

# The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2020

CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

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Photo/Debbie Connely

As the new owner of Arnold's Mighty Mart, Cheri Robbins said she plans to bring the business into the 21st Century. She reopened for business last Thursday, after purchasing it from long-time owner Bob Nielsen.

## Mighty Mart Reopens With New Owner

After closing due to the pandemic on April 2, the doors to Mighty Mart reopened on Thursday, July 23, with a new owner.

“I didn’t want to drive out of town, so I bought myself a job. I didn’t think Arnold was ready to give Mighty Mart up. People have been coming in just to say thank you,” said Cheri Robbins, who was busy accepting deliveries of flowers and balloons from well-wishers, as well as serving happy customers.

Bob Nielsen established Mighty Mart in 1988 in an established building located at 101 North Carroll Street. Cheri began working at the convenience store 11 years ago and had been serving as manager.

Cheri said when she brought up the idea of buying the busi-

ness, Bob gave her a price and they went for it.

“The name will remain the same,” she said. “It is a 30-year based business and we have a lot of customers that come from out of town.”

Cheri plans to bring Mighty Mart into the 21st Century. She now accepts debit and credit cards and the building now has WI-FI. She has taken the office wall down, increasing more flow into the kitchen. Three sinks for washing, rinsing and sanitizing have been installed and she plans to put in a grill, new fryers and a hood.

“I have several things in mind and will get there gradually. I’m taking baby steps,” she said.

The only change that will be made to the menu is lunch and

dinner entrees - such as lasagna and spaghetti - will now be homemade.

Mighty Mart will employ about five people. One employee, who has been there three years, plans to stay to work with Cheri.

Hours will be: Sunday from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.; Monday through Thursday, 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.; and Saturday, 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

“Mighty Mart has been a strong part of the community over the years,” she said. “We donated all of the ice for SORC and donate for proms. We are part of the community and with me living here and my granddaughter growing up here, we can become more of a part of the community of Arnold.”

## The 20th SORC Is On Its Way

From the humble beginnings of 34 entries in 2001 the Sandhills Open Road Challenge will welcome more than 150 drivers and navigators to Arnold for the 20th running of the SORC. The event kicks off with the Loup 2 Loup Open Road Race on August 6 beginning in Halsey, Nebraska, with cars competing in the timed event to Purdum then returning to Halsey for the last portion of the two way competition. Cars will leave the start line promptly at 8:30 a.m.

On August 7 the 19th running of the One Mile Shootout will be held south of Callaway with cars competing in their selected class of either one-half or one full mile. Drivers will seek to post the fastest speed in their class or achieve the closest average speeds of their three separate attempts. Several cars are expected to exceed 200 MPH. Only one driver in the history of the event has achieved three perfect matching speeds. In 2018 Stapleton resident Wayne Hora made three one mile attempts attaining a speed of 163.5 MPH in each run, a feat unmatched in shootout history. The shootout will begin at 8:00

a.m., with the road closing to spectators at 7:30 a.m.

The race car cruise will begin on Friday, at 2:30 p.m. with a new route taking cars past the city park. Check your next edition of *The Arnold Sentinel* for a detailed map of the cruise route. The signature event will begin Saturday morning at 8:30 a.m. with the Arnold/Dunning road closing at 7:00 a.m. The spectacle of more than 150 cars lined up on North Carroll street will impress the most jaded motorsport fan.

Once again, Great Plains Communication is sponsoring the barbecue held in the city park. Serving will begin at 5:30 p.m. Following the meal, a very special entertainment program will begin at 6:00 p.m., with Comedian/Magician Gail Biewar providing laughs and amusement with his very family friendly jokes and tricks. The award presentations will begin at 7:00 followed by a free dance with music from the musician “Rascal” at Grazers Bar & Grill. Dusk will be greeted with a fireworks display celebrating the 20th running of the Sandhills Open Road Challenge.

## Loup Basin Public Health Department Moves to Phase IV

Loup Basin Public Health Department is moving into Phase IV as of July 24, 2020. Phase IV removes all restrictions from the Directed Health Measures except indoor events having a 75% occupancy. Guidance still states that individuals should try to maintain 6 feet distance from groups along with the use of face coverings.

