



Citizens for Backus/AB Board of Directors

Gail Rognerud,
President
Tim Fairchild,
Vice President
Julie Bartkowski,
Secretary
Patti Ballan, Treasurer

Board Members

Barb Albert, Emeritus
Kay Arnold
Harry Batdorf
John Faith
Derek Foss
Donna Frederickson,
Emeritus
Diane Maxey
David Griffith
Sherrie Lessard
Beth Lowthian
Tracy Lunser
Bob Marquardt

Backus Staff

Executive Director
Ward Merrill
Business Manager
Hoa Sobczynski
Event Coordinator
Jaime Sjoblom
Event Staff
Jill Malone
June Wilson
Kitchen Supervisor
Mary Ann Lien
Cooks
Tim Collins
Wanda Linder
Custodians
Jerry Vohler
Joe Kenny

Volume 11, Issue 2

August 2019

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

On July 30 Linda and I returned from a two and a half week trip to California with our 14-year-old grandson Kendall. We enjoyed visiting relatives, sightseeing, and the ocean but did not enjoy the 109 degree heat, six-lane traffic @ 80 mph or the congestion. It was great to return to the Falls and to Backus last week. In my absence our historic buildings were in good hands with Hoa Sobczynski in charge, active board members participating in work on our Alexander Baker adaptive reuse project, and staff moving forward with a USDA Rural Development grant application. We have an amazing board, staff and volunteer group which are really the key to our success.

Our organization is excited about what's happening in many areas here at the Community Center:

- Friday August 30 Backus is pleased to partner with the Ernest Oberholtzer Foundation to bring five visiting artists to the Backus stage for a free-will donation performance preceded by an art exhibit Aug 26-30. Two performers, Kevin Kling and Dan Chouinard previously visited Backus as part of MPR's "Walking Shoes Tour".
- Our Arts & Programming Committee has an outstanding season of performances lined up. A "50th Anniversary of Woodstock" opens the season September 27.
- Backus has been awarded a \$32,100 USDA Rural Development grant matched with over \$26,000 in other funding supporting: asbestos tile removal, replacement flooring in east main floor hallway, a floor scrubber, boiler condensate tank replacement, basement drain work, fuel line replacement and basement lighting update.
- Our tenth year of Summer Food Service Programming (free summer lunch for kids) recorded a 7.53% increase in June and a 26.3% increase in July. ***The summer lunch program has served 57,730 meals since beginning in 2010!***
- Community Café continues to serve a free meal to anyone each Tuesday and Thursday from 5:30 – 6:00pm. ***The Café has served 39,655 meals since opening in December 2012.***
- ***Total meals served by both programs: 97,385!!***
- Ruby's Pantry continues each second Monday of the month providing food to an average of 292 people each month. A \$20 cash donation helps support ***the program which has distributed 16,124 shares since beginning in July 2015. Registration begins at 4:30pm with distribution from 5:00 – 6:30pm.***
- The Alexander Baker Adaptive Re-use Project is moving steadily with plans to bring KOOTASCA Community Action's anti-poverty programs and Head Start classrooms to the first floor with affordable housing on the second and third floors. (See "AB Project – Activity Update" on pg.3)

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK CONT....

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK CONT...

Backus programs impact our entire county and even region. That impact became even clearer with recent support letters for our USDA grant application from Littlefork and Ranier:

The Backus Community Center serves as a hub for many community care and arts & cultural activities which serve people throughout Koochiching County and the surrounding area, including residents of Littlefork.

Some examples of this include: The Backus Performing Arts Series of performances, Summer Arts @ Backus, Community Café meals, Free Kids Lunches throughout the summer and Open Gym. Backus also facilitates Ruby's Pantry food distribution – a foodbank available to all. The center is host to everything from concerts, to dinner theater, to craft fairs, to dance recitals. Backus has even come to Littlefork /Big Falls School with art programming having an even more direct impact in our city.

Keeping this historic building in good condition is important not only to those in International Falls, but to the entire Koochiching County region and extending

across the border to neighboring city, Fort Frances, Ontario.

Mayor Mike Fort, City of Littlefork

Backus/AB provides a place for outstanding community services that residents of Ranier are able to participate in and enjoy. The Backus/AB Community Center provides a wonderful facility for arts, culture, youth programs, educational classes and community-based services available for everyone who wants to take part in the activities. Many Ranier residents participated in the efforts to save the Backus Community Center and continue to cherish it. As we struggle with economic development of the area, we are always reminded that community development and quality of life are important aspects of the equation. To that end, the Backus Community Center is part of the equation and we hope that it will always be part of the equation.

Mayor Dennis Wagner and Ranier City Council

Ward Merrill, Executive Director

FREE!

An Evening of Stories, Songs, and Laughs

Direct from Mallard Island

KEVIN KLING
Master Storyteller

CLAUDIA SCHMIDT
Dynamic Songmaker

DAN CHOUINARD
Pianist Extraordinaire

PRUDENCE JOHNSON
Songbird Supreme

and Special Guest
WINONA LADUKE

ART SHOW in the Gallery August 26-30

NATURAL WONDERS
Paintings and photographs by Mark Granlund, Mary Ludington, and Karen McCall

RECEPTION Join the artists and performers before the performance from 4-5 pm in the gallery

We thank the Marshall N. Knudson Family Community Fund

Friday
AUGUST 30
Backus Community Center
900 5th Street
International Falls, MN
7:00 pm
Admission is FREE
(Donations gratefully accepted.)
All are invited!

