

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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Moving Forward

Construction Phases Begin on Cornerstone Project

By Janet Larreau

Third in a series on the Arnold Area Historical Museum project.

Brick by brick and rafter by rafter, the Arnold Area Historical Committee has set out to bring the old Archie's Cafe building back to usefulness as a museum. In this third part of the series, the focus will be on the actual c. 1914 structure that has sadly decayed in the 40-plus years that it has sat empty. The first step in the process was determining if the building could or should be saved.

“We felt it was important to take the extra step to have a structural engineer evaluate the building for both safety issues and to give direction as to the order of the work that needs to be completed,” said Cornerstone Campaign Project Leader Renee Bubak.

Overall, the evaluation completed on August 16, 2023, by Kevin Petross of Miller & Associates Consulting Engineers, PC, out of Kearney was positive. The report indicated that the building is sound enough and can safely be renovated to last for another 100 years. The biggest areas of concern that had already been identified were reinforcing of the west and north exterior brick walls in the basement to give stability and support and addressing the replacement of rotten rafters on the west end of the building.

The evaluation also concluded that a great deal of masonry work will be

needed, including filling in holes and tuck-pointing.

“The masonry work was the hardest, most challenging area for us to find someone to even come and give us an estimate. It is critical in several aspects and a skilled area that is harder to come by these days; however, we were referred to a seasoned, highly knowledgeable mason from North Platte who has experience in restoring building and is willing to start by the first of the year,” said Bubak.

Thanks to committee member Justin Strasburg, who lined up a clean-up crew with committee member Rick Peterson helping as well, the basement is prepared for the next phase of work to get started. This difficult and dirty job happened on October 10, 2023, when the crew borrowed Rich Hornung's telehandler and cleaned out at least four old water heaters, the larger furnace, and a slew of rubble and metal. Three truck loads ended up being hauled to the dump. They also borrowed Ron Cool's truck, filled it with iron, and donated it to Arnold's American Legion Post for their fund.

“Justin's architectural engineering background and construction experience is vital to the success of this project in both his understanding of what contractors are proposing, as well as his ability to handle the unique tasks that his building requires,” said Bubak. “Shoring up the west end of the roof and raising an I-beam to better car-



A volunteer clean-up crew, lined up by Arnold Area Historical Museum Committee member Justin Strasburg, cleaned out the basement of the old Archie's Cafe building. Three truckloads of rubble were hauled to the dump, and a truckload of iron was donated to American Legion Post 130 for their building fund. - Nicole Badgley photos

ry the load was work he completed independently. This was a necessary step for worker safety and improved water runoff.”

Building committee members met on-site with Arnie Albrecht of Albrecht Masonry Construction, LLC, out of North Platte, and Dalton Greeley of Greeley Construction, out of Sutherland, in the latter part of November. Definitive steps were laid out for the restoration of the walls of the cornerstone building.

One more full day's work was scheduled in mid-December, as the clean-up crew set about the task of removing the interior brick walls at the basement level in the west half of the building. Bricks were stacked to be repurposed in the restoration. Since the chimney had stability issues, it was also taken down. In addition, some dirt work was completed to prepare for footers to be poured.

Efforts to ensure the structural integrity will first involve the pouring of the footers on the interior of the west and north brick walls. Block walls will be built up to the level of the existing floor. Within the block walls and drilled into the footings, there will be rebar every four feet and poured cement to provide stability. In addition, footers will be poured and interior block walls built that the main floor joists will rest on.

“Arnie Albrecht has stressed that the work must begin immediately, as the building is structurally compromised until



Justin Strasburg (left) discusses the removal of interior brick walls at the basement level of the Archie's building with a masonry contractor. Decisions were also made about where footers would be placed and how block walls will take their place.

we can get the basement bricks stabilized with the cement block wall,” said Peterson.

