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Decorating Fun

Four-H member Marianne Zuniga tries her hand at cake decorating, Thursday at Finch Memorial Library. The activity - held during National Library Week - was planned to raise people's awareness of the library's 125 character cake pans that are available to the public. On Friday, everyone was invited to stop by to eat a piece of cake decorated by the kids. (Jessica Tickle photo)

Mezzanine Discussed at Village Board Meeting

The community center's mezzanine and what it can be used for was one of the topics of discussion at the April 11 Village Board meeting.

In the past, the school and organizations were told by the board that the mezzanine was not built to withstand activities such as aerobics classes and youth wrestling. Since the community center was built, this upper area has only been used for storage. The board's main concern, based on written communication with consulting engineers Miller & Associates and the builder, Chief Construction, was that the weight of people and activities could cause cracking in the ceilings below.

After doing some research and consulting with two architects, Clay Mohr attended the meeting to update the board on his findings. Mohr, who represented the school with Principal Joel Morgan, said the mezzanine can in fact be used for activities, although it was not designed to be a weight room.

"It was the intent for (the mezzanine) to be used, and everything has been built to specs. Neither (architect) said it should be an issue," said Mohr.

Board chairman Glen Bowers thanked Clay for his research and getting confirmation. It was mentioned that there will be a capacity limit, and Clay will check with the fire marshal's office to find out what the limit is. Bowers said the village will find a place to store items that are currently in the mezzanine so it can be used for activities.

ARA Picnic Shelter

Issues with the new Arnold Recreation Area picnic shelter, a project of the local Rotary Club, were discussed. Ron Cool, who is in charge of the project, was at the meeting to hear the board's concerns. With the shelter almost finished, Chairman Bowers said he consulted with the village's insurance agent, Joe Bob Atkins, and the low height of the eaves are not safe. He asked Rotary to stop the project and resolve the issue.

Discussion was held on ways to raise the eaves, and Cool was asked to work with Bill Moser

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Board Hires New Teacher, Discusses Summer Improvement Projects

At the school board's regular meeting held last Tuesday night, Superintendent Dawn Lewis was pleased to report that the new position of a full-time Title I instructor has been filled. Six applicants were narrowed down to three very talented teachers, and Arnold resident Nicole (Hauser) Recoy was hired.

"It's what she's been doing at Stapleton schools. It's not just the intervention, it's all the paperwork that is involved, and she is very qualified," said Lewis.

Mrs. Lewis read a letter of resignation due to retirement from long-time staff member Penny Allen. The board accepted Mrs. Allen's resignation, with regret, effective June 30, 2016. Mrs. Lewis said the school will start advertising locally.

Mrs. Allen, who has been on staff for 30 years, is the data steward, and does the hot lunch program and Power School. In addition, she drives a bus route.

"These will be big shoes to fill," said Dr. Lewis.

Summer Facilities Projects

Five summer facility projects were discussed, and all were tabled after discussion to give board members time to absorb new information.

The largest project proposed by the superintendent is room configuration. She presented several bids for work to open up and turn the current music room into the cafeteria, and move the music room to the wrestling room. The wrestling mats and weight equipment would be moved to the old gym.

In the first phase, concrete would be poured to bring the music room's floor up to level, and a support beam would be installed in order to open up the entire east wall of the room. The floor would be tiled. The next phase would be flooring, paint, acoustical tiles and materials for restructuring a wall and cabinets in the new music room. HVAC would also be installed.

Dr. Lewis said she is proposing the reconfiguration due to the increased number of students projected to be served lunch in the gymnasium and lack of space. Secondly, she said

a large amount of money has been spent on the gymnasium floor, and this will be the last time the floor can be sanded. Thus, the school wants the floor to last as long as possible. The reconfiguration would also create an open cafeteria area where students enter the gymnasium, go through the lunch line and proceed to the open cafeteria. The open cafeteria would also allow people attending events to eat in the cafeteria, with the event streamed in on a television screen.

