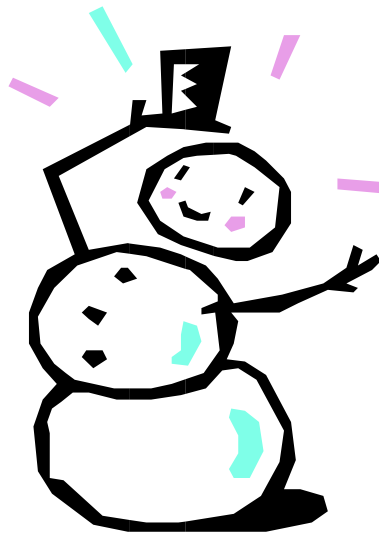


## From the Director's Desk .....

Not too many years ago there seemed to be some slow months at Backus. That's not the case anymore. The fall season has been busy with lots of events and tasks completed. Thanks to John Faith, our 1912 boilers were serviced, inspected and brought on line in October to begin their 100<sup>th</sup> year of service. The Gym floor was sanded and refinished just in time for its 75th basketball season. We installed a new Automated Ex-

ternal Defibrillator (its first season), waxed floors, serviced fire extinguishers and



prepared for another winter of snow and ice removal. Concerts in the Dun-

geon, Afterschool Arts, a basketball clinic and Harvest Party Show by Icebox Radio Theater helped complete a busy October.

Citizens for Backus/AB celebrated its 10-year anniversary on October 25 with 175 of our friends and supporters with a complimentary dinner and program. Featured speakers included four Board members who helped organize the group in 2002.

*Continued on page 4 ...*

### 2012 Highlights

- Ice Box Days Chili Challenge
- Arrowhead 135 Ultra Marathon Dinner
- Okee Dokee Brothers
- All-School Music Fest
- "A Chocolate Affair"
- Arch Allies
- Tonic Sol-Fa
- Ethnic Food Festival
- Lorenz Schwarz
- Hooked on Talent
- Prairie Fire Theatre—"Beauty & the Beast"
- Backus Triathlon
- Backus Kids Club
- Summer Food Service Program
- Community Market
- Summer & after school arts programs
- Bass Dash 5K Race Spaghetti Feed
- VFW Stand Down
- Monroe Crossing
- RRCC Basketball Camp
- 10th Anniversary Celebration
- Icebox Radio Theater "Harvest Party"
- Holiday Arts & Crafts Festival
- Borderland Community Orchestra Christmas Concert
- Tuesday Musicale "Christmas Then & Now"
- Hurricane Sandy Fund-Raising Sing-A-Long

## "Community Café" Begins December 4

Citizens for Backus/AB and the Falls Hunger Coalition are collaborating on an exciting project that's been a long time in

the planning stages for a "Community Café", the goal of which is to reduce hunger and build a stronger community.

The experience of our two organizations indicates a definite need for such a program in our area.

*Continued on page 6 ...*



### **Board of Directors**

- Patti Ballan, President
  - Julie Bartkowski,  
Vice President
  - Donna Frederickson,  
Secretary
  - Sherrie Lessard,  
Treasurer
  - Barb Albert
  - Kay Arnold
  - Marcia Bringedahl
  - James Bujold
  - John Faith
  - Beth Nelson
  - Pastor Steve Olson
  - Betsy Ward
- Backus  
Community Center  
900 Fifth Street  
Int'l Falls MN  
(218) 285-7225  
[www.backusab.org](http://www.backusab.org)**
- Ward Merrill,  
Executive Director
  - Hoa Sobczynski,  
Business Manager
  - Robin Bjorkquist,  
Event Coordinator
  - Julie Talmage,  
Backus Kids Club  
Coordinator
  - Mary Ann Lien,  
Event Supervisor
  - Steve Barnett,  
Custodian

## **Your Backus Membership is Important!**

Have you ever considered becoming a member of Backus Community Center? We invite you to lend your support to Backus through a Backus membership. Every day our historic building is filled with people of all ages and most evenings finds Fifth Street and Ninth Avenue full of cars. During the school year, Backus is home to a number of after school activities including 4-H, Backus Kids Club (state licensed school-age child care), art classes, dance, basketball, recreation, and music lessons. Almost 400 children use the building each week!

