

# The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

(USPS 032480)

SINGLE COPY: 50 CENTS

VOLUME 100, NUMBER 42

THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2017



Three generations of Nansels are serving the Arnold community at Nansel's Best Service. From left are: Bryce, Ralph and Brad. Ralph has been going strong for 50 years in the business, and says he has no plans to slow down. (Leta Connell photos)

## Fifty Years...Still Going Strong At 79 years young, Ralph Nansel celebrates milestone.

By Leta Connell

The all too familiar low fuel light starts blinking and the bonging sound begins; next stop is the local self-service station on the corner here in our own Arnold, Nebraska. The interesting thing about this stop is the fact that your father—and most likely grandfather—have been making the same stop, at the same station, for over 50 years.

On March 1, 2017, Nansel's Best Service, owned by Ralph and Karla Nansel, celebrated 50 years of service to the Arnold community. Although the business name has changed over the years,

there has been one staple through it all - Ralph Nansel.

Ralph will be the first to tell you a self-service station was not exactly a part of his original plan. After graduating high school from the University of Nebraska School of Agriculture in Curtis, Nebraska, at 16 years of age, he came home to Arnold and helped his three siblings on the family farm southwest of town. Shortly after his return, he was hired by Don Smith to run a combine and help with other farm work. Over the next three to four years, several men joined forces, gathered their equipment and sent Ralph and the

crew on wheat harvest around the country.

The harvest money was good, but the time away from family was not. So on March 1, 1966, when Dwight Best asked Ralph if he would be interested in coming to work at the station, it was an offer he couldn't refuse. Ralph joined the station crew of Leonard Croghan, Dwight Best and Don Flint. Don Flint left and later opened a station across the street. Around December 15, 1971, Calvin Joy, who was currently employed at the Ford garage, approached Ralph about leasing the station. The bulk fuel farm deliveries for Nansel Oil, Inc., alone were filling up Ralph's day, so he was happy to have the help and hired him. That was the start of Cal's Best Service.

When Ralph started working at the station, it was a Mobil station. We all remem-

ber the Mobil stations with the "big red O" on the sign. Ralph tells an interesting story about what actually inspired the red O. After hanging a "Mobil" sign up at the station one day, he looked up and thought, "That O would really stand out if I painted it red." He ran to the store, bought a can of red spray paint, and modified the sign. The Mobil sales representative out of North Platte, Ed Jorgenson, stopped by for his regular visit and noticed the sign. He asked Ralph, "How did that O end up red?" Ralph replied, "I painted it." Ed stated, "I really like that!" The rest is history, as Mobil soon updated all of their signs to reflect the red O. After Mobil went out of busi-

ness, Ralph switched to Conoco with buyouts to come later by Bosselman's and the current supplier, Sinclair.

Brad Nansel, Ralph's son,

joined the station in 1983 to work alongside Ralph and Cal. This terrific trio continued until Cal's retirement on June 30, 2010, at which time Brad's son, Bryce, joined the team. It has been a family affair ever since!

In a company and in the world of business, turnover occurs. You keep an eye on it, try to somewhat control it, but you know it is going to happen; however, that is not the case with Nansel's Best Service. In their 50 years of operation, there have only been two bookkeepers. Leuna Olson, Ralph's mother-in-law, was the bookkeeper for Dwight when Ralph joined the station. Ralph stresses most customers who came into the station referred to Leuna as "Grandma."

"She was Grandma to everyone. That's just the way it was," said Ralph.

Leuna decided it was time to retire. So in June of 1988, Jan Eastwood began her duties as bookkeeper and she is still hard at work 29 years later.

"She keeps things running in this office. I take money to the bank and make the trip to the post office - the rest is all her," emphasizes Ralph.

Many changes occur over time, and this business has seen its fair share.

"When I hired on, gas was about 29 cents a gallon and now it is close to \$2.39 a gal-

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Jan Eastwood has been the hard-working bookkeeper at Nansel's Best for the last 29 years.



With high expectations of fun, kids come running to the Methodist Church from the school last Wednesday for the last Good News Club of the year. (Sentinel photo)

## It's All "Good News"

"Here they come!" calls a boy's voice peeking through the doors of the Methodist Church. He is the first arrival of around 50 children attending Arnold Good News Club. The kids came running down the road at 3:30 p.m., Wednesday to the after school program held once a week from September through March. They gather with food and games, singing, and lots of excite-

ment and energy.

Local volunteers Melody Coleman, Judy Cool, Karen Hough, Pastor Irv Jennings, Pastor Lee Wonch, Natalie Cool, Shirley Basset, and DanDee Wonch work hard to prepare a positive space to have the kids gather. With grade levels ranging from kindergarten through sixth, the leaders break off into groups. Their mission: "To spread the good news of

Jesus," Natalie Cool said. "I like that this is not held by just one church; it is put on by the whole faith community."

Many volunteers have worked hard to offer this program for over 20 years to the youth of Arnold. The Good News Club finished their last session for this school year and will start back up in the fall.

## New A.H.S. Alumni Directory Lists 104 Years of Graduates

Some call it the Alumni "Bible," but it's actually a directory listing the names of approximately 2,184 graduates who have walked the halls of Arnold High School over the last 104 years. It's a huge undertaking to publish this directory every five years, but the Arnold Alumni Association has succeeded once again. Who else but Darlene Rimpley stepped forward to be in charge - a job most are unwilling to do.

The first step in the process was finding a class member who was willing to contact each of their classmates to list changes of addresses and changes to married names under their graduating year. In a case where no one was willing, Darlene took on that class—and there were many. She also tracked who has died since the last directory was published, deleting their address and placing an asterisk by their name.

The directory also lists those who have served as Alumni officers since 1953, and the names of 494 teachers who have taught at A.H.S.

The index lists all graduates, both under their name at graduation, and in the case of women, their married names, in alphabetical order.

As all of the information came in, Darlene worked with A.H.S. art instructor Julie Mohr to design a new cover, and the staff at *The Arnold Sentinel* to typeset and lay out the book and have it published.

*Sentinel* staff made a list of the top six last names listed in the index. Smith topped them all with 53 names, followed by Anderson with 49, Mills with 41, Geiser with 40, Peterson with 36, and coming in at sixth place in a tie were Weinman and Koubek with 29 each.

Several alumni have pre-ordered, and the directory will be on sale the week of Alumni when secretary Patty Goodenow is selling tickets - both at the Rialto Theatre and at the banquet. The directories are \$15.00 each, and if mailed, there will be postage added. To order, contact the Arnold Alumni Association via email at arnoldalumni@email.com or write to: PO Box 21, Arnold NE 69120.



1913 - 2017

Alumni Directory