



Celebrating 15 years SANDHILLS OPEN ROAD CHALLENGE August 6-7-8, 2015



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Arnold School House Graphic Products students display a banner created for the 2015 SORC in memory of SORC board member Alan Dailey, who passed away this year of cancer, and thanking the many volunteers who make the race happen. SHGP, a business ran by students, and overseen by teachers Clay and Julie Mohr, has been an integral part of the SORC since the second year. Each year students create and install numbers on the cars; create the balloon banner; road, traffic and directional signs; bumper stickers and memorial stickers; car graphics for workers; and Loup 2 Loup sponsor banners. Pictured, from left are: Haley Reed, Cole Gracey, Madison Reed, Lydia Connell, Jarret Buchholz and Olivia Paulsen. (Courtesy photo)



The 15th Anniversary SORC logo was created by Arnold school art instructor Julie Mohr, as was the previous logo.

SORC Marks 15th Year Growth of Event Testament to Community's Staying Power

On August 5 more than 135 high performance cars will converge on Arnold, Nebraska, for the 15th Annual Sandhills Open Road Challenge. The event will begin on August 6 with the 22-mile Loup 2 Loup Open Road Race between Halsey and Purdum.

August 7 will start with the One-Mile Shoot Out, held 14 miles north of Cozad, followed by an afternoon car show and burn-out contest in Arnold.

Cars and drivers will line up in Arnold on Saturday for an 8:30 a.m. start of the 56-mile open road race between Arnold and Dunning. The event will culminate in the evening with a free-will donation barbecue and award ceremony in the Arnold Community Park.

Drivers, their navigators and support people, will travel to

Arnold from the east coast, the west coast and everywhere in between. In all, some 20 states will be represented at the 15th annual race. They will fill up the motels and be staying with people who open their homes to the visitors each year.

The almost impossible idea of holding a professional open road race north of Arnold came from one man: Joe Shown of Stapleton, a Corvette owner from the neighboring town of Stapleton, who threw out the idea to Arnold Chamber members that the Arnold to Dunning road would be perfect for such an event.

"It was January or February of 2000 when I talked to Chamber," said Shown. "I knew I couldn't do it. It was something that had to be done by the people of Arnold, and it has worked

out really well."

Shown said it was very fortunate that Don Olson was on the Custer County Board of Supervisors. Olson was able to convince the supervisors that it would be a good thing for the county, and to close the road. Landowners, who were concerned about their property along the road, voiced their concerns; those concerns were addressed over time.

"The thing most people don't realize is how many obstacles there were to getting this thing off the ground," said Shown.

Shown said the supervisors made the condition that the race be sanctioned and overseen by the Silver State Classic Challenge, Inc.

Silver State agreed, and Gary Patterson, then Vice-President of the SSSC, drove from Nevada

to oversee the inaugural run. Today, Patterson remains the SORC's official advisor.

"What a great thing that (Gary) did," said Shown. "Since then, Gary has missed only a few races at Arnold. A lot of us have gotten to know him over the years, and there are very few people as quality as Gary. He has become a huge part of the event."

Thirty-four cars entered the first race, and Shown said that was a good thing because organizers were able to grow the event from there.

Before the inaugural run, Patterson was astonished when over 200 people showed up at the volunteer breakfast, saying it "was half the town."

Becky Dailey, a SORC board member who has served as secretary since the beginning, said

some of those same volunteers have helped all 15 years, and the volunteer base has stayed steady after all these years.

"It's like the whole town comes together. The 10 board members could not do this alone," she said.

Dailey, who has a big job keeping track of entrants, said entries for the race open on the first Monday in October, and it is usually filled that same day. Those on the waiting list could luck out if someone drops out.

The growth of the race - to now some 135 cars, the addition of the One-Mile and Half-Mile Shoot-Out, the Loup 2 Loup and other events - can be attributed to a strong SORC board, whose members donate countless hours, year-round to

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Teacher's Dream Finally Comes to Fruition



Berni Crow stands beside a Taylor artist's rendition of the Arnold fourth grade teacher teaching in a one-room school house. The amazing likeness sits just outside of Mrs. Crow's one-room school house that is likely to be completed late this year. The "teaching museum" will be complete with numerous items from the past that Mrs. Crow has collected over the years. (Kendra Veirs photo)

There's a little one-room school house sitting just west of the old Baptist church in the north part of Arnold. It wasn't always there, and the journey it took to get to Arnold is part of a teacher's dream finally coming to fruition.

"In 30 years of teaching, I've always exposed my students, in some way, to what education was like in earlier years. For many years, we dressed as pioneers traveling the Oregon Trail, studied books from the 1800s and even cooked a meal in cast iron dutch ovens as they would have done years ago on the Oregon Trail," said Berni Crow, fourth grade teacher at Arnold Public Schools. "Most recently, three classes of fourth graders have gotten to 'attend' school in a 'one-room school,' and also studied from those same books. I have a variety of vintage school books, McGuffey Readers and Spelling books, dated as far back as 1857. Perhaps my attendance at a one-room school sparked my desire to create a facility where students can experience this way of schooling that was so common in Nebraska's early years."

A memorable phone call came in January of 2010. Mrs. Crow's husband's cousin, Coeleen Wittuhn, and her husband Brad, had heard of Mrs. Crow's de-

sire to own a country school. The Wittuhns offered their school (that sat behind a house they owned) to Mrs. Crow for a small price of \$400.00, and the rest, as they say, is "history" ... in progress.

The Crows moved the school to Arnold in 2012, at a cost of \$6,000.00, and work began on building a basement Bed and Breakfast. The three primary workers have been Mrs. Crow's son Adam, husband Dave and herself. Many other volunteers have helped in a variety of ways.

The very first guests were Joan (Patterson) Thurman and her husband Lloy Duane Thurman. Joan was the last person to teach in what Mrs. Crow now called "my school" in the year 1950-51. Her signature on the B&B guest book adds, "I was the last to teach this school in 1950-51."

"I was so honored to have them as the FIRST guests," said Mrs. Crow. "Her husband, a retired Ag professor, has been instrumental in supplying me with first hand knowledge of the school, and he has given me countless books, documents, toys and photographs that are in amazing condition. Two of the most valuable prizes in the items he's donated to my school are his wife's teaching certifi-

cate, and original copies of the "Eighth Grade Exams."

According to the "Seven Valleys" history book, Center School District #185, had 24 students in 1910, as recorded in the School Census taken by Director Arthur Scott. That is the earliest information on attendance that Mrs. Crow has. Many schools listed in the Callaway History book indicate that their schools were built in the 1880s/90s or even began as sodies.

"This would make my school at least 105 years old," said Mrs. Crow. "Its original location was about five miles southeast of Callaway. It stood across the canyon from Dave's Uncle Duane and Aunt Kate Henry. Kate and Duane tell about remembering students going to and from school. Another bit of trivia that makes this school even more special to Mrs. Crow is that her great aunt Pearl (Boyer) Nichelson, taught in Center school in 1932. A photograph taken in 1928, shows a parent of one of Mrs. Crow's classmates from Callaway. The class list from 1910 shows four Nichelson children listed. These quite possibly could be distant relatives, as Mrs. Crow's grandmother was a Nichelson. Sometime after District #185 -

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