

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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Old Fashioned “Barn Raising” Helps Couple In Time of Need

Volunteers show up to frame home southeast of Arnold



Bringing all of the equipment needed, friends from near and far quickly worked on framing the loft of the 2,500 sq. ft. barn-style home of Billy and Alanna Hulse southeast of Arnold in mid-March while Billy was in hospice with Alanna. - Courtesy photo

By Janet Larreau

Sometimes life just doesn't give you enough time.

Time to see a dream come true.

When Billy and Alanna (Snyder) Hulse began planning to build their new barn-style home southeast of Arnold, they chose a piece of land where she grew up. Married for 13 years this June, but also knowing each other for 20-plus years, the couple was excited to start a new life's chapter. With the blueprints only in his mind, Billy started the project last fall, and with help from Jeff Kottwitz, he completed the basement, which is the main living area. All that was left by March was framing and drying in the loft area.

But everything came to a halt just a few weeks ago,

when Alanna began experiencing back pain.

“We thought it was just a pinched nerve or sciatica,” said Billy. They took her into emergency, where she was diagnosed with Stage 4 metastatic breast cancer. It was everywhere. It all happened so fast.”

With the diagnosis, the couple learned that Alanna had only a few weeks left to live. Choosing quality time over quantity, Alanna went into hospice care.

While waiting to finish construction on their home, the Hulses had been living in a small apartment at Red Fern Electric in Callaway. When owner Ed Lashley was told the bad news, he called Matt Baldwin, who now farms for Shane Cool, but had carpentry experience.

“He asked me if I would frame up the house, because he had seen some



One by one, volunteers who helped with the framing signed their name on a board.

of my work. Shane said there was probably nobody better than me, but I needed to be surrounded by carpenters,” said Matt. Matt got on the horn, people started saying yes and showed up with whatever was needed. Within four days – a Thursday through Sunday – they got it framed. Matt said last Wednesday that just one more day was needed for the house to be completely dried in and protected from the elements.

“It's amazing that some of these people, without any personal gain or business gain, just showed up,” said Matt, who oversaw the project with Lashley. “None of us did it for recognition, but these people with businesses, these guys deserve recognition for pausing their business and coming out. Some others would have been there, but for the fires. Mills Hardware was right there with anything that was needed.”

“They knew I needed to get it done, and with Alanna in hospice, they knew I wouldn't leave her side,” said Billy. “They wanted it to be a surprise and just do it, but they couldn't do that because the blueprints were in my head. Fortunately, Matt could see it too.”

On Monday, March 16, Alanna had the chance to see their home. She was brought by ambulance.

“We are overwhelmed,” said Billy. “This magni-

tude of compassion... It's God's country here, and it's showing. It's like nothing I've ever seen before in my life. It's hard to be on the receiving end of this. Alanna has a huge heart, and we've always been the giver, not the receiver, and it's come back ten-fold. I know whatever happens, this will always be my home for the rest of my life. I'm never going anywhere else.”

See **Barn Raising**, page 2.

Egg Hunt Is Saturday

Arnold Chamber and the National and Junior Honor Society is inviting all children to their annual Easter Egg Hunt, Saturday, March 28., at 11:00 a.m., at the city park. The rain date has been set for April 4 at 11:00 a.m.

Bring your own bag to collect eggs and have some egg-citing fun.

There will be a tote at the park to donate eggs back for next year and a tote at Mills Hardware to donate eggs for one week after the hunt.

The event is organized by Macy Koubek.



Gary Zalud and Dan Holtz will be entertaining the crowd at tonight's Rotary Pancake Feed.

Entertainment Planned for Rotary Pancake Feed

Dan Holtz and Gary Zalud will be performing at the Rotary pancake feed, scheduled on March 26, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at the community center. There's no charge, just a bonus for your donation.

They will be performing for an hour singing songs about fascinating stories from Nebraska and Great Plains history.

Dan and Gary are retired professors from Peru State College and University of South Dakota in Vermillion.

They are from Ord and started singing together in 1975. The duo brings Nebraska and Great Plains history alive through their acoustic-electric renditions of Holtz's and Zalud's story songs.

This program was made possible by Humanities of Nebraska.

Board Hears Update on Old Mill Park

Justin Strasburg gave Village Board members an update on projects at Old Mill Park at their regular meeting held on March 9. He reported that the bathroom concrete was poured in the last week of February and the block is approximately half laid. Once the block is finished, the rest of the construction will be completed. The septic tank is scheduled to be installed this month by Kirks Septic out of Cozad. It will be a concrete tank and will go west of the bathroom. Plumbing will follow with construction performed by TJ Elliot. Electrical is in the works, also, and will be tied to the service on the north side of the current concession building.

The lighting for the infield is scheduled to be installed by the end of April. Robert Keeney from Callaway will be doing the work. If the lighting works well, it would be nice to complete and upgrade the rest. On that note, Strasburg said they are going to try and salvage good parts from the few fixtures that they take down and use the lens for some of the old lights they are keeping.

The batting cage poles

were set last summer and will be strung sometime in April. They would like to get the concrete swept off.

After these projects are completed, Strasburg gave some thoughts on the next steps. The crow's nest needs work done to stop the rot. This has been discussed and was thought it would fall under the parks budget for upkeep. The scoreboard has been looked into, and they would like to renovate it to working order. It was originally an Eagle Scout project, and the family of the Eagle Scout said they would foot the bill if it is done. They would like to

place plastic corrugated safety plastic on all exterior fencing now that the fence has been repaired, and feel it would be a good upgrade. Strasburg said Little League should have funding for this project and be able to complete the work. They would also like to mount a permanent flagpole. Currently, an expandable one has been used, and they last about three years.

SORC Sign

Becky Dailey requested permission for SORC to put up a sign on Margie McDowell's land, just west of mile marker 250 and that the Village would take ownership of

the sign. Dailey said that according to the Nebraska Department of Transportation's regulations, the Village must own the sign. SORC has an agreement from Margie McDowell granting permission to put the sign on her property. SORC will be responsible for upkeep of the sign. After discussion, the Board gave its permission, provided the department of transportation approves the application.

In other business, the Board:

Heard AEDC Director Cheryl Carson's update.

See **Village Hears Update**, page 10



The bathrooms at Old Mill Park are starting to take shape. Justin Strasburg submitted an update on the project to the Village Board.