

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021

CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

(USPS 032480)

SINGLE COPY: 75 CENTS

VOLUME 105, NUMBER 25

Student-ran business is raising funds for new elective class.

“Crime Detectives” are at Work In Forensic Lab



Courtesy photo

In Arnold High's new elective forensics class, Faith Bierman (peering into the microscope) and Carly Gracey are learning microscope skills to help them identify an unknown substance found at a crime scene.

By Janet Larreau

Through a fundraising effort by students and private donations, Arnold Public School's science department is expanding to provide some pretty amazing learning opportunities for the kids.

Last spring, science teacher Melissa Sandager asked the administration if she could teach an elective forensics class instead of physics, saying that the students seemed very interested in this new class that has become popular in larger schools. Through the class, students learn critical thinking topics such as the CSI process, observation skills, and deductive reasoning.

“I wanted to offer a class that was hands-on and taught real-life lab and critical thinking skills. This class is really for



Courtesy photo

Science teacher Melissa Sandager shows Shayla Tickle how to collect evidence from a crime scene. Forensics classes are becoming very popular in larger schools, and with permission from Arnold's School Board, the class has now been added to the curriculum.

Gel-electrophoresis machine purchased with donations.

everyone. A lot of times, science electives are meant for college-bound students and can be really tough. These are offered, but I wanted a class that could help students explore different science careers and just have some fun with school,” said Mrs. Sandager. “When I found out last May that I could teach the class, I knew that I wanted to try to make it as hands-on as possible so that the students could get real-life lab experience. I remember doing a Gel-electrophoresis lab in college and it was one of the best educational experiences that have stuck with me. I wanted to bring it to Arnold.”

In order to help fund future labs and projects, the students started fundraising last year on Mother's Day. The art and science programs started working together to make products to sell. A social media group and “store” called The Birdhouse

shows off what the kids have been making to fund their projects.

“We thought it was very important for the students to be involved in making these opportunities happen. They are so invested in their education and are excited to bring new experiences into the school,” said Mrs. Sandager.

The science class makes soap and plants, switching between forensics and ag-bio every year. This class has made \$2,500 since last spring. The art class sells Arnold t-shirts and the shop class is making lawn signs. Students involved are in grades 10-12.

So far, basic crime scene materials such as fingerprinting materials and evidence markers have been purchased. Nothing too exciting, but the best is yet to come.

Students will also learn lab skills such as fingerprinting,

ballistic analysis, and DNA typing thanks to Mrs. Sandager's dream machine, which has been purchased. The Gel-electrophoresis machine is used for separation and analysis of macromolecules (DNA, RNA and proteins) and their fragments, based on their size and charge. It uses an electric field to move the molecules through a gel made of agarose. When the electric field is applied, the

larger molecules move more slowly through the gel, while the smaller molecules move faster. The different sized molecules form distinct bands on the gel. The bands can be used to compare DNA from a crime scene to DNA taken from a suspect.

Without fundraising and two generous donations, this very

See Detectives at Work,
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Christmas Around Town Is Dec. 8

