

# BACKUS Community Center

Volume 10, Issue 3

September 2018

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Vice President  
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## Backus Staff

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Business Manager  
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Event Coordinator  
Robin Bjorkquist  
Event Staff  
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June Wilson  
Kitchen Supervisor  
Mary Ann Lien  
Cooks  
Wanda Linder  
Diane Smalley  
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Joe Kenny

## From the Director's Desk

I remember my father Jim Merrill taking me to see the movie "Moby Dick" in 1956 at the Border or Grand Theatre here in the Falls. That experience still stands out as one of those memorable events with my dad. To a first grader in the 1950's growing up without a T.V. in our home, seeing Herman Melville's classic tale of Captain Ahab and the white whale come to life, in color and on the big screen, made quite an impression. Our home was full of books and later, with encouragement from my dad, I would read the *Moby Dick* myself. The first line in the book, "Call me Ishmael," still conjures up scenes from that haunting tale of revenge and tragedy on the high seas.

This season's opening performance in the Backus 2018-19 Performing Arts Series "Ishmael" brings Melville's tale to the Backus stage. The story . . . "has been adapted many times for the stage, but the massive scope of the story and detail has proved difficult for theater productions to adequately capture." Leo Getter's adaptation pares the narrative down to 90 minutes and molds it into a storytelling format. The play features Jack Weston as Ishmael, now a New England school teacher, who tells us his story. Weston assumes numerous roles including Queequeg, ship's officers and Captain Ahab. "He is the first and last to speak and his story becomes the reason we are there, the reason we listen, and his crisp, compelling delivery makes Ishmael a powerful piece of theater." Three folk musicians playing banjo, guitar, mandolin and fiddle – with a bit of clog dancing add warmth and color to the work. They maintain a constant presence on stage commenting on what just happened or setting the tone for what comes next.

"Ishmael" opened at the Jungle Theatre in Minneapolis last season and played to sell-out audiences. Reviews (quoted above) were positive. Tickets ranged for \$30 - \$45 for the performance. Backus is pleased to present "Ishmael" as our opening performance.

An immense amount of thought, planning, discussion and careful selection went into this season's performances. The Backus Arts & Programming Committee and Robin Bjorkquist Event Coordinator, reviewed many performers, suggestions from audi-

ence surveys and recommendations to develop this season.

In October The Borealis Bards under the direction of RaeAnne Conat will present the musical "Little Shop of Horrors" with a cast of local actors and crew. With families and children in mind, "The Hunts," a fantastic family band from Virginia (the state), will present a repeat performance featuring their alternative folk music. "The Holiday Shuffle" by Rhythmic Circus and Comic Juggler Tuey Wilson will entertain people of all ages and the season will culminate with Jazz by Sam Miltich & Friends in April. Sam's performance will blend Jazz with his personal story of recovery and dealing with mental illness. His program is underwritten with support from Northland Counseling.

Please be sure to thank all of our local sponsors for their support. Their financial support is one reason why Backus can bring quality performances to our area for \$12/ ticket instead of the \$25 - \$40+ you might pay to see the same performance elsewhere. I urge you to support our Performing Arts Series by purchasing a Season Ticket, buying a ticket for friends, encouraging others to attend or bringing a child or grandchild to a live performance.

**Ward Merrill,**  
**Executive Director**





## More about Backus Membership from Backus Board Members and Volunteers

Backus members demonstrate a commitment to creating a culture of pride and success in our community. Backus Community Center is more than just an architectural structure in this community, it is a participative organization with energetic, abundant volunteers and staff dedicated to providing stimulating and meaningful experiences for citizens of International Falls and surrounding areas. These include:

- Performing Arts Concerts with outreach to schools throughout Koochiching County
- Summer Food Service, Community Café and Ruby's Pantry
- Volunteer opportunities for dedicated and caring folks! (over 10,000 hours annually!)
- Summer Arts Week
- Open Gym, Walkercise and indoor walking

Backus Community Center provides a home for:

- Rainy Lake Community Orchestra, Community Band and music lessons
- Youth activities: Koochiching County 4-H, Bronco junior high basketball, Darcie's dance studio, Boy Scouts
- Senior Linkage Line/Area Agency on Aging, Northland Counseling, Rainy River Recovery, AARP: Income Tax Service
- Fitness and wellness services: Replenish Yoga
- Northland Arts Society, Koochiching County Community Television, Borealis Bards, Icebox Radio Theater

Throughout its evolution, Backus Community Center has worked to build a climate that fosters pride and success in our community. To many, Backus has become the heartbeat of our community. However, it faces challenges and pressures related to maintaining a historical structure that harbors promise for even more innovation and productivity.

