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Broadcasts!

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

JULY 2010

Presenting...Backus Kids Club!

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The already busy Backus building has added another activity to its bustling schedule: the Backus Kids Club (BKC). This program provides a fun, academic, and active environment for kids ages 5-12. The mornings are set aside for academic activities such as reading, handwriting, and some math games. The afternoons are full of field trips and outdoor recesses (weather permitting, of course). Breakfast and lunch are provided through the Summer Food Service Program (see article below).

So far, the Backus Kids have enjoyed paddling around the high school pool, browsing through books at the Pub-

lic Library, walking to Riverside Park, and even working



Lynn Peterson, one of the many skilled teachers, reads a story during the afternoon session.

on a scavenger hunt at Voyageurs National Park for an afternoon. That's not all Backus Kids Club Coordinator, Julie Talmage, has up her sleeve. Trips to City Beach

and an alpaca ranch are just a glimpse of the sights these kids will see!

Room 208 has become a welcome and familiar sight with over forty-five kids of this community. They enjoy the company of each other as well as the supervision of a caring teacher and aide. Backus Kids Club has grown tremendously in its first month; we hope to see its continued growth and success throughout the summer and fall.

To enroll your child in the Backus Kids Club, contact the office or email hoasobczynski@backusab.org.

Did you know we're providing *free* meals?!

Thanks to a new, fully operating kitchen and several grants, this summer we began providing meals June 7 to kids (ages 1 to 18) through the Summer Food Service Program. We will continue to provide breakfast and lunch

until August 31.

Breakfast is served from 7:45 to 8:15; and lunch is available from 11:45 to 1:15. Just step right up to the kitchen window and our cook will provide you with "a nutritious and healthy meal" to

eat. Those over 18 may purchase a lunch ticket in the office. Look for "Kids Eat Free Flyers" or contact the office for more information.



From the Director's Desk...



Edward Wellington
Backus (1860-1934)

BACKUS
COMMUNITY
CENTER

This summer our community is celebrating 100 years of papermaking in International Falls. That endeavor was begun by Edward Wellington Backus in 1910 under the name of the Minnesota & Ontario Paper Company and continues today under the corporate name of Boise Paper. E.W. Backus was a risk-taker, an entrepreneur, a visionary, and referred to International Falls as a "city of destiny." In many ways the original group of citizens who organized and formed "Citizens for Backus/AB" to save the AB and Backus buildings from destruction, exemplified those same characteristics. Today, thanks to their vision, risk-taking and hard work, the Backus Community Center is a vital part of our community's cultural and economic life.

At the annual meeting of the Koochiching County Historical Society recently, I asked Mr. Bill Beck, author of *The Mill At The Falls*, why more place names in Minnesota did not bear the name of "Backus." (Outside of our own local building and Backus, Minnesota – I can think of no others.) Mr. Beck's reply was that had E.W. Backus not died shortly after losing his company and when he was bankrupt, more attention would have been paid to him. He was perhaps viewed as a "loser" and not remembered for the success he had achieved and the impact of his accomplishments.

Apparently Backus, as well as his son Seymour, were well thought of in International Falls at the time. E. W. died of a heart attack at the Vanderbilt Hotel in New York on October 30, 1934 and his only remaining son died of a heart attack in Florida on June 30, 1936. The school board chose to name the new junior high school being constructed in 1936-37 in honor of E.W. Backus in spite of the fact that his holdings had passed into receivership in 1931 with a personal loss to Backus estimated at \$50 million.

Thinking back to the "turn of the century" – the years of 2000 to 2002 – we may forget that the fate of the AB and Backus buildings hung in the balance. The school district was abandoning the buildings. Community members and local government were divided over demolition versus re-use of the complex. What a shame it would have been to demolish and consign to a landfill these two historic buildings named in honor of two such important men in the history of International Falls: the first settler – Alexander Baker and the visionary, Backus, who harnessed the power of Koochiching Falls and built an industry founded on forest products that survives and flourishes to this day.

E. W. Backus might well be proud of what's happening to the building named in his honor. With growing support from community members, local business, alumni, foundations and users, the Backus Community Center is a thriving place today.



The finished kitchen.



Pelland-Swenson working on the elevator shaft.