The building provides a place for gathering, growth and learning for citizens of all ages. Adult education programs, counselors, artists, musicians, seniors and the general public make daily use of the building. Concerts, talent shows, recitals and meetings take place in the Auditorium; conference rooms are available for seminars and meetings. Meeting rooms are Internet accessible. Soup Suppers and Top the Tater Dinners fill the dining room, which also provides facilities for community use for dinners, celebrations, and other group gatherings.

Backus provides meals for those who are in need. The Summer Food Service Program has been served to children since 2010. Beginning, December 4, the Community Café began serving free weekly meals for

all, with no restrictions or income guidelines – everyone is welcome ! This program is dedicated to reducing hunger and building a stronger community.

Backus truly is the “Center” of the Community. Backus depends on its members and volunteers to continue to function. Through your membership, Backus will thrive and grow as we strive to fulfill our mission:

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

We welcome your support. As of December 4, Backus has received \$28,325.00 from 322 members. Help us make our goal for \$35,000.00. A Citizens for Backus/AB membership form is enclosed with membership categories and contribution method.

Visit us on the web site --  
[www.backusab.org](http://www.backusab.org) or find us on  
Facebook: Backus AB

Backus is fully accessible to persons with disabilities - please call the office at 218-285-7225 for specific accommodations.



*Make a difference, be a Volunteer!  
Fill out & return the enclosed form today!*



### It's Not Too Late!

Please think of Citizens for Backus/AB for any "end of the year" charitable contributions you may be considering.

Your donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Citizens for Backus/AB is an IRS 501(c)3 non-profit corporation and your donations help support programming, planning, grant-writing, maintenance and preservation of both the Backus and Alexander Baker Buildings.

**Seat memorials or honorariums make great Christmas gifts!**

\$100 buys a seat for a year  
\$500 buys a seat for 10 years  
\$1,000 buys a seat for Backus's lifetime!

## Community Café .... Now Serving Hot Meals!

**Every Tuesday | Doors open @ 5 | Serving 5:30-6pm**

- Offering free, hot and nutritious meals to those in need
- Unable to stay? Take-out meals are available at 6:00 pm
- Serving teenagers, families, elderly—anyone living with food insecurity— in Koochiching County
- No charge for meals, but donations are graciously accepted
- ***Dedicated to reducing hunger and building a stronger community***  
*(handicap accessibility is on the west or east sides of the building if needed)*







## From the Director's Desk, continued



Board President Patti Ballan with Board Member John Faith at the 10 Year Anniversary Celebration

Jerry Franzen and Cynthia Jaksa, two citizens who had a change of heart over the years about the value in saving Backus/AB, spoke about the importance of Backus to the community. The evening was enhanced with a slideshow depicting both historic and current activities at Backus/AB, music on the grand piano by Joe Belanger and special guest Beckie Aitken, who helped move the organization ahead during her tenure as Director.

A Border Concert "Two on Tap", several dinners, a Dungeon concert and a well-attended "Holiday Arts & Crafts Festival" attracted many people in November. A new

event held at Backus was the Indus School Parent-Teacher Conferences.

A personal highlight was serving on my second MN State Arts Board Grant Review Panel in St. Paul. Panelists received twenty-six Arts Learning grants in mid-October, read and evaluated them and

then met for two days in St. Paul to discuss and rate the applications. Grants ranged from arts groups to the McPhail School of Music to the Guthrie Theater and involved qualified artists and arts learning activities. Grants are funded through Minnesota's

"Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment" which added 3/8 of 1% to the MN Sales Tax by a vote of the people in 2008. 19.75% of the funds are appropriated to the MN Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund. Backus has accessed these funds through grants which helped install security cameras and funded several concerts and learning opportunities for local schools. We currently have a MN State Arts Board Arts Tour grant pending that could bring Chris Koza & Rogue Valley to the Falls in addition to the play, "The Mill" set in International Falls during the turbulent summer of 1987.