Your membership is truly vital and greatly appreciated by Backus Community Center as we continue to maintain program quality and build the art and architecture of future experiences for all in your community.

**If you are not a member and would like to become one, or if you would like to financially contribute in any way, please fill out and return the enclosed envelope with your donation. For membership, circle "General" under contribution type.**

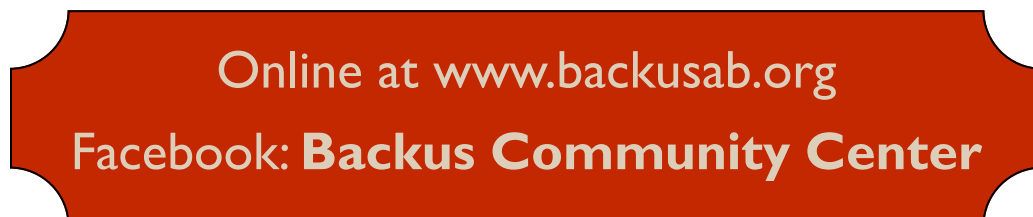
We sincerely thank you for your time and consideration,

*Carol Bryant-Bushinger*

Board Member / Volunteer

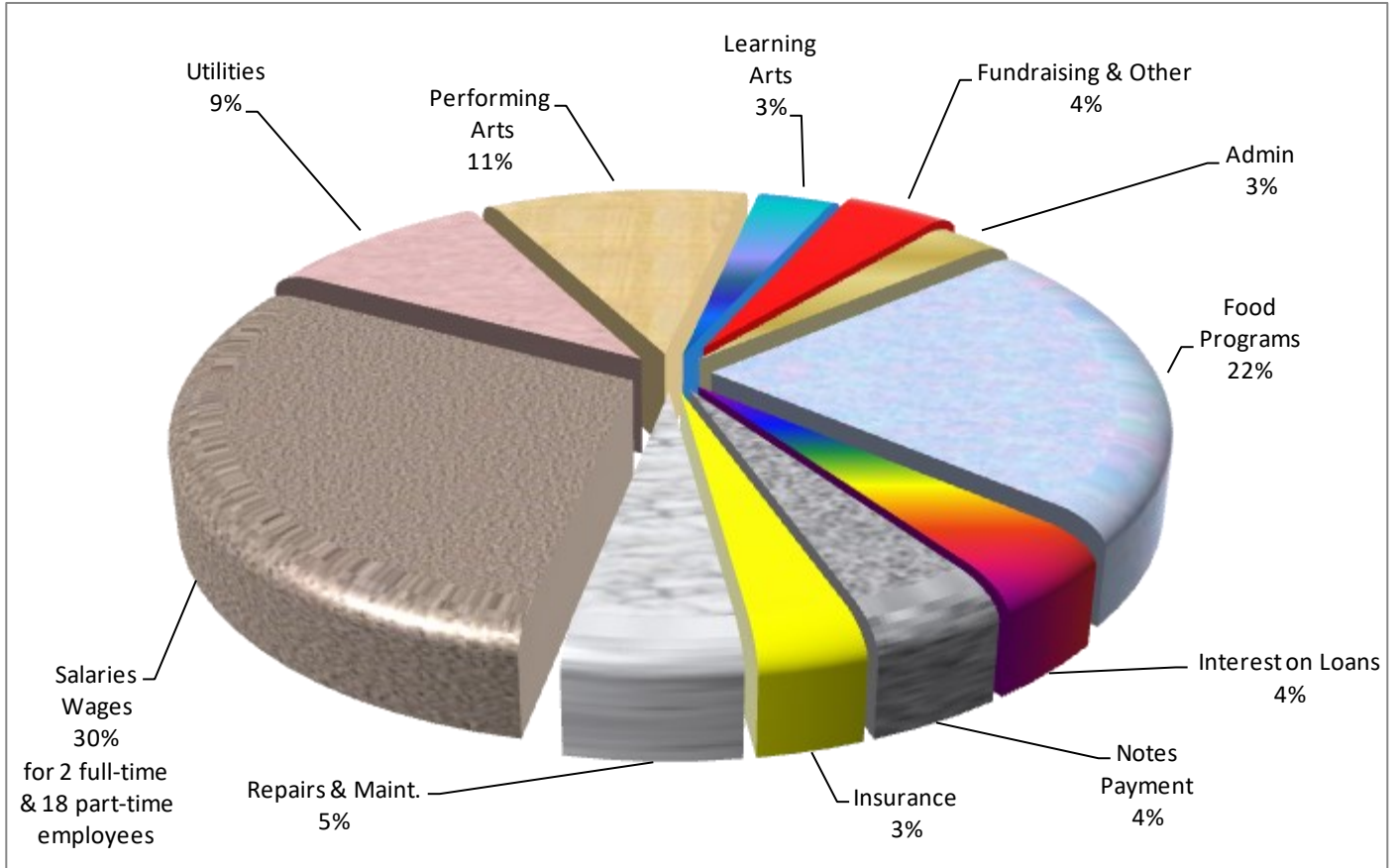
*Diane Masey*

Board Member / Volunteer



### Where do the dollars go?

As you can see from the chart, and is the case with most businesses and organizations, the highest percentage of expenses is for staff. However, Backus employs only two full-time people and 18 part-time employees. The second largest expense is food programs which includes cooks, food and a portion of utility costs.



## “Members Only” Event

Please join us on Friday, September 14, 2018 at 7:00 pm for a complimentary ice cream social and piano music to announce our 2018-2019 Backus Performing Arts Series. Season tickets will be available for purchase. Bring a new person to become a Backus member and receive two “Bring a Friend” tickets for future shows!

*Join us for dessert & renew YOUR membership!*



## Backus' partnership with Ruby's Pantry



Since July of 2015, Ruby's Pantry has been distributing food in International Falls. The program was brought to our attention by Mary Deneff, who was taking clients to Cook on a monthly basis to pick up food.

Ruby's Pantry was started by Ruby Flodin in 2003 as a way to keep good food out of landfills. Relationships were built with manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers and other non-profit agencies to source food that was surplus inventory or "mistakes". Ruby's Pantry non-profit was founded in 2003, trucks and vans were donated to pick up and distribute food in 2004. In 2005 a building was acquired in North Branch, Minnesota, that would become the main distribution center until a larger building was acquired in Waupaca, Wisconsin, in 2012. Ruby's now maintains both distribution centers.

