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They've a Story to Tell

14th in a Series on Arnold's
"Young at Heart"
Residents

By Darlene Rimpley

As I was driving out to visit with Don and Sunbeam Swanson, I was watching the road signs for their address, Niedan Road, and I could not find it. I proceeded on Sand Valley Road, and just as I was thinking I might be lost, I came upon the sign proclaiming the Swansons' home. When I asked them about that, they explained that the line separating Custer and Lincoln counties was right outside their yard, and the names of the road had changed there, so living in Lincoln County, they were on Niedan Road.

Don and Sunbeam have been life-long residents of the Arnold area, with the exception of a few years, so they tried to convince me that they really did not have a story to tell. Let's see what you think.

Don was born on September 26, 1930, in the old Arnold hospital (located in what is now the Gene Tullis home), to Carl and Ruth Swanson. He attended country school at Prairie View, graduated from Arnold High in 1948, and began his life-long love of farming with his father.

Sunbeam was born February 9, 1933, to Harry and Lettie Oman, attended Tallin country school and Arnold High, graduating in 1950.

Following graduation, Sunbeam attended Grace Bible Institute in Omaha for one year, then returned home and taught at Tallin school for one year.

The romance that began while both Don and Sunbeam were still in high school led to a wedding on June 4, 1952, at Tallin Church. They both had accepted Christ as their Savior as young children and had attended Tallin Church all of

Don and Sunbeam Recall Early Years Stationed in Germany



Love bloomed in high school for Don and Sunbeam Swanson, and after 64 years of marriage, they are still going strong. (Courtesy photo)

those years.

After their marriage, they lived north of Cozad on a farm that belonged to a mother-in-law of Sunbeam's uncle Alfred. The farming and raising of cattle was a job that Don truly enjoyed.

Their daughter, Pauline, was born on September 10, 1953, and they were expecting a second child in July of 1955. Life was good!

In early April of 1955, Don received notice from Uncle Sam that he was to report for service in the Army on April 26. Plans were quickly made for Uncle Alfred to take over the farming, cattle were sold, and Sunbeam and Pauline moved back in with her parents. Don left on the 26th of April from North Platte, headed for Camp Chaffee, Arkansas, to be inducted into the Army. After his induction, he was sent to Fort Riley, Kansas, for basic training. He was granted a two-day leave to come home to Arnold when their son, Don Lee, was born on July 20, 1955.

Sunbeam and the children traveled to Manhattan, Kansas, to stay for a few weeks while Don was at Fort Riley. He had received notice that the 41st Engineers - 10th Division was being sent to Germany in November. The chaplain of the church where they attended services told Don that his family would be able to join him in Germany, at their own expense.

The troop left Ft. Riley by train to go to New York in early November, arriving in Kitzingen, Germany, where Don began his job as a Message Center Clerk. This job entailed Don being picked up by a jeep driver, taking correspondence from Kitzingen to Wurzburg, which was about 10 kilometers, and delivering them, and in turn picking up any correspondence he needed to take back to Kitzingen.

Back home, Sunbeam made the very scary decision to join Don in Germany. With two small children - Pauline was just two and Don Lee only five months - they left North Platte by plane on December 20 to go

A Chance Encounter

While sitting in the New York City airport waiting to depart for Germany, two-year-old Pauline was taking advantage of the space to move around, and since Sunbeam was busy with Don Lee, she let her run. Pauline chose the time to keep circling a man who was attired in a fur coat, fur pants and fur boots, and since Sunbeam figured the man did not know who Pauline belonged to, she kept an eye on her but left her alone. Finally, the man asked Pauline what her name was, and then he took a book out of his carry-on, and wrote inside, "Merry Christmas to Pauline from your friend, Van Johnson." Johnson was a major movie and television star, and dancer. Needless to say, Pauline still treasures that book.

to Chicago. Plans had been made for the wife of another soldier who also went to Germany, to meet Sunbeam at the airport in Chicago, take them home to her parent's house for the night, and deliver them back to the airport the next day to take a flight to New York City, where they had a two-hour layover.

Don met his family at the Frankfurt airport and took them to their new "home" in Kitzingen. Since they had children, it was difficult to find a place to rent, but he finally rented a room in a guest house. They actually got two rooms on the third floor, storing their belongings in one room, and living in the other very small room. Finally, they moved down a floor to one slightly larger room.

