

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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Arnold Is Four-Peat One-Act State Champion

Team brings home Best Actress, multiple acting awards

By Amanda Wehnes

Did you hear? The town of Avonlea, uh, I mean, Arnold is buzzing with the news that Arnold High School's one act team is now four-time consecutive state champions in Class D2 Play Production!

Last Wednesday, the cast and crew, led by directors Lana Cool and Holly Remund, trekked up to Norfolk to the Johnny Carson Theater to compete for the fifth consecutive year in the play production championship competition. Their production of “Anne of Green Gables” wooed the judges and audience alike and brought home the highest accolade a team can receive, as well as junior Ella Cool earning her second consecutive Outstanding Female Performer award.

“What makes it so fun is the team around it. Really the big prize is the state championship - this is kinda the cherry on top,” said Ella. “The team this year was so supportive and everyone had so much fun together. I was overwhelmed with the support.”

Playing the title character, Anne Shirley, Ella became only the eighth actress to receive this award more than once in NSAA history. Her sister Reagan Cool was the award recipient in 2021 and Colbi Smith was the Outstanding Male Performer in 2020, so this is the fourth straight year an Arnold performer has taken home the top individual accolade.

“They gave their best performance of the year (at state),” said Lana. “We are just so stinking excited! And I am proud of these darling kids.”

And the judge's comments on the ballots agreed. One judge wrote, “I do not know when I had such an emotional

“(The play) fit our kids so well. You find a piece where everyone can show their talents.”

- Head One-Act Coach Lana Cool after winning the state championship

connection with a cast and their story.” Another judge said, “Such a polished and well-timed show. This was beautifully staged from start to finish.”

The third judge had nothing but praise as well, “I can see how hard you have all worked. I don't want this performance to be done!”

But when the show was finished and the ballots tallied, Arnold was the strong winner, beating runner-up St. Mary's by three points, and was one point off a perfect score. Two of the three judges ranked Arnold in first place (with perfect scores). The third judge ranked them second and awarded them one point off perfect.

Preparation for the season, which is only about two months long, begins way before auditions and set building. Lana starts reading scripts early in the summer to find the perfect piece to fit her cast. When she chose “Anne of Green Gables” this year, she knew it was a bold choice because it isn't a play that usually wins competitions.

“But it fit our kids so well,” she said. “You take a look at your kids and try to find a piece where everyone can show their talents and do their thing on the stage. And this checked all the boxes.”

Lana mixed both traditional theater with musical aspects to tell the story



With near perfect performances by all cast members of Arnold's one-act play, “Anne of Green Gables,” Ella Cool (center) brought home the Best Actress award from the state competition. Playing Anne, Ella is only the eighth actress to receive this award more than once in NSAA history. - Jessica Tickle photo

of Anne Shirley, a spirited orphan with freckles and red hair, who comes to live in the little town of Avonlea. Her quirkiness and zest for life quickly turn the strangers in town into

friends, and give those around her hope.

After picking the script, it is up to the performers to bring the words on the page alive. Lana gushed about her team and their

ability to not only perform as individuals, but to work as a team and to make each step of the process fun.

“This group of kids was the most delightful, fun,

engaged, coachable, and lovely group of students,” she said. “This is the most fun team I've ever had. You can tell on the stage

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Paying It Forward

By Janet Larreau

Waking up early on Thursday morning, November 30, Texas residents “Captain Dale,” his daughter, and dog Bandit pulled up to *The Sentinel* office to grab the recent issue and find the hidden clue for opening day of the 2023 holiday aardvark hunt in Arnold. The clue read: “Nebraska's most abundant resource – types of architectural structures in the world – no matter where you go.”

Following the rule of only hunting on public property, the part-time residents found themselves at Old Mill Park, where the seasoned hunting dog sniffed out the small laminated aardvark on the top of the bridge's railing. Standing on his hind legs, Bandit pointed to the aardvark.

“He smelled my scent,” said Tiff Varney, who came up with the idea



Bandit - a hunting dog from Texas - focuses in on the laminated image of the illusive aardvark on November 30 on opening day of aardvark hunting season in Arnold. Due to his exceptional hunting skills, Bandit, who was an official permit holder, left the aardvark for someone else to find. - Courtesy photo

of the fun community aardvark hunt several years ago.

Bandit, who was an official permit holder, and his human companions decided to leave the aardvark there and pay it forward so a local permit holder could find it and be awarded the \$200.00 bounty.

Days later, on Sunday, December 3, local permit holder Becky Dailley, who had searched for days on public property, went to the same spot and claimed the prize. She decided to pay it forward by helping others in need.

Forty-five hunting permits were sold for

the season totaling \$225.00. That money was paid forward to Arnold Public Schools for the greenhouse project.

The holiday hunt was sponsored by Tiff Varney, Pinnacle Bank, Arnold Insurance Agency, and First State Insurance.

Nothing Short of a Miracle Student-Led Food Drive Exceeds Goal



National Honor Society members met a higher than normal goal of food items, plus cash from a teacher's challenge, during their annual drive for Arnold's food pantry. - APS photo

Arnold's food pantry shelves were re-filled for the Christmas season thanks to a school-wide food drive that exceeded anyone's expectations.

“This year's food drive was one of the closest to a miracle that I've seen,” said National Honor Society sponsor Debby Moninger. “I accidentally made the goal much higher than we usually would. Last year's goal was 577 items, or three items per student; this year I set it at 1,000 items. I kept telling everyone that it would all work out and miraculously, it did. We actually exceeded the goal.”

The student non-perishable items drive was chaired by NHS member Ella Cool, and co-chair Gracie Neth focused on the teacher challenge of

raising \$500.00 cash that was either donated by APS staff or donated for the bake sale items.

“The girls decided a school-wide goal would be best, rather than class competitions, because they knew from the pre-drive interview that currently, there is a higher than normal need for food items. We didn't want any students who couldn't afford to contribute to feel awkward,” said Mrs. Moninger.

The drive was held Monday, November 27 through Friday, December 1. It started slow, but really took off towards the end of the week. The community supported the school and the Christmas program Thursday night

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