Ruby's Pop-up Pantry currently distributes in 71 communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The program requests a \$20 donation from participants with \$18 of those dollars going directly to Ruby's Pantry for operational costs. \$2 from every donation stays in International Falls and is distributed to local charities, groups and organizations. Since July 2015, \$22,650 has been given back to the community from patrons of Ruby's Pantry.

While the program does operate out of the Backus building, the program *is not* a Backus-operated program. A group of 12 lead coordinators manager approximately 100 volunteers for the monthly distribution.

Ruby's Pop-up Pantry is held the second Monday of each month with registration starting at 4:30 pm and food distribution starting at 5:00 pm. A \$20 U.S. cash donation gets each participant two large boxes of food that typically includes a paper product, meat, frozen potatoes, soda pop and lots of miscellaneous. Tentative food lists are posted on Facebook at Ruby's Pantry International Falls.

New volunteers are always welcome. Applications can be picked up and returned to Falls Hunger Coalition, Karina McClellan Volunteer Coordinator.



Backus does have two meal programs, Summer Food Service (free lunch for kids) and Community Café. At left, lead summer cook, Cherie Sweney, and Kitchen Manager, MaryAnn Lien, show off produce grown in the Backus garden. Fresh produce, including cucumbers, tomatoes, green beans and fresh herbs were served at summer lunches and the Café.



*Backus would like to say **thank you** to Rick DeBenedet, at right, for his four years of service in the Backus kitchen as Head Cook. As Rick retires, his wonderful personality and sense of humor will be greatly missed by staff and patrons.*

## Islamic Resource Group exhibit, "Tracks in the Snow", shown all September



Tracks in the Snow at Medtronic Gallery, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

It's not often that we get to learn about the journeys of people from diverse backgrounds. It's not often that we get to walk in the shoes of our neighbors, and reflect about the growth of our community in a meaningful way.

