

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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The Best Christmas Present Ever

Volunteers answer the call to help put up Lloyd German’s display

By Janet Larreau

Arnold resident Lloyd German has been putting up Christmas decorations for 29 years now.

“The way I remember is that I have a grandson that is turning 30 this year, and he was the reason. We started out with one trinket, and it turned into this,” said Lloyd, who was on the phone and most likely motioning at his myriad of lawn decorations.

Over the years, Lloyd’s decorations have come from all directions...Des Moines, Iowa; Omaha, Burwell, and Chadron and have even made short trips to his yard from other locations in Arnold. Being one of the town’s biggest elves, it’s no surprise to find Lloyd in his garage, tinkering around with Rudolph and his red nose that’s supposed to light up.

The lights and decorations usually cover a bare minimum of a half an acre, but this year was different because Lloyd was out of commission.

“I was being clumsy and not paying attention, fell, and my right shoulder felt the full brunt of it,” said Lloyd, who underwent shoulder surgery on November 13 – just days before the season of decorating should have begun. “That hurt bad. It hurt a heck of a lot more than my shoulder did when I thought there would be no decorations.”



All bundled up for hours of work ahead of them, a large group of volunteers surround Lloyd German in his yard on Saturday, November 30, after word got out that Lloyd wouldn’t be able to put out his large outdoor display of Christmas decorations this year due to an injury. - Courtesy photo

Meanwhile, Casey and Nicole Cozad, who live nearby and attend the same church, heard the news of Lloyd’s surgery. Nicole said they knew if the decorating was going to get done, somebody had to do it for him. Volunteers would be needed. Their son, Braxton, told his classmates, and Nicole asked her friends who had more social media contacts to put the word out in the community.

By Saturday morning at about 11:00, over 40 volunteers of all ages were standing in Lloyd and

wife Marge’s yard, from kids to grandpas and grandmas.

“It was overwhelming. We didn’t expect that many to show up, but it’s Arnold. People show up for their neighbors,” said Nicole.

With all the volunteers and an unknown to do list, things were a bit unorganized at first.

“We went into the garage where it’s just filled with decorations,” said Nicole. “Pastor Irv suggested that we stop for a minute and pray, and after that, just a few of us went into the

garage. At first, Lloyd was in the garage, but then we put Marge in the garage and Lloyd in a chair out on the lawn. Lloyd would say, ‘Penguins this side and that over there,’ and everything was where it needed to be.”

After everyone stopped to eat some donated food, a smaller group stayed to hook up all of the lights, finishing up around 4:00 p.m.

Among the decorations that were put in place that day were two jumping reindeer and a train – gifts from the late Bob

Forrester, who was also well known for his love of everything Christmas.

“I fell in love with the reindeer when I first came here,” said Lloyd, a now retired Biology teacher, coach, and railroad worker. “When Bob called me one day and asked if I would take them, I said, you bet! I really wanted to get the train out there. Bob and I were just friends. I have a picture of us beside the train. I think it meant something to him. That train occupies a big spot in my heart.”

The overwhelming

“That hurt bad. That hurt a heck of a lot more than my shoulder when I thought there wouldn’t be any decorations this year.”

- Lloyd German, after injuring his shoulder right before the holidays

show of support that day touched both Lloyd and Marge deeply. Lloyd described it as “the best Christmas present ever.”

“I’ve always thought of them as my lights, but after last Saturday, those are the community’s lights in my yard. I really had no idea how much they were enjoyed until this year,” said Lloyd, who with a wink added, “And Mom says, people sure are welcome to help next year!”

Christmas Concerts Scheduled

Pre-K through 5th grades will present their Christmas concert, Thursday, December 12, at 7:00 p.m., in the school auditorium.

The grades 6-12 Christmas concert is set for Monday, December 16, at 7:00 pm.

The public is invited to enjoy both concerts, directed by Tonya Welch.

Christmas Around Town Kicks Off the Season of Joy

Residents and out-of-towners turned out for Chamber’s Annual Christmas Around Town on Wednesday, December 4. Main street was blocked off, as people supported both small town businesses and vendors. Surrounded by festive decorations, Santa heard 120 kids’ wishes and handed out candy canes at Koubek Gardens, while young and old were lining up to take hayrack rides around town. No one went hungry, as there were tasty treats and food around every corner:



Iconic Red Kettle

Rotarians (from left) Lana Day, Laura Garrison, and Kelli Blevins happily ring the bells at the Salvation Army’s big red kettle during Christmas Around Town activities on December 4. Plenty of people donated to this great cause, as the downtown sidewalks were busy. - Debbie Connelly photo



Very First Visit

At almost two-months-old, baby Oakley has her first visit with Santa Claus at Koubek Gardens during Christmas Around Town. Oakley is the daughter of Austin Murphy and Jayden Hanna. - Jessica Tickle photo



New Trend Comes to Town

Sixth grader Ruby Hagler takes a seat to have vendor Shandell Shelton apply a permanent bracelet to her wrist. Both kids and adults stood in line at Four County Boutique to get the newest pop culture trend. - Debbie Connelly photo