These massively constructed buildings have been well worth the almost \$1.5 million in improvements that have been made in the past few years:

- Extension of fire sprinkler system in Backus
- Auditorium re-roof
- Art Room re-roof
- Complete re-roof of both AB & Backus
- Installation of fully-licensed kitchen & dining room remodel
- Construction of 4,000 sq. ft. of office space on Backus third floor
- Installation of four-stop elevator
- Installation of security camera system

In February the new kitchen opened in Backus and began serving noon lunch to St. Thomas School children. Free dinner tickets were offered to Falls Food Shelf clients. As anticipated the kitchen has made Backus more attractive to hosting events with meals. A geology conference, moose symposium and Kootasca Annual Meeting were held at Backus. The Rotary Club, City, Boise, bridge club and other groups have all made use of Backus meeting space and meal service. A Summer Food Service Program with free breakfast and lunch for children ages 1-18 is being offered from June 7 to August 31. The program is sponsored by the MN Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In April the third floor of Backus was opened for use for the first time in over 20 years. Local contractors including Up North Builders, Kantor Electric, Shannon’s, Pelland-Swenson and Ewald Enterprises completed a remodel project that provided over 6,000 square feet of new office space for Rational Alternatives and Northland Counseling. Koochiching County provided tax-exempt bonding authority that allowed almost \$700,000 in funding through Border State Bank, Bremer Bank, TruStar Federal Credit Union, Koochco and the Northland Foundation for the project. With the completion of the elevator, all floors became completely accessible.

In spite of these “big ticket” improvements to the building, perhaps the most exciting thing that has been added to Backus this summer is the “Backus Kids Club.” Over 45 children in grades K-6 are registered for this summer-long activity program that runs from 7:30am to 6pm daily. Each day these children interact with an enthusiastic and capable staff of licensed teachers and teacher aides. Their footsteps echo in the halls and stairs as they enjoy art, academics, games, recreation, field trips and swimming at the high school pool. Many people have commented on how great it is to have so many children using the building again.

Two years from now, in 2012, the AB Building will note its 100th year of existence and the Backus Building will celebrate 75 years of service to the community. This summer plans are being developed for the re-use of AB. With continued support, we believe the Backus/AB complex will serve the International Falls community well into the next century. Even E. W. Backus might take some pride in the fact that his name goes on in such a vital place as the “Backus Community Center!”



Ward Merrill, Executive Director



A small portion of the Backus Kids Club.

“We believe the Backus/AB complex will serve the International Falls community well into the next century.”



Sue & Terry Worthman at the Ethnic Food Festival held in March.

**BACKUS
COMMUNITY
CENTER**

Purchase a seat in honor /memory of someone by calling the office (285-7225) or Wanda Linder (875-2195)

Contributions in Memory of:

Jim & Louise Gordon, Dave Buechler, Florance Baron, Mary Ann Butts, Clint Carlson, Albert Erickson, Beatrice Fry, James Gordon, Ed Hanson, Les & Bob Hamalainen, Otis Hoppe, Tom Kellner, Robert Lovell, Aini Makenen, Chester Mann, Joan Myer, Bob Nordstrom, Vincent Pulicichio, Edie Schlieff, Jack Sether, Jack Sullivan, Loretta Skwarok, Jim Turry, and Lyle Vigoren

Thank you to our contributors:

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Capital Improvement Contributions

Thank you to:

Ameriprise Financial, Helen Christenson, Class of 1969, Donald & Marjorie DeRaad, James Hamalainen, Pat Hamalainen, Shirley Kocinski, Koochiching Development Authority, Joseph & Janet Schulz

Seat-Dedication Contributions

Thank you to:

Judith Baratta (in memory of Vic & Opal Mannila)
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Joel Haase and Joe Gust at the Ethnic Food Festival.

Contributions in Honor of:

Jay Hokenson, Harry Johnson, Ralph & Susie Johnson, Melanie J. Kucera's birthday, Lois & George Lambert, Donna & Lyle Mostad, Edie Sandstrom, and Frank & Gladys Schanus

Thank you to our contributors:

Rodger & Hildur Chapman, Marit Lee Kucera, Jason & Paige Vonbank, John & Karen Wilson

General Contributions

Thank you to: Ameriprise Financial (contribution match), Anonymous, Aquilo League, Arrowhead Regional Arts Council, City of I-Falls, Michael Gerard, GiveMN (contribution match), Koochiching County, Larry & Ruth Lewis, Stuart & Susan Nordquist, Northland Foundation, Rotary Club of I-Falls, Kurt & Hoa Sobczynski, Einar Sundin, The Marshall N. Knudson Family Community Fund, John & Karen Wilson

In-Kind Donations

Thank you to: Backus Friends' Network, Ballan Furniture, Battalion Distributing, Bootlegger Jay's, Bremer Bank, Chocolate Moose, Coffee Landing, Darlene Ditsch, Duty Free, Gearhart's Floral, The Junction, Joyce Rasmussen, Nancy Roche, Rose Garden, Sandy's, Kurt & Hoa Sobczynski, Sport Shop, Super 8, Super Valu, Thunderbird, TruInsure, TruStar Federal Credit Union, Viking Bar