**WHAT:** "Tracks in the Snow" Exhibit

**WHEN:** Sept. 4 — Oct. 5

**WHERE:** Backus Community Center, rooms 101-102

**TIMES:** Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. — 7 p.m.

**MORE:** John Emery, an IRG speaker, will offer a community presentation on Oct. 5 from 7 – 8:30 p.m. at Backus Community Center.

*Tracks in the Snow* provides a glimpse into the lives of one of the least known and rapidly expanding populations in America and in Minnesota – the Muslim community. Join us to gain a deeper insight into the true lives of Minnesota Muslims as narrated by themselves.

The month-long exhibit will be on display starting September 4 in Room 101/102 and will culminate on October 5 with a presentation by John Emery, an Islamic Resource Group speaker. All events are free and open to the public.

## Memorials June, July, August

- Bob & Betty Ewald memorial for ***Florence Wood***
- Donna Frederickson, Tom & Edna Karsnia, Brad & Shelly King memorial for ***Gary Davision***
- Ron & Jancie McClanahan memorials for ***Gordon Amerud, Marion Bush and Roy Averill***
- John & Karen Wilson and Bob & Betty Ewald memorial for ***Henry "Hank" Urban***
- Brad & Shelly King memorial for ***Jennie Coran***
- Robert & Leanne Crompton memorial for ***Lolly Hopke***
- Donna Frederickson, John & Karen Wilson, Ward & Linda Merrill and Jerry Klow memorials for ***Nell Anderson***
- Rick & Pat DeBenedet memorial for ***Stanley F Sobczynski***

*Thank you!*

**HELP WANTED:** Seeking person to prepare meals for Community Cafe on Tuesday & Thursday, lunches, dinners and other meals as needed. Minimum 10 hours per week. Fast-paced, pleasant working environment with friendly staff. Apply in person at 900 5th Street, or print application online at [www.backusab.org](http://www.backusab.org).





# 2018-2019 Performing Arts Series

Backus is excited to bring six diverse, fun, family-friendly, exciting and energetic shows to the stage this season!

A one-man play, local actors, a self-taught musical family of seven, high-octane city dancers, comic juggling and exploring mental health through jazz music will entertain and enlighten an audience of any age.

Season tickets will go on sale September 4. Individual show tickets will be available 30 days in advance of each show.



### **Ishmael—September 22, 2018**

Drawn from Herman Melville’s classic novel, *Moby Dick*, *Ishmael* tells the tale of a restless schoolteacher still haunted by the incredible and tragic adventure of his youth. A shape-shifting actor and three bluegrass musicians conjure a funny, thoughtful, harrowing play about one man’s drive to see the world and another man’s insatiable quest to destroy it.

### **Borealis Bards "Little Shop of Horrors" October 26-28, 2018**

A nerdy florist finds his chance for success and romance with the help of a giant man-eating plant who demands to be fed.



### **The Hunts—November 9, 2018**

With a harmony-laced take on alt-folk that’s both breathtaking and sweetly ethereal, The Hunts are a Chesapeake, Virginia-based band made up of seven brothers and sisters who’ve been playing music together almost their entire lives. The siblings all learned to sing and play violin as little kids and spent much of their childhood performing throughout their community. They widened

their following by playing at theaters and festivals around the country—and teaching themselves to play instruments like mandolin, piano, ukulele, banjo, and drums.



## *Tickets*

### **Season Tickets**

available only at  
Backus Community Center

#### All 6 Shows:

\$65 Non-Members  
\$55 Backus Members

#### Pick 4 Shows:

\$44 Non-Members  
\$38 Backus Members

#### **Individual Show Tickets:**

Adults \$12 | Child \$5 (age 6-18)  
Pre-K Free  
Available at:  
Backus Community Center  
City Drug Store  
J & D Foods in Littlefork  
Betty’s in Fort Frances  
At the Door



**Rhythmic Circus The Holiday Shuffle—November 27, 2018**

This season, don't miss out on a wildly-imaginative, "not-so-silent night" the whole family can celebrate together. A perfectly un-traditional holiday experience for the entire family — Four world-renowned hoofers and a swingin' seven-piece band inject the signature Rhythmic Circus style of rapid-fire tap into upbeat holiday classics.



**Tuey Wilson, Comic Juggler—February 1, 2019**

Tuey Wilson has always had a passion for physical skills. He grew up skiing, skateboarding, waterskiing, and anything else that satisfied his self-described personality: "introverted show-off." He learned to juggle in eighth grade from his older brother, but didn't take it seriously until he was a senior in high school, after a friend let him borrow some professional juggling equipment. His life has never been the same!