Dr. Lewis said she could comfortably say the total cost for this project would be \$100,000.00 or less, after gathering bids from several sources.

Another proposed project is a concrete landscaping project on the west side of the school to make it handicap accessible and safer. The first phase was removal of the tree that was causing problems with its large root system. This project would include new steps, a retaining wall and ramp. Dr. Lewis said a safety inspection has been done, and this project would address the problems found during inspection.

Other proposed projects presented included: HVAC gym units; rubber treads for both stairwells; and carpet for the high school hallway.

Comments from the Floor

Cattle grower and producer Wanda Kreikemeier voiced her concern over the school's current consideration of serving locally donated beef at the school. Kreikemeier spoke about cross-contamination liability issues for producers donating the beef, and suggested a different approach of producers selling a cow and cutting a check to a fund to purchase beef for the school. She urged board members to talk to people who have rejected a local beef program, not just those who support it.

When Kreikemeier asked why the school was considering local beef for the hot lunch program, Superintendent Lewis said the school is now working on the vision part of serving local beef and other locally raised goods, and said to a certain extent, people like to know where their food comes from.

Principal's Report

Principal Joel Morgan gave an update on past and upcoming activities in the school, and said Reading, Math and Science assessments are underway.

Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Lewis reported on bills that impact schools in the legislature. LB959 would impact many components of the budget, and has undergone many changes through the session. This is being closely watched, as is LB930 which would make it mandatory for schools to accept ACT scores is also being watched carefully. (As an aside, both of these bills have since passed in the legislature and await the governor's signature.)

In other business, the board:

- Approved to continue with the ESU10 Title I consortium
- Approved a contract with Mill's Lawn Service.

- Approved an Apple Education an estimated bid of \$16,800.00 for an additional 20 student computers. Dr. Lewis said the student population has grown, and there aren't enough computers for everyone. The school anticipates additional growth next year.

Clean-Up Day Postponed to April 25

Due to rainy weather, the Community Clean-Up Day, scheduled for last Monday, has been moved to this Monday, April 25. Volunteers from Arnold Rotary, Chamber, the school, American Legion and village personnel will be helping residents who have asked to be placed on the list clean up their property.

Everyone is reminded that a roll-off, located at the village street shop, is available free to village residents through the month of April. Not accepted at the site are construction rubble, refrigerators, freezers, batteries, computers and household hazardous waste.

Residents can also call Mike Harvey at 308-530-1475 to have Legion pick up metals of any kind. This project is a year-round fundraiser for Legion.

A.H.S. Student's Photo Places in Congressional Art Show

Washington, D.C. - Congressman Adrian Smith (R-NE) has announced the Third District's winning artists of the 2016 Congressional Art Competition.

Smith worked with the Nebraska Art Teachers Association to coordinate the competition. The first place artwork will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Smith will display the runners-up in his Washington, D.C., Grand Island, and Scottsbluff offices.

"This year's entries from young artists across the Third District showcase the natural beauty of Nebraska," Smith said. "Congratulations to the many talented students who entered the competition as well as the teachers who have inspired their creativity and helped cultivate their abilities."

Arnold freshman Leighton Bubak from Arnold Public Schools was named fourth place winner in the competition for his photo titled "Webbed Ladder." Leighton's work will be displayed in Smith's Grand Island office.

"Mrs. Mohr really encouraged Leighton to enter," said Leighton's mom, Renee Bubak. "When he had to choose a picture for this Congressional contest, it is still one of his overall favorites as it is somewhat unique or mysterious as to what the picture is."

Other winners were:

First place: Chance Snook, Crawford High School; Second place: Amanda McClain, Litchfield Public School; Third place: Chance Snook, Crawford High School.



Leighton Bubak's photo titled "Webbed Ladder" placed in the 2016 Congressional Art Competition. (Courtesy photo)