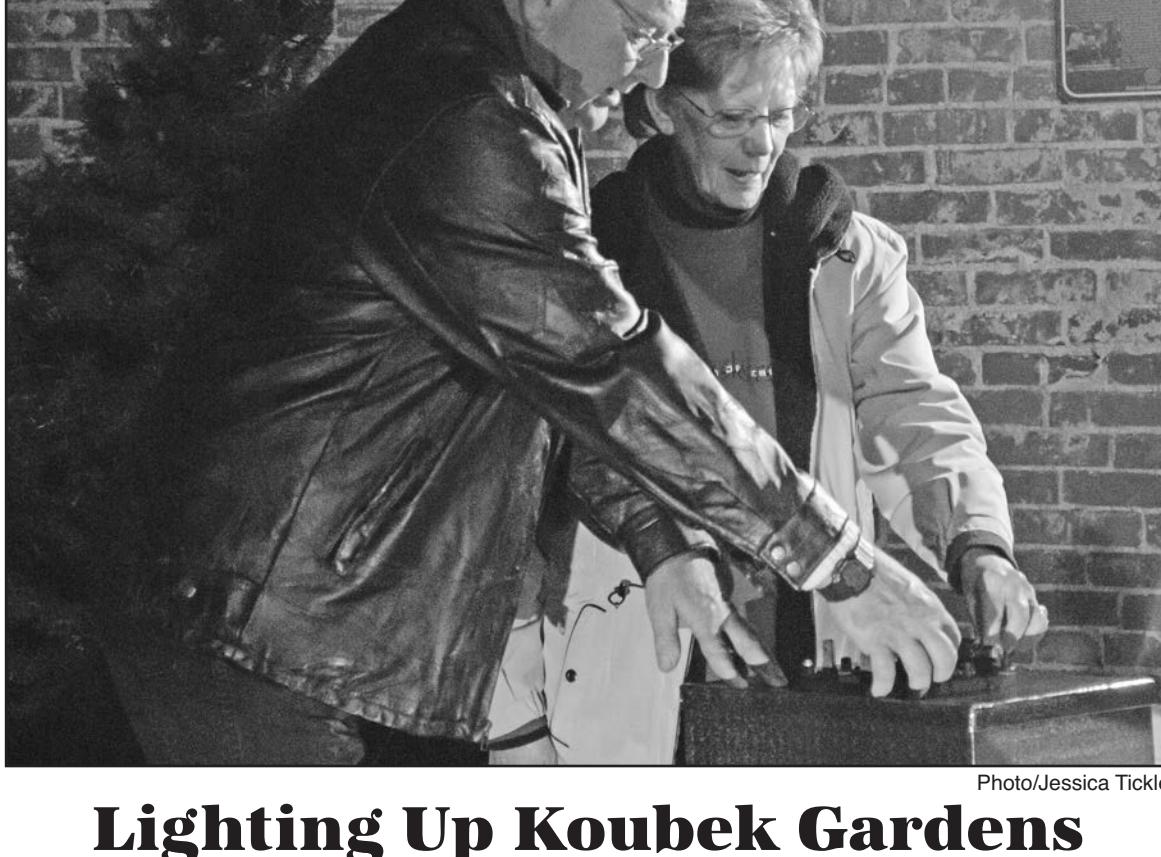
Everything is lined up for the annual Chamber-sponsored Christmas Around Town, set for Wednesday, December 8. Holding all events in downtown Arnold was such a hit last year, that the same will be done in 2021.

Retail businesses are planning special hours, discounts, and drawings, and eateries are offering some specials of their own.

Santa will be listening to kids' wish lists and passing out treats at Koubek Gardens from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Buddy the Elf and The Grinch will be making special appearances. At the same time, kids and their parents will have the chance to pet and interact with live reindeer.

Everyone is also invited to load up on Main Street in front of Sandhills Motors old red shop for a hayrack ride from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

For more detailed information on the day's activities, please turn to page 8.



Photo/Jessica Tickle

Lighting Up Koubek Gardens

As a crowd of about 75 people count down from 5, Peter Koubek and Sharon Forrester turn the switch to light up Koubek Gardens Saturday night during a special ceremony organized by the Arnold Economic Development Corporation. Sharon donated nine Christmas trees for the project from the collection of the late Bob Forrester, who as everyone knows, loved Christmas. Peter and his family donated the property to provide a green space for the town to enjoy, which has definitely served its purpose. Everyone attending enjoyed the beautiful display, hot cocoa and popcorn, and Christmas carols sung by Arnold's own Men on the Mountain quartet. The AEDC plans to make the lighting ceremony an annual event to kick off the Christmas season.



Photo/Debbie Connelly

Willing Volunteers

As kids line up, Max Smith and Kenny and Patty Goodenow attach labels to Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes at the annual packing party held on November 18. Many adult volunteers turned out to help in the school's gymnasium, as over 1,000 shoeboxes were prepared to be shipped around the world. Please turn to page 4 to read the complete report by organizer Melody Jennings.