

BACKUS *Community Center*

Celebrating Marcia Bringedahl



My wife Linda and I first met Marcia in 2008 shortly after Richard had passed away. Backus was in need of a new Publicity and Advertising Chairperson and I think Marcia was looking for a volunteer opportunity. Marcia had 20 years of newspaper, proofreading, typesetting, office management and book-keeping experience and proved to be the perfect match for Backus' needs. Our friendship and relationship continued to grow from that point on.

Having Marcia as our Publicity and Advertising person was like having a full-time staff person on board. Lynn Naeckel, one of Marcia's friends, commented on Marcia's passing, "where are we going to find three people in the community to fill her shoes?" Marcia was active in two orchestras, Tuesday Musicales, Zion Lutheran Church and as a member of the Backus Board

of Directors since 2009.

Needless to say Marcia did a fantastic job of promoting Backus through news releases, advertising, radio ads, scheduling radio interviews, tickets to radio auction, promoting and participating in events. However it was in proofreading that I came to depend on Marcia the most. Not only did she do a thorough job of reading and editing what I wrote, but she would tactfully suggest a different word or on occasion, point out that I used the same word three times in one sentence.

But the best thing about having Marcia proofread what I wrote, whether it was a grant application, article for the newspaper or Alumni News, was that she was always so complimentary and encouraging. She boosted my confidence and self-esteem every time she proof read my work. How could I ever mind a few red pen marks with Marcia's bubbly and enthusiastic compliments coming back to me?

Marcia not only became part of the "Backus Family," she also began to feel like "family" to Linda and me. Many

Norwegian/Lutheran similarities emerged as we got to know each other. Her parents were Norwegian – my mother's family was all Norwegian. We learned about growing up in Fargo (my parents lived in Fargo for almost 20 years). Marcia attended a private Lutheran College – Concordia. I attended a private Lutheran College – Gustavus Adolphus. Marcia and Richard were married while she was in college. Linda and I were married my senior year in college. We attended Zion Lutheran Church together. Marcia encouraged us to join the Sons of Norway Lodge. She often brought food for us to enjoy (which we did!). Linda and Marcia often collaborated on "gift baskets" for Backus fundraisers. Our niece graduated from Carlton College as did Marcia's grandson Tyler. We both celebrated our excitement over new "Wisconsin" babies in the family: Marcia's great-granddaughter Lana our granddaughter Lily; both born about the same time. Linda and Marcia visited, talked on the phone, worked on projects together, shared stories and even some secrets.

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Board of Directors

*James Bujold,
President*

*Sherrie Lessard,
Vice President*

*Betsy Ward,
Secretary*

*David McKee,
Treasurer*

Board Members

*Kay Arnold
Patti Ballan
Julie Bartkowski
Tyler Borgen
Marcia Bringedahl
(deceased)*

*John Faith
Donna Frederickson
Beth Lowthian
Beth Nelson
Pastor Steve Olson
Barb Albert, Emeritus
Board Member*

Backus Staff

*Executive Director
Ward Merrill*

*Business Manager
Hoa Sobczynski*

*Event Coordinator
Robin Bjorkquist*

*Event Staff
Jill Malone*

*Kitchen Supervisor
Mary Ann Lien*

*Cook
Rick DeBenedet*

*Custodian
Jerry Vohler*

Marcia Bringedahl, continued



Ward Merrill, Dan Chouinard, Kevin Kling & Marcia—she was so excited to have these gentlemen perform at Backus Community Center on May 2, 2014

The most telling secret that Marcia let us in on was that the Sons of Norway often purchased frozen meatballs rather than making them from scratch – you can imagine how devastating that was. Linda told Marcia that she had used the same frozen meatballs and passed them off at our house until discovered by one of our sons. Linda confided recently that Marcia was like an older sister to her.



I met Marcia when I joined Backus Staff and Tuesday Musicale in 2009. Marcia was always available when I needed her. I did not have to worry about any advertising for Backus and Tuesday Musicale's events. She often called to see if I needed special office supplies when she shopped with her family in Bemidji. Our relationship had grown through the fundraising events for Backus and Tuesday Musicale. I could count on Marcia to shop with me at Supper One Foods getting supplies for making egg-rolls. We had so much fun planning and preparing a Têt Dinner for Tuesday Musicale in last February. I am blessed to know Marcia the short six years we were friends. I miss calling Marcia sometime three or four times a day to talk about advertising schedules, question her about advertising costs and more. I miss her joyful laugh, her cheerful comments, and her beautiful personality.

—Hoa Sobczynski



Marcia with Mona Johnson at a Backus volunteer luncheon

Marcia was continually in our thoughts and prayers over the past several months. Unsure about visiting, we reached out with flowers or a card. I thought about her frequently as I wrote a grant application on September 30 and October

1. As I attached the "List of Current Backus Board Members" to the grant, I reflected on all Marcia had meant to Backus over her eight years of volunteer work for us. I wondered, would this be the final time Marcia's name appeared on the "List of Current Board Members." Marcia passed away the next day.

—Ward Merrill

I had heard of Marcia Bringedahl, she came into The Journal often while I worked there. I sat in my corner, doing my work, listening to her happy chatter with the newsroom staff.

When the time came to leave The Journal, I never knew that Marcia Bringedahl would be the person to lead me to "the perfect job I never knew I wanted" as I didn't know she even knew my name.

Ward Merrill called me a few days after I had left the newspaper, wondering if I would be interested in the event coordinator position at Backus.