AB PROJECT - ACTIVITY UPDATE

The summer months have seen lots of activity for the adaptive reuse of the historic Alexander Baker School. In June we had a site visit from Commonwealth Development of St. Paul who has worked on many adaptive reuse housing projects in the Midwest and expressed interest in the AB project. We continue to work with the Minnesota Housing Partnership guiding us through the complexities of financing and tax credits to make the project successful. Backus was given much encouragement and positive feedback for groundwork and planning already completed as well

as assurance that the AB structure is indeed viable and that our housing proposal is important in helping meet the housing needs in our area. In July, Three Rivers Community Action completed a site visit and met with staff. Three Rivers serves as a developer and consultant for housing solutions while working with historic building owners throughout the upper Midwest. Again, they confirmed we're on track and have a unique property

that will provide a solution for additional local housing while at the same time preserve and reuse an historic building. We have received a draft Conditions Assessment for the AB building from Kaas Wilson Architects and expect the final report to be completed in the next 30 days. The initial assessment is very positive stating that we have a structure and features well preserved and ready for reuse. The next step is to determine the best development path and who to bring in as partners.



AB School north side exterior roofline crenulation, "Tree of Life" mosaic circa 1912. This large glazed tile art mosaic measures approximately 16" x 20" and is one of a pair at the top of the building. It is attributed to the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works of Doylestown, PA.

These arts and crafts era tiles were mass produced as architectural features and ordered by architects from a catalog. Our mosaics are in excellent condition considering they have weathered our winters for the past 107 years.



Art Deco Bathroom Signs — Installed this spring

Sign brackets: Designed & Constructed by Dave Olson, FHS Industrial Arts Instructor.

Signs Installed by Dan Benedix & Jerry Vohler.





Thank you!

To our instructors and volunteers:

Angelika Gibson
Carrie Clark
David Griffith
Declan Lowthian

Heather Hall
June Wilson
Mary Gibson
Melissa Fuller

Shelly Koenig
Sherry Fehrman
Stacy Hall

The staff & the kids all appreciate the time they take to instruct them through breaking creative boundaries! Art can be a shared experience that creates bonds & friendships. We thank you for taking them through that journey together. If you see one of the above mentioned, please take a moment to thank them for sharing the joy that is art!

Review from Summer Arts Week Director: **Ariana Daniel**

“Summer Arts 2019 was another rollicking, imaginative time here at Backus! We had nearly 70 children from the ages of 5-14 involved in the program this year.

The classrooms, stage, garden and hallways were a buzz of creative energy as young artists tried their hand at decorating cupcakes, painting, sketching, sewing their

own stuffed animals, acting and gardening. This year we had the addition of a live animal sketching class in which students were able to sketch such exotic and exciting guests as spotted geckos, hedgehogs, and a Chinese hairless dog!

Also new this year was our own homegrown puppetry and theater camp. This is the first year

that we have offered a theater and puppetry program that was entirely led by Borealis Bards, involved and trained puppeteers and actors.

It is so exciting to see the program grow and develop in this way as both new and returning students mark the beginning of their summer creating art at Backus!”



SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM & COMMUNITY CAFE

What is the difference between the Summer Food Service Program & Community Cafe?

The Summer Food Program helps keep kids, ages 1-18, fed for free throughout the summer! This occurs every weekday during open gym from 11:30am to 1:30pm. Fridays are special because Falls Hunger Coalition offers ‘snack packs’ for the weekend. Anyone over 18 accompanying a child may eat as well, for a small fee of \$4.50. There are five nutrition components to every meal: protein, grain, vegetable, fruit or vegetable, & milk.

Community Café is open to the entire public, occurring every Tuesday and Thursday evening from 5:30 to 6:00 —also free! These meals are always nutritious, and filling. Think of it as “grandma’s cooking”, because you won’t leave hungry, and you’ll certainly leave satisfied.



Pictured are some of this years staff & volunteers for both programs. [Pictured left to right, 1st then 2nd image] Tim Collins, Cherie Sweney, MaryAnn Lien, Kylan Bjorkquist & below is Jerry Vohler. **All showing off our freshly picked peas!** [Not pictured: Tatiana Pillsbury, Jill Malone, Judy Peterson, & Joanne Bjorkquist]

This year, the garden has been full and fruitful! 2019 Summer Arts Week kids were able to aid in gardening, (*and of course decorating!*) with wonderful results. Our food program staff & volunteers have been using our garden vegetables in Community Café salads, sides, and with just enough extras to add to our Summer Food program as well! With a huge thank you to Rick DeBenedet for the ‘behind-the-scenes’ care and maintenance of our garden. Thank you also to our donors who were able to contribute vegetables to the garden.