Once these immediate structural concerns are addressed, the long process of interior and exterior tuck-pointing will proceed. Meanwhile, local contractor Brent Urbanovsky will be ordering prefabricated trusses to replace the rafters on the far west end of the building from where the chimney stood. Plans for the rafter work will hopefully take place as early as late spring, followed by the installation of a completely new roof and gutters.

Strasburg has suggested that a fully enclosed building by the fall of 2024 would be a realistic goal.

Funds are available for the initial stages of the renovation process and

the committee will be able to use several businesses in our surrounding area to complete most of the necessary work, along with volunteers where appropriate. However, the museum funding campaign is still seeking contributions to meet its overall renovation goal.

The fourth part of the series will focus on how the committee is recording stories and recollections about Arnold from people who have lived here for years and gathering artifacts for the museum.

The Arnold Area Historical Museum is organized under the Arnold Area Historical Society as a 501(c)3 entity. For additional information contact AAHS President, Renee Bubak or email arnoldareahistoricalmuseum@gmail.com.

“Justin Strasburg's architectural engineering background and construction experience is vital to the success of this project.”

Cornerstone Campaign Project Leader Renee Bubak

Charitable contributions can be made online at www.nebcommfound.org/give/arnold-community-fund-designated-to-the-arnold-area-museum-account or mailed to Arnold Area Historical Society at P.O. Box 241, Arnold NE 69120 or delivered to First State Insurance in Arnold.

Chuck-A-Duck Raises Money for TeamMates



Jason Wehnes, left, program coordinator for the Arnold Chapter of Teammates, poses with Tylen Schacher during halftime of the basketball game where Tylen won a football autographed by Tom Osborne. Tylen won the Chuck-A-Duck contest by throwing his rubber duck closest to the center of the target. - Amanda Wehnes photo

Schacher Is Grand Prize Winner

By Amanda Wehnes

Fans attending the basketball games against Medicine Valley on Dec. 15 were treated to a great holiday stress reliever while helping raise money for the The Arnold Chapter of Teammates Mentoring during their annual Chuck-A-Duck fundraiser.

More than 160 miniature rubber duckies, some complete with squeakers, were sold for fans to throw at a giant target in the middle of the gym floor during halftime of the boys' game. The duck chucker who landed their yellow plastic fowl closest to the center of the target got to take home a football autographed by former Husker Head Coach Tom Osborne.

Tylen Schacher, an Ar-

nold 8th grader, was the winner of the grand prize after his duck bounced another duck away from the center point.

Jason Wehnes, the program coordinator of the Arnold Chapter, was pleased with the outcome, especially being able to raise funds right before the holidays.

“I really appreciate all the contributions we received, as it provides a tremendous opportunity for the youth of Arnold,” he said.

The flying ducks brought in more than \$250.00 to help the chapter pay for administrative fees such as background checks for new mentors, insurance, and advertising; as well as to pay for supplies for events for mentors and mentees.

Teammates Mentor-

ing started in 1991 as the brainchild of Tom Osborne and his wife Nancy, with 22 Husker football players and 22 middle school students in Lincoln. The Osbornes wanted to create a culture of hope for young students to help them go on to positively impact the world through a mentoring relationship.

The Arnold Chapter has been active for more than 10 years, and is in the re-growth phase after taking a two-year pause during COVID.

According to Jason, the biggest challenge in rebuilding the program has been finding those willing to participate - both adults and students.

“We currently have eight or nine mentor/mentee pairs, but we have room for more,” he said. “We need adults in the community and students in the school to sign up.”

Mentor/mentee pairs meet once a week at the school to talk, play games, cook or bake, do crafts, or eat lunch. This time together builds a positive and healthy relationship between the mentor and mentee.

Mentees interested in joining the program should talk to Mr. Wehnes at the school. Students must be in grades 6-12 to participate.

Adults wanting to join must be 18 or older, be able to pass a background check, and be committed to meeting with their mentee once a week at the school. All meetings must be held at the school during school hours.

For more information about the program, contact Jason or any board member. The current board members include Christie Rogers, Ashley Nansel, Amanda Wehnes, and Sarah Phelps.