

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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Students Go On Reading Safari

Peter Brunette brings first animal show of its kind to Arnold Public School



Jessica Tickle photo

Elementary Principal Chanc McIntosh watches over Jett Morgan, Ava Bierman, Ricky Viter, Christian Mills and Chief Educational Adventurer Peter Brunette as they go on a balloon animal adventure with a diamond-back balloon snake in the school's auditorium in March.

Students at Arnold Public Schools had a rare treat in March, when Peter Brunette from Balloon Animal Adventures presented a show in the school's auditorium. The guest performance was the high point of Read Across America activities. Balloon Animal Adventures is brand-new and the first animal show of its kind.

"APS celebrates Read Across America each year around Dr. Seuss's birthday. This year we chose the theme of animals because Dr. Seuss's books have such creative animals and he wrote *What Pet Should I Get*,"

said librarian Debby Moninger. "The teachers all had activities in their room, but Peter's show was the culmination."

Mrs. Moninger learned about Brunette from the Central Plains Library System. Brunette, who has a degree in biology, has devoted his life to educating and entertaining children and adults. He ran the "Zoo 2 You" at the world renowned Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, building it from scratch into an award winning, internationally known phenomenon which reached tens of thousands of people every

year.

During the Balloon Animal Adventures show, Brunette shared interesting information about the animals' habitat, adaptations, and their superpowers. The show was very interactive with both the students and Mr. McIntosh learning how to survive the wild animal encounters. Some of the wild animals that were featured included the lion, elephant, aye-aye, bat, monkey, chicken, fire ant, diamond-backed rattle snake, and tree frog.

"Several of the teachers com-

mented that the Balloon Animal Safari was their favorite RAA activity because it was educational, entertaining, and very active," said Mrs. Moninger.

Some of the other events during the week included the annual book fair and a visit with local author Yvette Mannon and her dog Cookie. The author did a book reading and answered questions with students in Grades K-2 and did a writer's workshop with students in Grades 6-8 where she talked about the writing process and turning biographical events into a children's story.

Village Board Holds Special Meeting

The Arnold Village Board held a special meeting on March 7 with a short agenda.

A public hearing was held regarding the application of EB Ventures LLC, DBA The Exchange for a Class D retail liquor license. No one from the floor had any objections to the application during the open hearing. Members unanimously voted to recommend the issuance of the license.

Members discussed the quotes from Eakes Office Solutions and All Makes for office furniture for the Village office. Members voted to authorize the clerk to order the office furniture from Eakes in the amount of \$7,853.63, and to add a keyboard tray under the desk.

After discussion on snow removal, Brent Kulp said that for safety reasons, Village employees should not work alone on the weekends.

Filings Received for General Election

Custer County Clerk Conni Gracey reported last week that filings for open positions on local boards. All candidates will be on the General Election ballot.

For Supervisor District 5, the position of Don Olson will expire. Olson did not re-file.

Charles "Chip" Blowers filed for the open position by the deadline.

There are three open positions on the Arnold School District #89 board:

Incumbents Merle Bierman and Joe Cool re-filed by the deadline.

Incumbent Shane Cool did not re-file.

Non-incumbent Jennifer Dalrymple filed by the deadline.

Filing Deadlines for Arnold Village and Township Boards will be July 15 for incumbents and August 1 for non-incumbents.

Rotary Club's Pancake Supper Will Raise Money for District Project in Kenya

Supper scheduled for Thursday, March 24

By Janet Larreau

The Arnold Rotary Club will be raising money for a special project at their annual pancake supper set for Thursday, March 24. The project, titled "Give a child a safe foot forward," will provide shoes for kids in Kenya. The shoes that will be purchased cost \$22.00 a pair.

Louise Hoffmann, president of the North Platte Rotary Club, made her first visit to Kenya in January of 2022 and saw firsthand the needs of the children. In a school they visited, 70 percent of the kids were orphans.

"Poverty seems to be a big driver, along with the issues of drugs and alcohol. Grandparents play a large role in caring for the children. When they are no longer able, the kids are forced to the streets. They are sometimes victims of abuse and feel safer on the streets than at home," she said. "Because of poverty, the kids typically wear flip flops rather than shoes. When they run and play, they kick off the flip flops and are barefoot. The continual exposure to dirt makes the kids susceptible to chiggers that embed in the feet and spread."