With the change in Directed Health Measures, large-scale social events including weddings, concerts, county fairs, community celebrations and family reunions will be more prevalent. This increase brings the probability of additional community exposure to COVID-19. If you choose to attend one of these events, it is strongly encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms, practice strict social

distancing and wear a mask when out in public. If you or someone in your family becomes symptomatic, self-isolate at home and contact your primary care physician or Test Nebraska for COVID-19 testing options. “We want to do our part to help protect each individual within our district. Part of that includes educating the general public about possible exposures and how best to protect themselves,” stated Charles Cone, Director. “As we move into Phase IV, the likelihood of community spread is bound to increase as individuals become more comfortable venturing out. We want to remind the public that it is their choice in what extent they choose to participate.

## Historical Marker Placed at Nansel's Best Service



Courtesy photo

Four generations of the Nansels (from left) Brad Nansel, Bryce Nansel (holding son Carter) and Ralph Nansel stand by the new historical marker placed at Nansel's Best Service.

Rotary Historical Marker project organizer Berni Crow has been busy, with another historical marker recently placed at Nansel's Best Service. The marker reads as follows:

**John Priess's Station -**

**1923**

**Nansel Oil - 1970**

In 1905, Henry Imboden's Liv-

ery Barn was built on this site.

Will Judkin's bought the barn

around 1908 and sold it in

1911. Pleasant Phifer, Judkin's brother-in-law, bought the livery that same year, anticipating increased business. Therefore, he added more teams and buggies and put in a cement floor.

The barn was torn down in 1920. Around that time, John Priess came in from his farm, bought the Phifer barn corner, and put up the first building in town that was designed to be a filling station.

Priess's Station was ready for business by October of 1923.

In the mid 1920's, work was progressing on the road between Broken Bow and Stapleton. This highway came to be known as the “White Way” highway (Hwy 92) for several years. It passed right by Priess's new gas station, and five other gas stations in Arnold. At one time, Walt Skinner owned the Priess Gas

Station leasing it to H.A. Murphy, then to Ed Erickson and his father-in-law Joe Henry, during the years 1932-1937. Ed Erickson & Joe Henry had purchased their E & H Oil Co. from Skinner. Erickson and Henry sold their station to Dwight and Eva Best who renamed it D. Best Oil Co.. The Bests, from Oconto, bought the station in 1953, and remodeled the building. It's new ‘modern look’ had very little resemblance to its original appearance. Leonard Croghan worked in the gas station while the Bests owned it. Ralph and Karla Nansel and Don Flint leased from the Bests in the early 1970s. Flint had been operating Dwight Best's Service Station for several years, changing the name to “Don's Service”. However, by 1973, Flint had moved east across the street into the former Roman's Station, added an office, and sold western tack for four years.

Ralph and Karla Nansel bought the adjoining Mobil Tank business, and upon Flint's move in 1973, gained management of both. Calvin Joy came aboard in 1975, and in Ralph's words “was a life-saver”. The former “Best Station”, had operated as “Cal's Best Service” for a number of years. Since Ralph had worked for the Bests starting in 1966, it's safe to say that he has been in the business of helping people for 54 years. Ralph Nansel and Cal Joy continued to operate the station. Cal worked with Nansels for a total of 35 years until his retirement in September 2010. Ralph's son Brad had worked at the station from 1975 to 1980. In 1983, Brad and wife Connie came aboard again and have been there ever since. At the pres-

ent time, Nansel's Best has had three generations of Nansels working the station, adding Brad's son Bryce in 2010. Since the 1950's, much of the station has remained the same as it was in the earlier years. When the John Deere store next to them moved to a different location, that building became part of Nansel's Best, and they wondered how they had ever run the business without that extra space. In Ralph's many years at the station, he had only two bookkeepers, Grandma and Jan. Grandma Olson (Leuna) was a bookkeeper for Dwight Best and came with the business to Ralph; she was his mother in law. She had started with Dwight in the early 60's and worked until 1987. Everybody called her ‘Grandma’ throughout the years that she did books for Dwight, Nansel Oil Co., and Brad and Cal. Jan Eastwood is part of the ‘family’, at least it seems so, since she has been Nansel's bookkeeper for 32 years. Nansel's Best Service-Sinclair has seen four generations of Nansels on the “Corner” (their name for it) and has sold fuel for Mobil, Conoco, and Sinclair. Nansel Oil Co. is also an important part of their business. (Some information for the markers was taken from the book “One Hundred Years on the South Loup” by Norene Hall Mills. Written and produced by Berni Crow 5/28/20)

A reminder that vintage photos of Arnold businesses are needed to complete the Historical Marker project. Contact Berni Crow, who will scan and return the photos immediately.