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Back to the Basics

4-H Club Members Taking Interest in New Projects

Editor's Note: For a number of years, the Western Riders 4-H Club horse project has been going strong, with few to no entries in some of the other divisions at the county fair. This year, interest has significantly grown in other projects, with several new leaders taking 4-Hers "Back to the Basics." Sewing and Shooting Sports are featured in our series this week.

By Kendra Veirs

Three years ago, Leron Bierman stepped up to be the sewing leader for Arnold's Western Riders 4-H group with only two who signed up. After taking last year off and Jane Hornung stepping up to the plate, this year, Bierman and Hornung have 11 kids signed up between the ages of 8-16.

"My mom was my sewing instructor as a kid and I loved learning to sew and it's a skill I use and I love now that I'm older. I want to transfer my love for sewing to the next generation," Bierman said.

During the class, students learn how to understand patterns, measure themselves to find their size, technique and how to display or model their projects.

The group has one or two big meetings, including a field trip to The Quilt Rack in North Platte to learn about types of fabric and notions. Students then sew with either leader during individual sessions or on their own with an adult.

Bierman commented that the sewing group is fun and the students have a great time selecting their patterns and their projects and it's always fun to see how proud they are of their accomplishments.

This year's students are making garments that include aprons, pajama pants, sun dresses, skirts and pillowcases.

The sewing competition is set for July 21. The girls will be in-



Elizabeth Fetty is just one of Arnold 4-Hers learning how to sew under the instruction of Leron Bierman. (Courtesy photos)

terviewed by a judge about their project and then the items will be displayed in the 4-H building during fair. There is an opportunity to participate in a style show that same evening.

"Sewing is an absolute basic skill and one I think all, including boys, should have. Sewing is a good skill to have not only for the ability to create things but because of the math, design, adaptability and problem solving that go along with it," Bierman stated. "As I come in contact with people I'm amazed

by the number of guys and gals who can't sew a simple seam or repair a button. Sewing is a simple skill that crosses many areas of life."

SHOOTING SPORTS ADD TO NUMBERS

Arnold 4-Hers are fortunate to have two shooting sports leaders, Dusty Stutzman, who became a leader in 2014 and is certified in both pistol and rifle, and Blake Bierman, who became a leader in 2013, and is certified in rifle. This year, they are guiding 26 youths, ages 8-



Brook Bierman is one of 26 youth who are involved in shooting sports this year. She is pictured with instructor Blake Bierman.

16, in several areas of the sport, a large increase over the 10 youths who participated last year.

The students are taught the safety, aiming and proper use of the tools, Stutzman said. They are taught the different shooting positions that they will need to know for competitions.

For the shooting sports, the competitors are judged by how well they hit the bullseye targets in the various age groups and by type of tool.

"I just want them to have fun while being safe," Stutzman said. "I became the leader because I want our youth to know the importance of firearms as a tool and a sport. The 4-H shoot-

ing sports program is the safest sport out there."

Stutzman, whose profession is a deportation officer with ICE, also commented, "If we could get back to the days where people are responsible for the actions and actually understand the proper use of the tools available I feel it will become a safer place. I feel we are helping the youth understand the proper uses of the tools used in shooting sports."

It was also noted that the club wanted to give a big thank you to the "Friends of the NRA," because without the grant that the club received, there would be no way the youth would have the guns and ammo that they need to participate.

School Board Looks at New Floor Plans

Architect Suggests Connecting Main Building With Shop

By Janet Larreau

At their regular meeting held last Tuesday night, Arnold School Board members looked over two proposed floor plans that would improve the functionality of the school. The plans were presented by Grant Creager of CG-ID Architects, LLC, of North Platte.

Arnold Superintendent Dr. Dawn Lewis said the building plan is to capture classroom space in the existing parking stalls in the bus barn.

"We had looked at using the old gym for this, but the uncertainty of the building structure in the absence of original blueprints, and the potential for additional costs due to the age of the building, caused the architect to advise us to look elsewhere," she said.

Dr. Lewis said the school needs to make an effort to gain handicap accessibility for all of its classrooms. As the government places additional burdens on schools, it has become necessary for APS to add teaching staff, including an elementary teacher, full-time high school SPED, and full-time Title I teacher, over the past six years.

"Additionally, we are attempting to look into our crystal ball and predict that in the future at some time, Arnold will offer a preschool as well, as most schools in the area already have done. This would require a main floor, handicap accessible classroom as well," she said.

There has also been much discussion about finding a true cafeteria space to protect the investment in the gymnasium floor, as it cannot withstand being refinished again. Dr. Lewis said the floor will have to last many years. Having a dedi-

cated cafeteria will eliminate daily breakfast and lunch traffic on the floor, and provide a space for patrons to congregate during games to consume concessions without bringing food into the gym.

The plan would connect the main school building and shop by creating either a corridor or cafeteria in the currently concreted space between the south exit of the main building and the shop if possible. The original plans of the buildings from the 1960s had the buildings connected, and somehow that plan was abandoned. For the security of the students, and to have fewer "outside access" classrooms, Dr. Lewis said it would be very beneficial to connect the two buildings.