2010 Backus Community Center Memberships (as of June 30, 2010)

Karen Aklestad	Jessie Dahl	Dennis & May Ann Kalar	Charlotte Saari
Barb Albert	Eva M. Dana	Phyllis Karsnia	Darlyss Samuelson
Allan & Beth Anderson	Carolyn & Gary Davison	Mary Ann & Wayne Kasich	Edie Sandstrom
Bob & Carol Anderson	Marguerite Davison	Gene & Patricia Kjellgren	Gary & Pam Saunders
Ellsworth & Mary Lou Anderson	Aldo & Shirley DeMarchi	Rose & Virgil Kluge	Karen Shickell
Ruth Anderson	Donald Dickson	Florence Knutson	Edith Schlieff (deceased)
Janet Arai	Rhoda Dickson	Shirley K. Kocinski	Janet & Roman Schultheis
Dale & Kay Arnold	Jim & JoAnn Dornhecker	Lil (Lillian) Koranda	Janet & Joseph Schulz
Dave & Jill Austin	Trudy Dunn	Norma Krats	Diane Semmler
Millie Ballan	Christy & Steve Earley	Barbara & Marvin Kruskopf	Bette & Orin Simon
Patti Ballan	Ethel Einarson	Marit Lee Kucera	Frank Simon
Donna Mae Barg	Bonnie & David Erickson	Phyllis Kuluvar	Kurt Skallman
Joan Barkovic	Charlene Erickson	Bill & Terry Lahmayer	Charles Skrief
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Marilyn Berlin	Dennis & Sharon Frank	Juanita Leolich	Frank & Renee Soboleski
Joanne & Leslie	Donna Frederickson	Jim & Sherrie Lessard	Helen C. Sparby
Bjorkquist	Beatrice Fry (deceased)	Jane Levene	Cheryl A. Stemm
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Allan & Susie Braaten	Leah & Wally Gilbert	William H. McPherson	Adele Stone
Darell Bradley	Jackie & Tom Glowack	Allan & Myrna Meadows	Floyd & Geraldine Streiff
Jerome & Lois Brekke	Pauline Grandaw	LeeAnn Meer	Lillie Strong
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Marcia Bringedahl	Bunny Green	Howard & Virginia Milette	Bonita Swenson
Martha Buchholz	Georgia Growette	Clarice Miller	Arden Thompson
Alan Burchell	Mary Jane & Rodney Haanen	Leila Naucler	Ted Thompson
M. Burchell	James Hamalainen	Denise & Paul Nevanen	Marilyn & Rick Toninato
Mike Busch	Patricia Hamalainen	John & Yvonne Nevanen	Gary & Kathy Tornes
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Clinton J. Carlson	Myron Hawrylak	Anne Nordstrom	Clarice Turry
Janice & John Carlson	Tim & Joan Heinle	Judith & Soren Olesen	Thomas Turry
Lorraine Carlson	Greta & Peter Hemstad	Darlene Olsen	Lorne & Marlys Tveit
Mabel Carlson	Agnes Henrickson	Stephen & Victoria Olson	Ray Usiak
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	Nancy Johnson		



Meet Our New Staff!

Bob Scholler: Volunteer Coordinator



Where are you from?

I was born and raised in International Falls.

Favorite animal?

Yorkshire Terrier! Because I have two: Caesar and Bandit.

Favorite part about your job?

Seeing people satisfied with the events! And having volunteers wanting to become part of the Backus community is great. The connections are great. You get to meet all different kinds of people.

What is something you'd like to see happen with Backus?

I'd like to see Backus keep growing as a community center and just staying busy and putting on events not just for entertainment but for a greater good.

What's the number one item on your bucket list?

Go on a vacation where there's water. No phones. No people. And just relax somewhere serene!

BACKUS
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Julie Talmage: Backus Kids Club Coordinator

Where are you from?

Rush City. In southern Minnesota.

What's your favorite season?

Summer! I don't like the cold but I enjoy being outside camping, fishing, running and hanging out with the kids.

Favorite part about your job?

The variety of people and kids and being busy. There's always something new!



What is something you'd like to see happen with the Backus Kids Club?

I'd like to see the program grow to need more staff and more rooms and become a "go-to" place for those in the community with children.

What's something from your bucket list?

Originally, it was to run a marathon. Now, it's to run a half marathon. I'd like to travel to Alaska. And eventually get a new car!



The Backus Kids Club on a field trip at Voyageurs National Park.

BROADCASTS!

New Faces on the Backus Board!

Julie Bartkowski: Board Member

What do you like to read?

I like to mix it up. I like mystery, a little bit of sci-fi, and the occasional romance.