December will be a busy



Holiday Arts & Crafts Festival had 30 vendor tables and 300 visitors!



## From the Director's Desk, continued

month at Backus with four events taking place on the first weekend of the month. Koochiching Aging Options held its second "Logging Camp Christmas" on Friday, November 30 with a sold out crowd of 140 enjoying dinner and entertainments in a logging camp atmosphere. Authentic decorations supplied by No Place Like Home, music, stories, door prizes and auction all added to the festive nature of the evening.

Everything was cleared off the stage in time for the first "Open Gym" of the winter season on Saturday afternoon. The Backus Gym will be open from 3-5pm on most Saturdays for families and youth all winter. These events are sponsored by a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation.

The Dining Room was the scene of a children's birthday party on Saturday and the Auditorium provided the venue for a Holiday Christmas Concert by the Borderland Community Orchestra on Sunday – a busy start to the last month of the year.

Seventh and eighth grade girls' and boys' basketball practices and games are now underway in the Gym and three more holiday music events, including a concert to benefit Hurricane Sandy victims, take place in the Auditorium. We are perhaps most excited about our "Community Café" project which will provide free meals to those families and individuals dealing with food insecurity. This project will hopefully help reduce hunger while at the same time help build a stronger community.

We are also looking forward to an on-site meeting in January with the State Commissioners of the Department of Employment and Economic Development and the MN Housing Finance Agency. Both Governor Mark Dayton and Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk were introduced to the project during an August 30 event at Backus. The site visits and discussions may help in moving along the AB Project.

The month of December is always a time of reflection and

preparation for the Christmas season at our house. During the holidays we might reflect on all those that may have sat around the Thanksgiving or Christmas table in years past. They may be our parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles or siblings and perhaps even our children. In our case, we are now the Grandma, Grandpa or Papa at the table. We're thankful for all the memories, love and nurturing that those family members provided. I sometimes wonder would they be proud of the way we've lived our lives or what modest success we may have achieved.

Linda and I were fortunate to have both sons and their families' home for Thanksgiving. Three grandchildren ages 4, 7 and 9 added to the excitement and enjoyment of the holiday. With another grandchild due to be born just after the New Year, we will be doubly blessed this Christmas.

WARD



## Community Café continued

This past summer, Backus served 6,803 summer meals as part of our third year of offering a Summer Food Service Program. This number dramatically increased by 29% from last summer's total of 5,272. 82% of the meals were served to children ages 1-18 while 18% were served to adults. Parent surveys indicate that these summer meals have a direct impact on their children's nutritional needs in addition to aiding families who might otherwise be hard-pressed to afford healthy meals for their children. With almost 20% of Koochiching County's children living in poverty – the need for this meal program is dramatic.

Hunger is prevalent in Koochiching County. The latest statistics indicate that there are as many as 600,000 missing meals in the county. Falls Hunger Coalition's Food Shelf works hard at closing this gap



by giving clients a 3 to 5 day supply of food based on family size. Including voucher programs, the Hunger Coalition distributed 153,487 pounds of food to 3,700 people during 2011, all to people living with food insecurity. In spite of these efforts, what they are able to provide isn't enough.

Latest client survey indicates that 80% of

are eager to finally bring the project to fruition. Meals will be prepared in the Backus kitchen and served in the dining room. Plans call for a weekly meal to be served on Tuesdays from 5:30-6pm. Meals will be expanded to Thursday evenings within 4-6 weeks as the program grows. The "Community Café" is scheduled to begin meals on December 4.

### ***Make a donation:***

To purchase food for the Café, please send your tax-deductible donation to: Community Café, Backus Community Center, 900 5th Street, International Falls MN 56649

If you would like to help with this effort please consider volunteer-

Food Shelf participants would attend a free evening meal if such a program was offered.