Marcia had noticed I was no longer in my corner at the newspaper and had suggested Ward give me a call.

I had been to Backus a few times, but didn't know much about it. What I did know was that a fast-paced, exciting environment working with wonderful people trying to make a difference in our community sounded like a great job! I started two days later.

Thanks to Marcia Bringedahl, I have had the privilege to coordinate events at Backus for three years now. I am so grateful for her awareness of those around her and that she thought enough of me, without even knowing me, to recommend me to Backus. She will be tremendously missed.

—Robin Bjorkquist

Food Distribution Helps Keep Food Out of Landfill

The best place to store surplus food is in people's stomachs! Therefore, we have made an effort locally to provide food to individuals without question. To qualify, they just have to be hungry and be able to eat!

Ruby's Pantry is "a hand up, not a hand out." In reality, people feel good helping the organization with a small financial contribution. Participants receive an abundance of food.

When attending one of our distributions you are truly a guest and partner in this effort. A guest because our volunteers are there to serve you with enthusiasm and partner because you are given an "opportunity for dignity" by donating \$20 to help cover the operational cost.

Ruby's Pantry has no government funding. It is primarily funded by the contributions of our guests. Please bring cash to help to simplify bookkeeping and two large boxes or laundry baskets. We do not sell food!



When you arrive at a distribution for the first time you will need to register and then sign in. This is a simple registration that requires no documentation. After the first time you will need to simply sign in. The \$20 is donated first, then your registration form is handed in/signed in and you will be given a number.

Then you will wait until your number is called and you will go through a line where the food is then placed in your boxes. Although you aren't required to take anything that you do not want we encourage you to take it and share with your family members, neighbors and friends.

Volunteers are on hand to assist you in the line and your food will be carried out for you. Guests simply drive up on the west side of Backus; volunteers load your food into your vehicle.

Ruby's Pantry is the second Monday of each month. The next one will be held Monday, November 9 at Backus Community Center, 900 5th Street, International Falls.



Drive for Warmth—free winter gear
Saturday, November 7 | 10 am—3 pm
Sunday, November 8 | noon—5 pm
Room 208—209 (east hallway, second floor)

A cartoon illustration of a person wearing a blue winter coat with a white fur-lined hood and blue mittens, standing in the snow.

TO THE MAX
give DAY 
NOV 12, 2015

The logo for "Give to the Max Day" features the words "TO THE MAX" in blue, "give DAY" in blue and green, and a green outline of the state of Minnesota. Below this is the date "NOV 12, 2015" in blue.

Give to the Max Day was created in 2009 to launch GiveMN, a collaborative venture led by Minnesota Community Foundation and many other organizations committed to helping make our state a better place.

That initial spark touched off a blast of online giving — \$14 million in 24 hours. Since then, Give to the Max Day has become an annual tradition. Every year thousands of organizations

and individuals generate donations and excitement for Minnesota causes that are working to improve the quality of life for all Minnesotans.

Join the giving on November 12—search for Citizens for Backus AB to donate to YOUR LOCAL community center!

Backus Community Center operates by way of multiple funding sources. We receive dollars from the city, county, various grants written throughout the year, and we value the donation and membership dollars that come from folks like you—those who use the building in many ways, or maybe just see the value in preserving historic buildings.

We sincerely thank you!



900 Fifth Street
International Falls MN 56649
(218) 285-7225
www.backusab.org

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“Historic Backus Community Center, the heart of International Falls, where all generations celebrate arts, culture, recreation, wellness and life-long learning.”

Find us online!
www.backusab.org

Upcoming Events

- **November 9** Ruby's Pantry 5:00 to 6:30 pm
- **November 13** Pre-Show Soup & Sandwich Supper sponsored by Waschke Family GM Center 5:00 pm
- **November 13** Border Concert Roy & Rosemary 7 pm
- **December 4** KAO Logging Camp Christmas
- **December 14** Ruby's Pantry 5:00 to 6:30 pm
- **December 15** St Thomas Christmas Program 6:30
- **January 11** Ruby's Pantry 5:00 to 6:30 pm
- **January 16** Icebox Days Chili Challenge & Turkey Bowling Noon to 2:00 pm
- **January 24** Arrowhead 135 Ultra Marathon Spaghetti Feed
- **January 28** On the Edge Film Festival
- **January 30** Border Concert: Alaskan Odyssey 7 pm
- **February 5** Top the Tater Dinner sponsored by Bremer Bank 5:00 to 6:30 pm
- **February 5** Sister 7:00 pm
- **February 8** Ruby's Pantry 5:00 to 6:30 pm
- **February 13** Tuesday Musicale's TET - Vietnamese New Year Special Dinner 6:00 pm
- **February 15** Contractor Class 8:00 am
- **February 19** Backstage Taco Bar sponsored by Up North Builders 7:00 pm
- **February 19** Baby Boomer Comedy Show 7:00 pm
- **February 27** Borealis Bards Room to Act
- **March 5** Backstage Bistro sponsored by Coca-Cola Bottling 7:00 pm
- **March 5** Hobo Nephews of Uncle Frank 7:00 pm
- **March 14** Ruby's Pantry 5:00 to 6:30 pm
- **March 18** Ethnic Food Festival 5:30 to 7:00 pm
- **April 1** MN Deer Hunters Association Banquet

Dates Subject to Change

For more details and updates, visit

www.backusab.org

Or stop by the office at 900 5th Street