Any pet peeves?

Lying, dishonesty.

What is your oldest memory with Backus?

We held our baccalaureate for graduation from high school in the auditorium. I remember reading the sayings on the walls. It was a big step, and Backus was the right place for it to happen.

What is a goal you have for Backus?

To have Backus become a premier community spot for all ages.

Where do you see Backus in twenty years?

I'd like to see it grow. And to fully utilize the whole building including the AB side, as well as the gym for theater productions and art.

What did you want to be "when you grew up"?

A policewoman. My undergrad is Criminal Justice. I used to watch "Cagney & Lacey". It was a TV show about these two woman detectives.



Sherrie Lessard: Treasurer

What's your dream job?

To be a travel writer for a magazine.

Any pet peeves?

People that are late.

What is one goal you have for Backus?

To make it self-sustaining overall.

What about Backus that caught your attention?

It's a fascinating place, just the building itself. There's a lot of history there.

Do you remember the first time you were at Backus?

I used to play volleyball Wednesday nights at Backus.

What did you want to be "when you grew up"?

An Egyptologist! That stuff just fascinates me.



Betsy Ward: Board Member



Where would your dream vacation be?

An "eco-vacation" at the Galapagos Islands counting how many sea turtles are hatching or sailing. Somewhere warm.

Any pet peeves?

People who are quick to blame others.

What are some goals you have for Backus?

To continue pursuing our cultural mission of reaching children with the arts. There's always more that can be done.

What was your first impression of Backus?

I thought it was cool that they had a community

center. Because I lived in the city, I didn't expect it to be so effective. I've been proven wrong many times over.

Why should someone become involved with Backus?

It's extremely rewarding. And the community needs more people willing to give their time.

What did you want to be "when you grew up"?

I've always wanted to be an artist: a Georgia O'Keeffe or Picasso. A classic artist that was considered eccentric by the rest of the world but amazingly successful. Or a geologist. I've always loved rocks.



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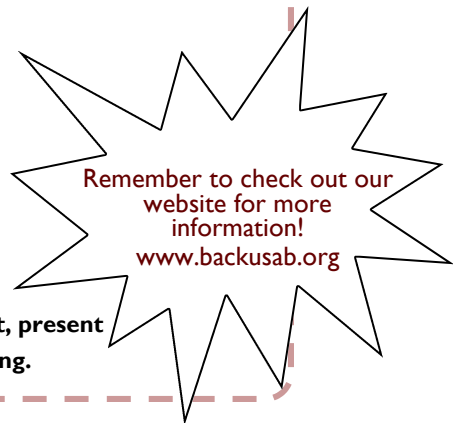
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Historic Backus/AB, a community center in the heart of International Falls, where past, present and future come together to celebrate the arts, culture, recreation and life-long learning.

Upcoming Events at Backus

August

- 5 Soup Supper: Sponsored by Duty Free Americas (4:30-7PM)
- 26 Arts and Crafts Festival (2-8PM)
- 27-28 Arts and Crafts Festival (10AM-8PM)
- 28 3rd Annual Budak Memorial Bike Ride
-8AM: Registration begins
-9AM: Ride begins

September

- 2 Soup Supper: Sponsored by Streiff's Floral (4:30-7PM)
- 2 Concert by Mike Olson (7:30PM)
- 15 Stroke Detection Clinic (9AM-5PM)
- 25 Last Day of Community Market (8-11AM)
- 28 Border Concert (7:30PM)
- 30 VFW "Stand down" (8AM-2PM)

October

- 7 Soup Supper: Sponsored by Bremer Bank (4:30-7PM)
- 8-9 Autumn Arts Festival (9AM-4PM)
- 14 Women's Wellness Workshop (6-9PM)
- 21 Backus Fish Fry (5-7PM)
- 23 Monroe Crossing (7:30PM)

Thank you to our Dinner Sponsors!

Coca-Cola Bottling, Super One, The Hideaway, Island View Realty, Kantor Electric, Curves, Border State Bank, Good Samaritan Society, Sunrise Center, Friends Against Abuse, Battalion Distributing, Green-Larsen Mortuary, City Drug, and Randy Pozniak, CPA.

Backus Supporters: watch for the

Bremer Give-to-the-Kids Challenge September 28-October 5

Every dollar donated to Backus online at Give MN.org during that time will be matched by the Otto Bremer Foundation up to \$6,000. Funds will be used to support the growing youth programs at Backus. Thank you for all your support!



Above: The All-School Music Festival and Concert held Feb. 10. Organized by John Faith, it comprised over 280 school musicians from ISD 361, Fort Frances, St. Thomas School, Indus, Emo, and Littlefork.