**Sam Miltich & Friends: Mental Health through Jazz—April 12, 2019**

Sam Miltich brings greater awareness, tolerance, and education focused on mental health issues through the lens of his own life experience and music career. Sam uses his personal story of recovery and management of his own condition to help inspire light and hope for a meaningful life. Sam speaks about jazz as an American art form and profiles one of its greatest practitioners, Thelonious Monk, to illustrate how the story of his life and music has influenced Miltich's art and aided his personal recovery. *This show is underwritten by Northland Counseling Center.*



The Performing Arts Season is brought to you by local sponsors and Backus Community Center. Thank you to the following who have provided support for the shows: Marshall N. Knudson Family Community Fund, Family of Karen (Turnquist) Johnson, Bremer Bank, Coca-Cola Bottling Inc, Days Inn, Jim & Sherrie Lessard, Sandy's Place, Wagner Construction, Ballan Furniture, City Drug Store, In Memory of Robert Frederickson, Rainy Lake Medical Center, Rainy Lake Oil Inc, Up North Builders Inc, Borderland Insurance, In Memory of Mary Jo Gerlach, Peter Graham Auxiliary to VFW Post #2948, Thrivent Financial, Ann Backes, Waschke Family GM Center, Northland Counseling Center underwriting Sam Miltich

*Thank You Season Sponsors*



Thanks to the work of a new Backus volunteer who would like to remain anonymous, the Backus Kimball grand piano located in room 101/102 now has an institutional grade grand piano dolly to allow for movement without damaging the legs. This was made possible by Keys 4/4 Kids (a non profit charity piano reseller located in St Paul, Minnesota) and Anderson Piano Service (Kristina Anderson) of Hibbing, Minnesota. The piano has also been tuned and will soon be ready to perform!

*Life is one grand, sweet song, so start the music.  
—Ronald Reagan*



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

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## Upcoming Events

### September

- Sept 4 to Oct 5—"Tracks in the Snow" exhibit
- 14—Member's Only Ice Cream Social with Music 7:00 pm
- 22—Backus Performing Arts Series "Ishmael" 7:00 pm
- 30—Harvest Dinner 11:00 am to 2:00 pm \$10 per person

### October

- 4—ServSafe Food Management Class 4:00 to 8:00 pm
- 5—Islamic Resource Group Speaker John Emery 7 pm
- 8—Ruby's Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
- 24—Egg Roll Making Class—call Hoa for details 285-7225
- 26 to 28—Borealis Bards "Little Shop of Horrors"
- 31—Treat Street

### November

- 9—Backus Performing Arts Series: The Hunts 7:00 pm
- 12—Ruby's Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
- 22 & 23—Happy Thanksgiving! Backus Office Closed
- 27—BPAS: Rhythmic Circus: The Holiday Shuffle 7 pm
- 30—Kooch Aging Options Logging Camp Christmas

### December

- 10—Ruby's Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
- 24 & 25—Merry Christmas! Backus Office Closed
- 31—Backus Office Closes at Noon

### January

- 1—Backus Building Closed for New Year's Day
- 14—Ruby's Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
- 19—Icebox Days Chili Challenge
- 27—Arrowhead Ultra Marathon Spaghetti Feed

### February

- 1—Tuey Wilson Comic Juggler 7:00 pm
- 11—Ruby's Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
- 13—All School Music Festival
- 14—Backus Annual Meeting
- 18—Contractor Continuing Education Class
- 20—All School Choral Festival
- 23—Vietnamese TET Dinner

### March

- 11—Ruby's Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
- 29, 30, 31—Junior Bards Production

### April

- 5—MN Deer Hunters Banquet
- 8—Ruby's Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
- 10—Backus Volunteer Appreciation Lunch
- 12—Sam Miltich Mental Health Through Jazz 7:00 pm
- 16—Centra Pipeline Dinner
- 19—Backus Office Closed for Good Friday
- 27—Borealis Bards Room to Act

[Walkercise](#) Monday—Wednesday—Friday | 10 am to 11 am  
[Adult Volleyball](#) Starts in November! Watch for details!  
[Community Café](#) Tuesday & Thursday | 5:30 pm to 6 pm

Please note: Some dates are tentative and subject to change.  
 For updates, visit [www.backusab.org](http://www.backusab.org),  
 call 218-285-7225 or stop by the office at 900 5th Street