

# The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024

CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

(USPS 032480)

SINGLE COPY: 75 CENTS

VOLUME 107, NUMBER 38

## The Story Behind “Ordinary Angels”

Casting Director has connection to Arnold

By Janet Larreau

Hilary Swank will appear on the Rialto Theatre's big screen in March in the movie “Ordinary Angels.” Her starring role in the film is directly connected to a former Arnold resident who is now part of the movie industry in Hollywood.

“Ordinary Angels” was a fun project to work on. It's not every day that you get to cast two-time Oscar-winning Hilary Swank in a movie, which was both inspiring, but also a bit unbelievable,” said Anthony Kraus, who with his business partner Jill Anthony Thomas, were casting directors. “Her name was one of the first ideas we had for the role. We didn't think we could get her, and we're so glad the story spoke to her, allowing her to bring this incredible, flawed, ordinary hero to life. The most challenging part of this casting process was casting young actors for the daughters, Ashley and Michelle, which required an international search and countless audition sessions. This was done during COVID, so it was almost entirely done over Zoom with kid actors

from all over Canada and the U.S.”

Kraus, who is a Los Angeles resident, was born in Callaway in 1985, and his family lived in Arnold from 1979 to 1989. His siblings, Mary Jo, Kevin, and Theresa, attended elementary school in Arnold where his father, Bill, was a teacher and high school coach while his mom, Patti, stayed home with the kids and helped watch other family's kids during the school year. The family moved to Dunning in 1989 when both parents got jobs in the Sandhills school system. That's where Kraus started kindergarten.

“I have so many memories of spending time in Arnold,” said Kraus. “We lived across the street from the tennis courts and baseball field. So many summers were spent there, along with many adventures in the park and riding our bikes around town with my siblings. We remained very close with Penny (Allen) and her family after moving. Her kids were similar in age to my siblings and me, so anytime Arnold and Sandhills played each other in sports, we would all spend extra time together. One summer, I re-



“Ordinary Angels” will be shown at the Rialto the last two weekends in March.

member coming back to Arnold so we could paint our house and get it ready to sell, and my favorite part was getting to go dive in the community pool at the end of the day.”

A horse-obsessed kid, he said he loved it when Penny and her family would take him riding when he would visit in the summer. Later, when he was closer to junior high age, he spent a couple summers living in Arnold with Penny while doing 4-H and showing horses.

After finishing junior high at Sandhills, the family moved to Hooper, Nebraska, where Kraus graduated from Logan View High School in 2003.

He spent a year at Doane College before moving to Los Angeles to pursue a dream of working in entertainment. He started attending the L.A. Film School and graduated from there in 2005.

While still attending the L.A. Film School, he got an internship in a casting office working for someone to whom one of his friends introduced him. He started spending more time there at the casting office than he did at school and was immediately hooked. When he graduated, they hired him as an assistant, and he started working his way up. The first movies he worked on were “Scary Movie 4,” an Adam Sandler movie called “Click,” and “Bring It On 3.”

Now a casting director, Kraus is currently a member of the Casting Society of America (CSA) and also a proud Teamsters union member. He's now casting with his business partner, with whom he has worked with the past seven years. They are an independent casting duo and can work for any studio or entity and have recently completed TV and film projects for Lionsgate, Apple TV, ABC, Netflix, and Disney Channel.

“Casting is such an exciting, but also long process,” he said. “After writers and directors, we're often the first crew hired when a project gets a green light or approved to go into production. We are initially hired to make



Now an L.A. resident, Anthony Kraus is enjoying a career as a casting director in Hollywood.

lists of actors that could potentially take the leading roles, and then later in the process, we hold all auditions for every speaking part. We also work with location casting directors if projects are shooting in another city to ensure they can find local actors to fill the roles. Casting an actor is an art form and can vary from making offers to A-list stars to auditioning for one-line parts. In general, for each role, we start with a list of options, and with the producers, writers and directors help, we make our top selections to present to the studio or network for their approval.”

Kraus does get “star struck.”

“There is a reason stars are stars. They are charming and seem larger than life, especially in person,” he said. “On the flip side, living in L.A., you can sometimes even run into them at the grocery store

“I have so many memories of spending time in Arnold... So many summers were spent there, along with many adventures in the park and riding our bikes around town with my siblings.”

Anthony Kraus, Casting Director for “Ordinary Angels”

or see them out to eat. They're just normal people. Once, I ran into Julia Roberts at an Oscar party, and I was stunned when I saw her standing in line at the bar.”

