

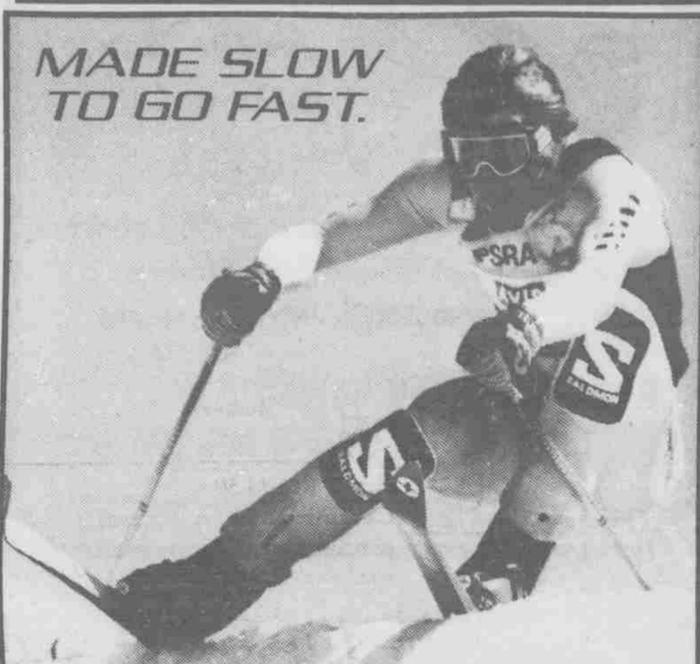


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STEVE HILL '84 DN

Let it snow! Arthur folks have a few cards up their sleeves...

By Jim Rasmussen
Daily Nebraskan Senior Reporter

For residents of Arthur, a Nebraska Sandhills town with a population of 125, the Christmas season brings added social activity and celebrations.

Arthur, about 37 miles north of Ogallala, serves as the Arthur county seat. That's only natural, since Arthur is the only town in a county which boasted 513 residents in 1980.

Arthur probably couldn't be called a bustling community, but residents say activity does pick up around Christmas.

"It gets pretty busy around the first of December," said Dolores Daly. "There are a lot of social activities."

Mrs. Daly and her husband Swede own the Country Inn, Arthur's only cafe.

The social activities include Christmas programs at the county's three rural schools, Arthur County High School and Arthur's three churches; a pancake supper sponsored by the Lions Club; a dance at the Longbranch, Arthur's only bar; and free coffee, donuts and cookies served at Arthur businesses.

Pitch players

Over at the Longbranch, customers usually play pitch on snowy days.

"I swear, if the cards quit being made, I don't know what they'd do," said Cheryl Saul, who with husband Myron, owns the Longbranch. "They play pitch here, and then they play pitch out in the country, and then they come back here and play."

What else do people do for fun in Arthur during the Christmas season?

"Pitch," Mrs. Saul said. "That's it."

Well, not quite. Along with the Christmas programs and other activities, the families of Arthur County get together to celebrate the holidays.

"It's a very big family community," Julie Green said. "There are a lot of big families up here that have intermarried, and they

have big family dinners."

Open houses

Mrs. Green said her husband Walter both graduated from UNL in the early 1970s. The Greens manage a ranch near Arthur. After experiencing both city life and country life, Mrs. Green said she enjoys the country — especially during the Christmas season.

"There's quite a sense of community involvement," she said. "All the stores have open houses, with free cookies and coffee and things, and it's really nice."

A person could attend all the open houses in one afternoon. Besides the Country Inn and the Longbranch, Arthur features two gas stations, a grocery store, a feed store, a meat locker and a veterinary clinic. They may not be many in number, but Arthur's business people keep up the Christmas spirit.

"We want to show our customers that we appreciate them throwing us their business," Mrs. Daly said.

The biggest party of the season takes place at the Longbranch.

"We usually have a dance and live music," Mrs. Saul said. We get a lot of people for it, but a lot depends on the weather."

If the weather's bad, people might stay home and play pitch.



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