You can find the monthly menu's on our website, our Facebook page, or in our office!
www.backusab.org
Facebook: @BackusAB

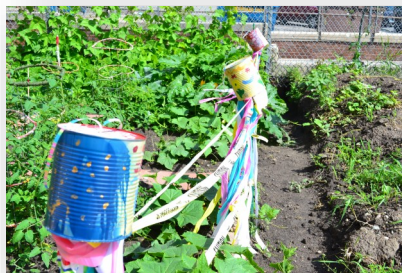


Thank you Harry Batdorf for the donated piano bench! Kids and teens alike have been showcasing their musicianship at our piano in the dining room, during summer food hours. They love it, and we do too!



Members of the Boyer family enjoy a family meal together during our Summer Food Program.

Whimsical decorations from the Summer Arts Week kids adorn our garden, protecting from unwanted visitors & inviting the pollinators!



Another featured vegetable that has grown quite large! A broccoli head that was used to make salad.



2019 - 2020

Performing

September 27th

Pat Surface & the Boundary
Water Boys Presents:
50th Anniversary
of Woodstock



Feelin' Alright! celebrates the 50th Anniversary of Woodstock 1969. It is an entertaining musical variety show that pays tribute to a historic event that defined a culture but could never be duplicated. With the songs we love from Woodstock and riveting back stories that take you behind the scenes, this unique show will blast you back to the past. Performed by the award-winning band, Pat Surface & American Pie - this show includes humor, compelling video, and a Woodstock Trivia segment with prizes. Fun, interactive, and unforgettable.

Show Times:

Doors open at 6:30

Show starts at 7:00

The Little Prince

This play/musical tells the story of a world-weary and disenchanted Aviator whose sputtering plane strands him in the Sahara Desert and a mysterious, regal "little man" who appears and asks him to "Please, sir, draw me a sheep."

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's

The Little Prince

By Rick Cummins and John Scullar



October 25th - 27th
Borealis Bards Present:
The Little Prince

November 5th
Triple Espresso



Triple Espresso tells the story of three guys whose bid for showbiz fame and fortune ended in 4-minutes of magnificent failure on national television. Hugh Butternut, Buzz Maxwell, and Bobby Bean tell their rags-to-rags story earnestly, with hysterical results. Butternut is a musician, a vulnerable soul with a lounge lizard smile; Maxwell is an uncertain magician with an attitude; and Bean is an irrepressible, all-over-the-map entertainer with big dreams. The laughter is infectious and the comedy appeals to everyone from first graders to college students to baby-boomers to grandparents.

Save the Dates!

Arts Series



Ticket Prices

Season Pass:	\$65.00
Pick 4:	\$48.00
Adults:	\$12.00
Kids:	\$5.00
Under 4:	Free

January 31st James Sewell Ballet



James Sewell Ballet was founded in New York City by James Sewell and Sally Rousse and brought to Minnesota in 1993. Combining their expertise, vision and chutzpah they envisioned a close-knit company of dance artists willing to both challenge their physical limits and expand their notions about ballet. Over two decades later, critically acclaimed JSB performances move and delight audiences across the country. The embodiment of the original vision is a professional company of dancers performing innovative work that explores the technical boundaries of ballet.

“One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind...”
The moon, stars, and the tapestry of the night sky all are responsible for some of humanity’s oldest legends and mysteries. History is filled with stories of daring innovators who had the audacity to dream of one day conquering the sky. In One Giant Leap, Cantus explores and celebrates the allure of upward exploration, the triumph of the human spirit, and striving for excellence through innovation and technology.



January 10th Cantus “One Giant Leap”

Whether you are an ‘ol timer that grew up listening to Mr. Cash in your tractor or a young soldier driving your tank across the deserts of the Middle East with the Man in Black in your headphones, the Church of Cash will bring his music, with style and energy to fans everywhere. What the Church of Church has that no one else can match is their loyalty to the song and the message that Johnny left to all of us. The band merely keeps this word alive with a youthful spirit that has entertained audiences completely.



March 6th Church of Cash



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

Return Service Requested

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
INT'L FALLS, MN
PERMIT NO. 86

Address Label

Upcoming Events

list of events is subject to change - check the Backus Website for up to date changes

August

- 22nd - Veterans Stand Down @9:00am—2:00pm | Ceremony @11:30am
- 26th - Koochiching County Housing Collaborative Meeting : 10:00am—11:30pm
- 30th - Oberholtzer Concert & Art Reception Reception @ 4:00pm—5:00pm | Show @ 7:00pm

September

- 7th & 8th - Playwriting Workshop
- 9th - Ruby's Pantry @5:00pm
- 27th - Pat Surface & The Boundary Water Boys: 50th Anniversary of Woodstock | Show @ 7:00pm
- 29th - Harvest Dinner : 11:00am to 2:00pm

October

- 14th - Ruby's Pantry @5:00pm
- 25th—27th - Borealis Bards "The Little Prince"

**Not a Backus member yet—
or forgot to renew? See our
website or call the office! Help
support your community center!**



Featured:
Pat & Donna Surface
Sept. 27th



Featured:
Triple Espresso
Nov. 5th