Kraus was involved in casting “Jesus Revolution,” which came out in theaters last year, and they just wrapped films called “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever” and “The Unbreakable Boy,” both will coming to theaters soon. Some of his recent favorite projects that he has worked on have been TV projects, including Apple TV's “LOOT,” ABC's “Not Dead Yet,” Netflix's “Unstable,” and Disney Channel's “The Villains of Valley View.”

With his partner, he has been nominated for three Artios Awards (Casting Society of America's annual recognition of excellence in casting) and have won in the Outstanding Achievement in Casting in a Short Form Series for a show called “Maple-See Story Behind “Angels”

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Natalie G'Schwind was awarded a scholarship to attend the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada. - Courtesy photo

## Turns Out She's a Poet G'Schwind attends national gathering

Natalie G'Schwind has been writing poetry her whole life, but didn't really know it was poetry that she was writing until college, when she minored in creative writing. Her poetry caught the attention of the 2024 Della Johns Scholarship committee. The scholarship, intended for young women who recite or write cowboy poetry, gave Natalie the chance to attend the 39th Annual National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada.

Natalie writes “free verse” poetry, which is different from the more traditional cowboy poetry in that it doesn't have the strong rhyme and

rhythm. At Elko, Natalie performed three times and read some of her original work.

“It was a great opportunity to meet many well known artists and some new artists. The folks at the Western Folk Heritage Center are trying to promote the next generation of young artists,” she said.

Last Fall, Natalie completed her first book composed solely of her own work called “Bays and Prairies.” Her poetry focuses on ranch life in the Sandhills and her experience growing up on a ranch around Callaway. She currently lives in Halsey, Nebraska,

where she makes her living managing Sandhills grasslands.

She has had the honor to contribute poems to Sally Harper Bates' “Facing West: Voices of Western Women” and Betty Lynne McCarthy's “Real: A Reader of Poetry.”

First produced in 1985 by a small group of folklorists and poets, the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering has grown into a national and international happening. Over the course of a week, the Gathering features more than 40 artists and dozens of events in seven Elko venues.



## Chili Cook-Off Is March 2

Six teams will be vying for the title of “Best Chili” and other prizes this Saturday, March 2, at the 35th Annual Chili Cook-Off. The chamber-sponsored event will be held at the Arnold Community Center, with food and entertainment for everyone.

Serving of contestants' chili, potato, and chicken noodle soup will be from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., and St. Agnes Church will be selling pies for dessert.

B.J. Jamison Music will be entertaining the crowd from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. The awards program will start at 7:00 p.m.

A free cornhole tournament will be held for the cook-off contestants while their chili cooks.

Taylor Snyder and Debbie Connelly are organizers of the event.

## Last Call for Alumni News Letters

A.H.S. alums are encouraged to submit letters for the 2024 edition of *The Alumni News*. Very few letters had been received by the 26th. The deadline will be moved up to March 10, giving everyone a bit more time to submit.

Letters can be e-mailed to [arnoldsentinel@gpcom.net](mailto:arnoldsentinel@gpcom.net) with the subject line “Alumni Letter,” or mailed to the Arnold Alumni Association, PO Box 121, Arnold NE 69120.

## 26 Arnold Students Compete at Inter-High Day

By Gracie Neth, Sentinel Intern

NORTH PLATTE: Twenty-six Arnold High School students competed at Inter-High Day at Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte on February 22. Three students medaled in four categories.

Rio Remund won first place in two categories, Personal Finance and Introduction to Business. Rachel Leetch also won 1st place in Prose Writing.

Competitors who won 1st place won a \$500.00 scholarship and a free 3-credit hour summer class. Danah Baldwin placed 2nd in Dramatic Arts and Theater (11-12). Second and third place winners also received a free 3-credit hour class from Mid-Plains Community College.

Arnold won second place

in Division III in the team sweepstakes. Mid-Plains split up the divisions based on school size.

Inter-High day is a competition where schools bring students to compete in a test in various subjects. These subjects range from Art and Biological Sciences to Criminal Justice and Welding. Most tests are multiple choice, however some are more interactive. Prose and Poetry Writing competitors are given prompts, then using paper and pencil, write a short story or poem based on it. Art and Criminal Justice have an interactive portion - drawing a mannequin and solving a ‘crime’ - and a multiple choice test. Those who competed in the Welding and Diesel Mechanic categories went to a different building and took the test in a more hands-on manner.



Three Arnold students medaled at Inter-High Day at Mid-Plains Community College on February 22. Pictured from left: Rachel Leetch, first place in Prose Writing; Danah Baldwin, second place in Dramatic Arts and Theater; and Rio Remund, first place in Personal Finance and Introduction to Business. - APS Photo