The chaplain, who could speak German, went with Don to try to find a roomier place to live. They finally came to a house that was 1,400 years old, and was part of the old city wall. A lady, who they came to know was Frau Darlapp, rented the house from the city. She lived in an upstairs apartment, and had an apartment on the main floor that she rented to the Swansons for \$15.00 per

month.

The Swansons had been there about a week, when the mailman slid a postcard, in German of course, under the door. When Frau Darlapp, who rode her bicycle to homes to sew for people, arrived back home, Sunbeam used her German-American dictionary to figure out a few words to ask her what the postcard said. Frau Durlapp, in turn, used her dictionary to find the words to say that the card said the Swansons had to move. Sunbeam began to cry, and the German woman put her arms around her and said, "Nein! Nein!" Darlapp went to the mayor and told him the Swansons were not going to move. Her words carried weight, as they were able to stay there for their time in Germany.

While stationed there, the Swansons were able to take some three-day American Express trips to Holland, Paris and Switzerland, with friends taking care of the children while they were gone.

For the next trip, we need to go back in time. Don's father, Carl, had come from Sweden to America when he was 21 to avoid the compulsory military

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Snack Time - Again?

While visiting family in Sweden, the young Swanson family was fed well: coffee and snacks before they got out of bed, a big breakfast, coffee and snacks mid-morning, the noon meal, coffee and snacks mid-afternoon, the evening meal, and coffee and snacks before they went to bed!

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." This week we end the series with Rocketry and Horse projects.

Adult Leaders Help Horse Project Stay Strong

By Kendra Veirs
It is no secret that Dwaine Lehmkuhler loves two things - kids and horses.

"There is nothing like seeing a little girl or boy come riding up with a big smile on his/her face wanting to show me what they can do with their horse or an older girl or boy riding up, sliding their horse to a stop with a look on their face that says, 'What do you think of that?' Kids are my heroes, I consider myself very lucky to be a 4-H horse project leader," Dwaine said with a smile.

Dwaine, who has been a leader for the Western Riders 4-H horse project for numerous years and led both his children and grandchildren through the program, reported that he is happy that 24 kids, ages 8-18, are enrolled in this year's project.

"The numbers have been pretty steady over the last few years, but if anyone would like to add to that number, we would love to have you!" he said.

Meeting every Wednesday at the Arnold arena, the partici-



4-H Horse Project leader Dwaine Lehmkuhler instructs Eli Rogers on the basics of horsemanship at the final practice before fair. (Courtesy photos)

pants concentrate mainly on horsemanship. No matter what discipline you're in, whether it be barrel racing, roping, reining, or just trail riding, horsemanship is the foundation to success.

Horsemanship isn't just riding either. It is understanding how a horse thinks, how a horse responds to pressure, when to apply pressure, and when to release pressure.

"Years ago, the answer to a horse problem was a bigger bit

or in some cases a bigger club. Horse training has evolved almost as much as the telephone. Remember when your phone number was two longs and a short, or two shorts and a long? Not many do, but some will. What we try to teach our kids is new proven ideas and techniques of how to understand our horse that leads to better horsemanship which will lead to a better and much more un-

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Rocketry leader Dynette Oberg (far right) helps a 4-Her set up his rocket in a pasture, while others wait their turn.

Rocketry Grows Through Trial and Error

By Kendra Veirs
After Dynette Oberg's son, Chester, competed in rocketry for two years, Oberg volunteered to lead other 4-Hers in the rocketry division for the second year now.

"The first year my son built a rocket we didn't know what we were doing at all!" she said. "So after several attempts we kind of figured things out. As a result, I have simply offered to help others learn."

This year, the club has six youth enrolled in the rocket project, with ages ranging from eight to 12 years old, and one Clover Kid who is making a rocket. This is up from the three enrolled last year. Prior to that, Chester was the only one who built rockets.

"Boys love to blow things up and cause things to explode, so channeling that in a positive di-

rection is always good. Rockets are also a neat part of our history as inventors and explorers," Oberg stated.

Meeting once per week on Mondays, the group worked on construction and safety of building and launching their rockets. In the future, Oberg hopes to spend more time calculating altitude and learning how to use an altimeter.

At fair, the participants enter their rocket with a launch log that tells specifics of each launch. The kids are interviewed and questioned about their knowledge of their rocket and how to launch it.

Although Oberg's experience consists solely of trial and error the last four years and fixing their own mistakes, she summed it up with, "The kids really love to build and launch the rockets, but they are harder than they look. I hope as we learn, the kids will get better and better."