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BROADCASTS!

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September 2013

From the Director's Desk

As summer begins easing into fall I reflect back on the past three months and look forward to a busy season of concerts, plays, programs and special events at Backus. In years past we could catch our breath a bit during the summer months but that's no longer true. The summer of 2013 was busier than ever with hundreds of children participating in the free Summer Food Service Program Monday through Friday each week. This summer Backus served 7,560 meals to children and parents in need. The "Community Café" continued on Tuesday and Thursday evenings with attendance averaging 65 per evening. Over 3,500 meals have been served since the program began last December. Summer meals are supported by the MN Department of Education and

the U.S. Department of Agriculture in addition to funds from the Otto Bremer Foundation. Both food programs are supported by Backus and the Falls Hunger Coalition with additional funds from the Northland Foundation and the Marshall N. Knudson Family Community Fund. The Summer Arts week drew 65+ kids and included new classes in music and radio in addition to an art show and production of "Peter Pan." Open gyms engaged as many as 70+ Kids on a daily basis and a "kids' garden" was planted, grew and is being harvested on the east side of the building. For three months kids filled the building and the "school" vibrated with their presence.

It's been much quieter since Labor Day. Our attention is focused on several new efforts

aimed at enriching the community and citizens of all ages. For the first time Backus Community Center will offer its own "concert series" and a "season ticket." Thanks in large part to funding from the state's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, Backus will present four concerts and one play on stage during the 2013-2014 season. Purchase of a \$45 season ticket will provide admission to a variety of great entertainment including:

Chris Koza & Rogue Valley on Sept. 28, The Rose Ensemble on Oct. 14, Hard Travelin' with Woody on Nov. 7, *The Mill* on Feb.28/Mar. 1 and The Galactic Cowboy Orchestra on Mar. 22.

Hard Travelin' is sponsored with funding from the Marshall N. Knudson Family Community Fund with the Minne-

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From the Director's Desk Continued ...



Ward Merrill
Executive Director
Backus Community
Center

While "Backus" is still viewed by most as a center for arts and culture, many of our programs reach far beyond the walls of the historic building.

Since adding our modern and fully-licensed kitchen in 2010, Backus has served over 25,700 meals to those in need.

sota State Arts Board providing funds for the other four programs. Grant funding through the Arts Board is highly competitive with Backus competing against groups such as the Guthrie Theater, private colleges, state universities, the Ordway Theater in addition to professional dance and theater companies. Backus was one of 34 out of 90 applicants to receive funding for this season.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of these programs is the outreach that many of these artists will provide for Koochiching County students during the school year. Although The Rose Ensemble and *The Mill* will only connect with students in International Falls, the other three groups will perform/provide outreach at Indus, Littlefork and Northome in addition to the Falls. Most groups will also provide a free school-age program at Backus for St. Thomas students and home-school students prior to their on-stage performances.

While "Backus" is still viewed by most as a center for arts and culture, many of our programs reach far beyond the walls of the historic building. Since adding our modern and fully-licensed kitchen in 2010, Backus has served over 25,700 meals to those in need. Musicians have visited and interacted with hundreds of area students. A "Community Market" has grown and flourished over the past seven seasons. Community events such as a Backus Rainy Lake Triathlon and Riverfest concert have begun to take shape. The center provides two full-time jobs and part-time employment to over a dozen workers. Over \$1.6 million in capital improvements have been made providing work for area contractors. If every dollar "turns over" seven times in a community – that represents over \$11 million in dollars to the local economy. All this is not insignificant when you consider that less than a dozen years ago both historic buildings could have become rubble in a landfill. And not

insignificant when you consider the humble beginnings of Citizens for Backus with dollars collected in a hat and a little girl donating \$11 from a lemonade stand to help save the buildings.

Ward Merrill,
Executive Director

BACKUS

Concert Series

2013-2014

Season Tickets
NOW on Sale!

Season Tickets:

Adults \$45
Students \$10
Family \$95

Available for purchase at the Backus Office, City Drug Store and Betty's in Fort Frances.

Chris Koza and Rogue Valley

Saturday, September 28, 7:00 pm

Chris Koza is a Minneapolis-based singer-songwriter who has been recording and releasing albums since 2004.

