be the new wagon caretaker. I’m very fortunate to have him as a neighbor.”



Mick Preston is thankful for her good neighbor, Tony Hall, after he made her worn out ornamental wagon better than new again. - Debbie Connelly photo

## Arnold Offers Program Participants the Opportunity to Learn

With the goal of expanding their knowledge about community development and several other topics they are studying, 12 participants of the Custer County Leadership Program stopped in Arnold on September 25.

Arnold Economic Development Director Cheryl Carson welcomed the group at the AEDC office, with several topics lined out for discussion.

Arnold Area Historical Museum committee members Renee Bubak and Holly Remund gave a slideshow presentation on the Cornerstone project, while speaking about the committee’s goal of renovating Archie’s Cafe to create a museum.

BrewBakers owner Jody Carlson was also there. She had previously been a panelist for the leadership program and spoke about her experience as an entrepreneur and starting a business. The group had the opportunity to see her renovated building, along with the future site of the museum, and the duplexes that are being constructed in Arnold.

Carson, who coordinated

the visit, took the group to the school to specifically talk about the school’s internship program that partners students with businesses. Both Joel Morgan and Ashley Nansel spoke and students gave their input on the experience. Science teacher Melissa Sandager talked about the greenhouse project, and Clay Mohr spoke about schoolhouse graphics.

The leadership program’s goal is building our region by developing leaders, creating connections, growing awareness, and stimulating involvement. Topics the group covers are: Leadership, Identification of Critical Challenges & Opportunities, Networking, State & Local Government, Risk Management, Public Relations & Media, Social Issues, Business & Economic Development, Educational Opportunities, and Healthcare Opportunities.

Arnold was one of several stops the group made in Custer County towns that day at the request of one of the members.