



# The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

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## Near Perfect

High score earns A.H.S. one-act team fifth consecutive state championship title

By Janet Larreau

On December 11, Arnold’s Play Production team raised the state championship trophy in Class D2 for the fifth consecutive year and made NSAA history. Performing “Marching On” in the Johnny Carson Theater in Norfolk, the team scored 179 out of a possible 180 points and received a first place nod from all three of the judges.

“It’s very difficult to get all firsts,” said Lana Cool, who has served as the team’s head coach for the last seven years and was awarded her own mini state championship plaque that day. “They just performed beautifully, and the judges loved it. It’s such an honor to score that high. We received another standing ovation. I’ve never seen that happen at state. It’s the subject matter. It’s such an important story. It’s just really hard not to cheer for these young women who put their lives on the line to change history.”

During the 2024 season, Arnold’s actors worked towards bringing the play “Marching On” to life, exploring the theme of perseverance and resilience in the face of adversity, as a group of young women, led by a Nebras-

ka native, fought for the right to vote. The judges were moved, and in one of their notes described the play as “emotionally touching,” “humorous,” and “full circle.”

“I can’t imagine a team in the whole state that works so hard. They put in as many hours as volleyball or basketball,” said volunteer coach Tatum Cool, who was following the stats of how other teams were scoring at state in all classes. Tatum developed her love for play production in high school, while Arnold was in the process of building a strong program.

Another one of the Cool girls, Reagan, won best actress at state in 2021, helping lead Arnold to that championship.

On Wednesday, the youngest Cool girl, Ella, won best actress for the third straight year. She is the first person in Class D2 to achieve that since the inception of NSAA Play Production in the 1970s, and she’s only the fourth person to earn three best actress titles in a row in all classes. Lana said it is actually rare for a student to get it two times in a row.

With five consecutive state championships, Arnold is now amongst only four Nebraska schools that have ever won this



Arnold High’s one-act team celebrates their fifth consecutive state championship, December 11th, at the Johnny Carson Theater in Norfolk. - Jessica Tickle photo

## NSAA State Play Production Acting Awards

Danah Baldwin - Paxton Bierman - Josie Christensen  
Ella Cool - Realta Leach - Anna Tullis - Ivy Tullis  
Coach: Lana Cool  
Assistant coaches: Holly Remund and Jason Wehnes  
Vol. Coach: Tatum Cool

many consecutive awards in all classes since the 1970s, and currently has the longest running streak.

Both Lana and Tatum said Arnold’s technical crew was incredible this year and needed very little direction – they just “got it.”

“We have the most technical aspects,” said Tatum. “It’s more com-

plex than any other show in D2. Our set might take more to set up and take down, and we have 33 music and sound effects. We have six people at all times on spotlights and main stage lights.”  
Something Arnold is known for – from leads to ensemble – is there are no weak links.

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Senior Ella Cool made NSAA history, when she received her third Best Actress Play Production award. - Jessica Tickle photo

## All that jazz...

With the stage glittering, preschool through 5th grade students put on quite a show on December 12, when they presented “Merry Christmas and All That Jazz” in the school auditorium.

The program line-up, directed by Tonya Welch, showcased singers and performers, and fun stories performed by groups such as Elf Force One and the Antler Avengers. Other highlights were the choir singing “You’re a Mean One Mr. Grinch” and three performances by the 5th grade band, including “A Mozart Melody.”



Fifth grader Cora Leetch sings, “Christmas Tree Farm,” with classmates, from left, Emery Schacher, Kate Kulp, Aubrey Corbin, and Klara Baldwin, surrounding her.



Elf emcees Uriah Schweitzer, as Kringle, and Bridger Teahon, as Kris.



Parker Neth sings “I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas.”

## Village Board Reorganizes

The Arnold Village Board of Trustees reorganized for the coming year at their December 9 meeting. The oath of office was administered to newly appointed member Austin Snyder and to the newly re-elected member, Glen Bowers. Zach Hagler was elected chairman, who then appointed the following trustees to various committees: Donnell DeLosh and Jason Jenkins, General (community center, parks, and swimming pool); Bowers and DeLosh, Streets; Bowers and Hagler, Water & Sewer; Jenkins and Austin Snyder, Electric; and Hagler and Snyder, Solid Waste. Village Clerk Patricia Lamberty was appointed interim project coordinator.

During the agenda item of dogs, Patricia Lamberty said that finding an abandoned dog that the Village picked up on November 11 has been a learning lesson, and gave an update on how Sal Hilderbrant of Sal’s Dog Grooming and others helped with free services and donations before the

dog was rescued. Discussion was held on fees for re-homing a dog and fees the adoptee will need to pay. A revised agreement with Sal Hilderbrant will be on the January 13 agenda.

During the monthly update report, it was noted that a snow fence was installed at the north end of town, the fire pits at the ARA were cleaned out, the new cord for the ARA fountain was tested and worked, the fountains have been removed for the winter, and an inventory of the picnic tables/benches was completed. They will be repaired and fixed during the winter.

## Aardvark Clue Inside...

Tiff Varney has been out and about and has hidden the aardvark somewhere on public property for the Christmas holiday hunt. The lucky finder will receive a prize of \$200.00 in Chamber Bucks. No permit is required.

The clue is hidden somewhere in this issue. Good luck to everyone.