In the Twin Cities, Koza performs as both a solo artist, as part of ensemble shows, and primarily with his band Rogue Valley. His song-writing carries a strong emphasis on the lyrical and poetic elements, with stylings and textures rooted in folk and Americana traditions.

Hard Travelin' with Woody (Guthrie)

written & performed by Randy Noojin

Thursday, November 7, 7:00 pm

Randy will present a one-man performance titled, "Hard Travelin' with Woody" (Guthrie). The show was originally produced for the New York City Fringe Festival in 2011.

Noojin presents a straight-forward, no nonsense portrayal of singer, songwriter and activist Woody Guthrie in his one-hour show.

He blows the dust off such Guthrie standards as "Bound for Glory" and "This Land is Your Land" during a performance set at a 1940 benefit for striking miners.

"The Mill"

Friday, February 28, 2014, 7:00 pm
and

Saturday, March 1, 2014, 7:00 pm

Backus brings playwright Jeannine Coulombe's play "The Mill" to the town that inspired it.

The play is her own look at unions and corporate power, based on her experiences growing up in International Falls.

The play is set during an unusually hot week in June of 1989, as Boise Cascade is offering to expand the town's mill, but only if the union workers sign a new contract that would, among other things, change shifts from eight hours to 12 hours. Coulombe focuses on how the proposed contract affects a long-time mill worker, his wife, and their son.

The Rose Ensemble

Monday, October 14, 7:00 pm

Founded in 1996 by artistic director, Jordan Sramek, The Rose Ensemble reawakens the ancient with vocal music that stirs the emotions, challenges the mind, and lifts the spirit.

The group will perform "The Roots of Bluegrass", a journey through America's Folk, Old-time, and Gospel Traditions.

Return to America's folk roots. Rousing hymns, Appalachian foot-stomping songs, Southern Harmony shape-note singing, and Shaker spirituals: the music that gave birth to bluegrass. The Roots of Bluegrass explores our country's musical heritage with close vocal harmonies, banjo, guitar and fiddle.

Galactic Cowboy Orchestra

Saturday, March 22, 2014, 7 pm

The Galactic Cowboy Orchestra is a unique and powerful musical ensemble that fuses an eclectic mix of original and traditional bluegrass-edged tunes with jazz and world/fusion elements. The mix ranges from highly accessible bluegrass tunes to extreme arrangements of East Indian ragas. GCO's instrumentation includes guitar, fiddle, bass and drums. The widely versatile instruments are accessible to music-lovers of all ages!



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Label

Up Coming Events

- **Saturday, September 28, 5:00 to 6:30 pm:**
Top the Tater Dinner, Sponsored by
City Drug Store
- **Saturday, September 28, 7:00 pm:**
Chris Koza & Rogue Valley
- **Monday, September 30, 6:30 pm:**
Library Documentary Movie Night
"A Place at the Table"
Co-sponsored with Falls Hunger Coalition
- **Thursday, October 3, 8:00 am & 4:30 pm:**
ServSafe Food Manager Class
- **Monday, October 14, 7:00 pm:**
The Rose Ensemble (with a Top the Tater)
- **Tuesday, October 22, 7:30 pm:**
Border Concert: The Abrams Brothers
(dinner sponsored by Minnesota Monument)
- **Wednesday, October 23, 4:00—6:00 pm:**
Walk a Mile in Her Shoes
- **Thursday, October 24, 6:30-8:30 pm:**
Library Paper Airplane Contest
- **Monday, October 28, 6:30 pm:**
Library Documentary Movie Night
"Shift Change"
- **Wednesday, October 30, 9:00 am:**
Egg Roll Making Class—sign up today!
- **Thursday, November 7, 7:00 pm:**
Hard Travelin' with Woody (Guthrie)
written & performed by Randy Noojin (dinner
sponsored by Green-Larsen)
- **Thursday, November 21, 7:30 pm:**
Border Concert: Vocaldente (with dinner)
- **Monday, November 25, 6:30 pm:**
Library Documentary Movie Night
"We are Not Ghosts"
- **Saturday, November 30, 10am—3pm:**
Holiday Shopping & Craft Festival
- **Saturday, November 30, 11am—2pm:**
Holiday Shopping Luncheon
- **Tuesday, December 17, 6:30 pm:**
St. Thomas Christmas Program