"School facilities are a source of pride for the community, so it is a priority to me to ensure that we are keeping up on our facilities and truly meeting the needs of our staff and students, as well as reflecting the pride of our patrons in Arnold Public Schools," said Dr. Lewis.

The approximate \$1.5 million dollar amount included the cost of adding fire code sprinklers to the shop buildings, and to the potential renovations. If the school sub-contracted much of the labor in-house, the cost would be much less, as the architect indicated that 55 to 60 percent of the cost of such a building project is outside labor. Dr. Lewis said the architect is not yet under contract with Arnold Public Schools, and has not been paid taxpayer dollars for the work he has already done. He is attempting to gain a contract with APS by sharing the plans.

If a plan is approved by the

board at a later date, the money would be levied for in the special building fund and qualified capital purpose undertaking fund.

Principal's Report

Joel Morgan presented an idea that the school begin a push for branding and promoting Arnold Public School - something he has seen being implemented at other schools. Morgan said that by creating a brand and creating promotional items, the school would show what it has to offer that

other schools don't have.

Superintendent's Report

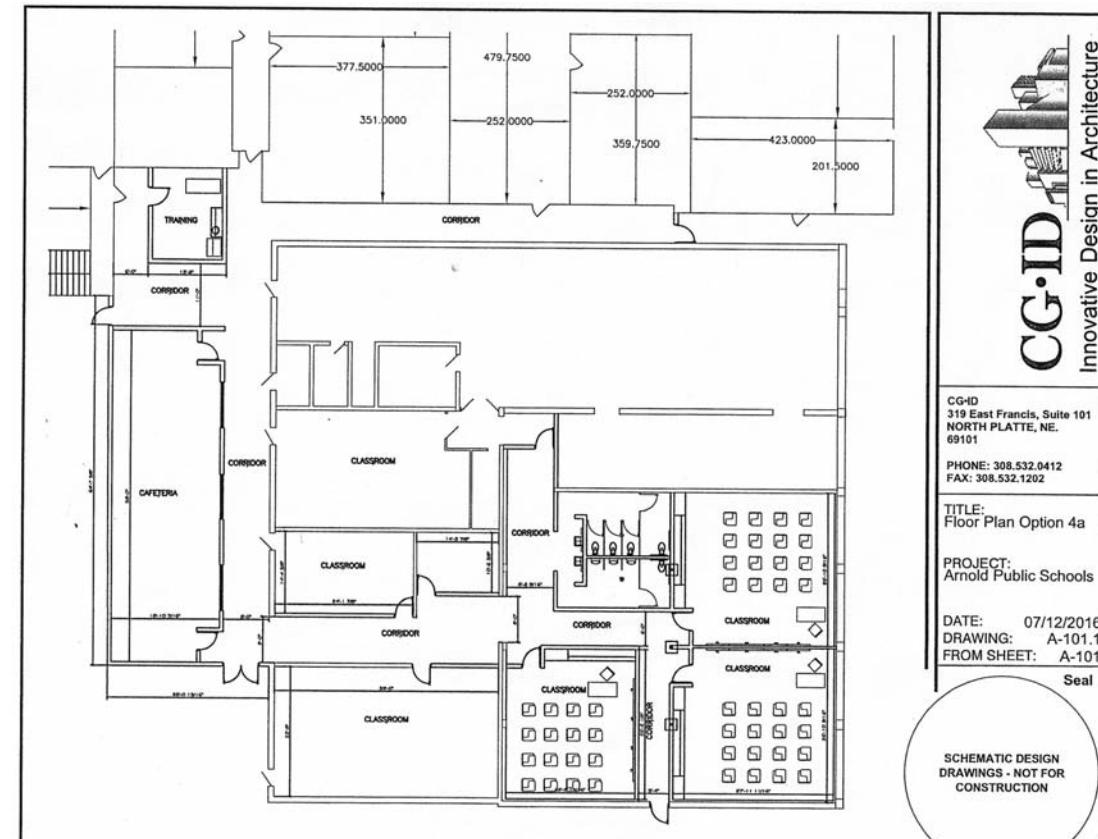
Dr. Lewis gave an update on the progress of summer projects. Progress continues on landscaping the west side of the school, new HVAC units have been hooked up in the elementary classrooms and units are coming for the gymnasium, the gym floor has been finished, new stair treads have been installed, and Service Master has cleaned carpets. She also plans to have a single door installed for the new west landing, and a

new private space is being created for the Title I teacher by dividing the SPED room.

During the report, board members participated in discussion about marketing and launch plans for the "Local Beef" program. With this program, donated beef will be served in the school's cafeteria.

Dr. Lewis said if the donated beef is inspected, there will be no liability issues. The importance of establishing priorities of the quality of beef the school will want was also discussed. The Local Beef program will be on the August agenda for the board's official approval, and a community event to kick-off

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Above is one of two floor plans school board members considered at last Tuesday night's meeting. The plan would connect the main building with the shop building and capture classroom space in existing parking stalls in the bus barn.