The Hunger Coalition has committed \$5,000 to the project while Backus is contributing \$5,000 in "in-kind" administrative support. Both organizations' respective Boards have discussed the project, approved the plan/budget and

ing or making a financial contribution. \$100 will help provide almost 40 meals for those in need. Churches and community organizations have received information on this project and have also been encouraged to offer volunteer or financial support. If you know a family or individual who might benefit from the "Community Café", please encourage them to take part.





## New Life-Saving AED Installed

On October 18 Backus installed an AED (automated external defibrillator) near the Dining Room on the main floor.



Ward Merrill receives the AED device from Judy Hanne Gonzales from Northland Chapter American Red Cross in Duluth on October 18, 2012

The life-saving device was a gift from the Northland Chapter of the American Red Cross.

Through its "HeartSafe Northland" program, the Duluth office made twelve units available throughout the northland.

Thirty-six applications were made with Backus being one of the twelve groups to receive the AEDs. Ward and Linda Merrill attended a Red Cross training and presentation event in Duluth on October 10 and John Faith installed the device the following week.

As a follow-up, Northland Counseling, Rainy River Recovery and Backus will collaborate on the financing and installation of a second AED to be located on the third floor of the building. Further plans

call for all three groups to participate in First Aid/CPR/AED training next spring or summer.

Each year, over 465,000 Americans die of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA), making it the leading cause of death in the United States. 2/3 of SCA deaths occur at work, home or play. Time is the critical factor in preventing SCA deaths. The survival rate for SCA is 90% if a defibrillation shock is administered within one minute and 80% within two minutes. Survival rates decrease by 10% for every minute of delay. The new AEDs and upcoming staff training represent one more way that Backus Community Center works to meet the needs of our community.



On Give to the Max Day Thursday, November 15, 2012, over 53,000 people donated \$16.3 million to more than 4,300 Minnesota

nonprofits and schools. Backus Community Center partnered with GiveMN.org to raise funds and would like to sincerely thank those who

## Thank you!

gave on this day through the GiveMN.org website.

We truly appreciate each and every donation!



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Find us on Facebook! Search for "Backus AB"



## Up-Coming Events ....

### January

- **Thursday, January 3**—Soup Supper sponsored by Up North Builders @ 4:30 pm
- **Thursday, January 17**—On Edge Film Festival
- **Saturday, January 19**—Ice Box Days Chili Challenge and Turkey Bowling @ 1:00 pm
- **Sunday, January 27**—Arrowhead 135 Ultra Marathon Spaghetti Feed at St. Thomas Aquinas Hall @ 5:00 pm
- **Sunday, January 27**—Border Concert: Thuringer Salonquintett @ 3:00 pm
- **Monday, January 28**—Library Documentary Movie Night @ 6:30

### February

- **Wednesday, February 6**—All School Music Festival, Concert @ 1:30 pm

- **Thursday, February 7**—Soup Supper sponsored by Wagner Construction @ 4:30 pm
- **Saturday, February 9**—"A Chocolate Affair" @ 11:30 am
- **Monday, February 18**—Contractor's Seminar @ 8:00 am
- **Thursday, February 21**—Backus Annual Meeting @ 5:00 pm
- **Monday, February 25**—Library Documentary Movie Night @ 6:30

### March

- **Friday, March 1**—Top the Tater sponsored by Border State Bank @ 4:30 pm
- **Friday, March 1**—Border Concert: Alexander Fiterstein Trio @ 7:30
- **Thursday March 7**—Soup Supper sponsored by Waschke Family GM Center @ 4:30 pm
- **Ethnic Food Festival**—TBD



With winter upon us, we ask that you use caution when entering and exiting the building. We make every effort to keep the sidewalks clear of snow and ice, but you can't beat Mother Nature!

## Seasons Greetings

- **Saturday, March 16**—Tuesday Musicale Borderland Musical Showcase @ 7:00 pm
- **Monday, March 25**—Library Documentary Movie Night @ 6:30 pm