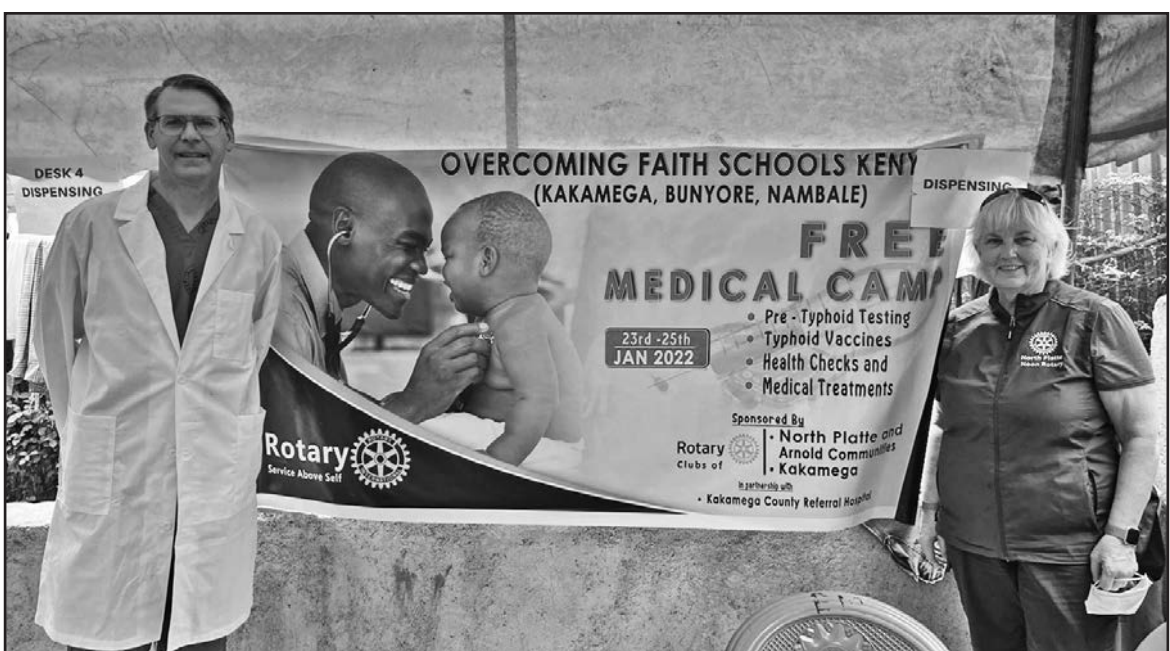
This isn't the first time that the Arnold Rotary Club has donated towards the needs of children in Kenya. The club

contributed \$1,000.00 to a project organized by five children from McDaid School in North Platte to replace textbooks and supplies for the school in Kakamega that burned down. The goal was to raise \$3,000.00 and the kids raised over \$12,000.00. In discussion with the head of the school in Kakamega, it was determined that the medical camps were the next critical need. The Arnold club's donation was used to purchase typhoid vaccines and the club was named as one of the medical camp sponsors.

The medical camps are the result of Dr. Eric Schwartzkopf's desire to return to Kenya to provide care. The doctor, who previously practiced in North Platte, had spent time in Kenya during his residency. A good friend of Dr. Kim Baxter, he was aware of the eye care missions to Kenya and saw an opportunity to help.

"Typhoid is dangerous for children and can cause life-threatening complications. Most Kenyan children are not vaccinated due to the vaccine cost of \$13.00 per dose. The kids also lack routine medical care," said Hoffmann.

During the camps, the physicians, including Dr. Schwartzkopf and two physicians from Kakamega County Hospital, did a general physi-



Courtesy photo

Dr. Eric Schwartzkopf and North Platte Rotary Club President Louise Hoffmann pictured standing beside the Medical Camp sponsor banner in Kenya. The Arnold Rotary Club is listed as one of the sponsors of this important project.

cal. As needed, the kids were given over the counter medications for head and stomach aches. During the three days of medical camps, 315 students were tested for typhoid with 350 vaccinations administered. Three-hundred-thirty kids received deworming medication and multivitamins.

North Platte Rotary, with assistance from 16 District 5630 Rotary clubs and private donors, has initiated a project to build a medical clinic in Shikunga, Kenya. Eye care clinics have been held in this area for many years.

"The residents have no access to medical care and are isolated due to lack of transportation and financial resources," said Hoffmann. "The plan is for the medical clinic to provide primary care with assistance from medical students. A number of

US specialists have expressed interest in providing care which would be in conjunction with Kakamega County Hospital, which has formed a strong partnership with the Rotary as the recipient of a very successful Rotary Global Grant to improve maternal and infant care."

In Kenya, the government doesn't fund education. Most of the schools are associated with a faith-based organization. If the parents are able, they pay a fee to cover the school uniform, books, supplies and the teachers. In the elementary setting it is about \$400.00 per year. When the kids are in eighth grade, they are tested to determine their high school placement. A student who has lower test scores would most likely be placed in a trade school which costs about \$500.00 a year. An

upper school is about \$1,000.00. The top high schools are close to \$2,000.00 per year.

One of the major challenges for Kakamega County is the lack of land. The population is 1,867,579, but the area is only 1,171 sq. miles, which is less than half of the size of Custer County. The major industry in the area was a huge sugar processing plant that was closed by the government due to mismanagement. With the closure of the plant, the farmers weren't able to process their main cash crop.

"The challenges of the county are widespread levels of poverty, weak economy characterized by dilapidated infrastructure, a low industrial base and decreasing productivity across all the sectors, alco-