



# SANDHILLS OPEN ROAD CHALLENGE

August 8-9-10

# The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2019

CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

(USPS 032480)

SINGLE COPY: 75 CENTS

VOLUME 103, NUMBER 8

## Behind the scenes of the SORC



2019 will mark the 10th year that Dan Duncan, flight paramedic for Star Care, has traveled to Arnold from his home in Lincoln, where he has served in the primary role of Medical Incident Command for the Sandhills Open Road Challenge.

### Paramedic Dan Duncan is huge asset to event

By Janet Larreau

One-hundred-forty-five drivers from across the U.S. have signed up to test their driving skills in this weekend's Sandhills Open Road Challenge. The timed road race takes place on the curvy and narrow Arnold-Dunning county road, with some drivers accelerating

their high performance vehicles up to 145 miles an hour. Although all measures are taken for the safety of everyone involved, accidents can and do happen.

Approximately 15 volunteer fire and rescue departments are behind the scenes to make this event safe and to provide medical and fire/rescue related tasks. Leading the volunteers is

Dan Duncan, who has traveled from his home in Lincoln to Arnold to serve as the SORC paramedic for the past 10 years.

At the time he started volunteering for the SORC, Dan was a paramedic for Lincoln Fire & Rescue. He is now a flight paramedic for Star Care, works as an EMS instructor and serves on the Trauma Advisory Board

for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. His family includes wife Kelsey and son Jhett.

“I was asked to become involved with the SORC by one of the original participants who happened to be a retired Lincoln firefighter that I worked with for many years. It was a no brainer for me, because I also have a passion for fast cars,” said Dan. “My primary role is Medical Incident Command. This includes making sure in the event we have an accident or medical emergency, the responders have all the resources they need to complete the incident safely and efficiently.”

His experiences during his career in fire and rescue are a huge asset as he leads the EMS crews at accident scenes. He leads the fire & rescue meeting at the volunteer breakfast each year, promoting safety to the department personnel, as well as instructing them on race equipment used by drivers during the race. When an accident occurs, Dan responds to the scene in the Arnold command vehicle, along with the volunteer crews. He oversees extrication and patient care on each scene and is equipped with IV supplies to use if the patient requires them for treatment. If a patient requires immediate advanced care, Dan communicates with the helicopter personnel and helps in the task of setting up a landing zone close to the scene.

In his ten years of participating in SORC, there have been approximately eight accidents

**“Dan is well known among the area departments that volunteer at the SORC events.”**

- Shelley Smith

during the SORC events that required at minimum extrication by a fire/rescue team and four of those who required transport to a local hospital for evaluation. The event has had two racers who required air medical transport to the Level 2 Trauma Center in Kearney.

“The SORC community is absolutely amazing,” said Dan. “It’s unbelievable to me the amount of time these great people put into making this race what it is today. They begin working on next year’s race within a month of finishing the current year’s race. The SORC community has become a family to me. We meet in the winter in Lincoln to raise money for the fire/rescue and EMS departments, and I have become great friends with many of the other SORC members and volunteer departments. I look forward to this race every year, and look forward to many more!”

Dan’s knowledge of trauma and patient care is outstanding, and the SORC community is truly lucky to have him at the events. Thank you, Dan Duncan, for volunteering for the last 10 years!

## Pelster Families Receive Pioneer Farm Award at County Fair

Grasshoppers destroying all of the grain crops, including alfalfa, and dust storms in the 1930s are all a part of the history of one Custer County farm family that received the Pioneer Family Farm Award at the Custer County Fair last week. On hand to receive the award were the Conrad and Peter Pelster families, who currently farm the land established in 1885. Presented by the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben Foundation and the Nebraska Farm Bureau, these awards recognize Nebraska farm families who have consecutively held ownership of land in the same family for 100 years.

The Anton Wehling Farm, west of Broken Bow, consists of two tracts, known to the Pelsters as the Frank Wehling Farm on the East and the Anton Wehling Farm on the West, but all started by John C. and Justina Wehling about 1885. Born in Germany, attaining his “majority,” and dutifully serving the required two and a half years in the German army, he first came to America in 1874. He then returned to Germany for a while, married, and returned to the United States with his young wife and some 150 other German folks who all immigrated to America in 1881.

John and Justina first purchased land in Madison County, sold it, purchased land

**John Wehling built a barn large enough to shelter 12 teams in 1901. Local residents followed the freight wagons to determine where ‘the new town was being constructed.’**

and moved to Boone County. While there he made acquaintance of Thomas Fay, who offered him his pre-emption claim in Custer County for \$257. In March 1885, they moved to Custer County even though local citizens said he was crazy to move to the “West table because no water was to be had there.” He met Hiram Caswell who had a “well outfit,” so they started digging. They bored to 140’ which was as deep as Caswell’s equipment would go. He learned that Charles Milligan of Eureka Valley had equipment that would go 350’ so gave him a mortgage on his mules to use the equipment. In spite of hitting quicksand at 300’ which they had to carry out by the bucketful, he



Courtesy photo

Conrad Pelster, Peter (holding Kenzie), Kari Pelster, Aleta Ambler, Keylie Pelster, Trell & Kayzie Pelster received the Nebraska Pioneer Farm Award at last week’s Custer County Fair.

successfully established a well, later upgrading it to a hydraulic well which was used as long as he lived.

John built a barn large enough to shelter 12 teams in 1901. The construction company had the lumber delivered to Merna by train and hauled to the farm by their freight wagons. Local residents “followed the freight wagons to determine where ‘the new town was being constructed’.”

John and Justina had seven children, the six who survived

him were Frank Conrad, Charles, Henry, Anton, Lena, and Katy. John died at his home on the “West table” after a short bout of pneumonia on January 25, 1923. Ironically, Justina died at their same home, now owned and operated by their son, Anton, on January 12, 1929, also from pneumonia.

Anton operated the west side and brother, Frank, owned and operated the east side. He married Elizabeth (Lizzie) Pelster, daughter of Conrad and

Josephine (Lockson) Pelster, born in Seneca KS, on April 28, 1882. Anton and Lizzie were married in Merna on October 15, 1915. Together they farmed the same land as did John C. until Anton’s death on April 11, 1964. Lizzie died April 22, 1969. They had no children. Frank married Lizzie’s sister Mary Magdalene Pelster (born August 31, 1896, also in Seneca KS). They were married at St. Paul’s Catholic Church in

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### Fair, school coverage in next week’s issue

Arnold 4-H members rocked it at fair last week, and students will start back to school on August 13. The Sentinel is currently working on a 16-page “4-H Scrapbook” tab that will come out next week, in addition to stories on school starting up again.