**Upcoming Events**

**June**  
5 - Summer Food Service Program Starts  
12 - Ruby’s Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm  
14 - Community Market begins 4:00 to 6:30 pm  
17 - City Wide Clean-Up 8:00 am to Noon  
19-23 - Summer Arts Week & Prairie Fire Children’s Theatre  
24 - Prairie Fire Children’s Theatre Performance 7:00 pm  
25 - Kickball Tournament and Picnic 1:00 pm  

**July**  
4 - Backus Office Closed  
10 - Ruby’s Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm  

**August**  
12 - Backus Triathlon  
14 - Ruby’s Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm  

**Community Café**  
Every Tuesday & Thursday | 5:30 pm to 6:00 pm  

**Community Market**  
Every Wednesday | 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm  

**Pickleball**  
Every Thursday | 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm  

**Open Gym**  
Monday - Friday | 11:30 am to 1:30 pm  

**Summer Food Service Program**  
Monday - Friday | 11:45 am to 1:15 pm  

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

**Summer at Backus**

**Summer Arts Week**  
June 19 - 24  
Grades K - 9  

Morning and Afternoon Classes  
With Art Exhibit on June 24  

Prairie Fire Children’s Theatre  
A Midsummer Night’s Dream  

To register, mail or bring registration form and class fee to Backus Community Center, 900 5th Street, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.  

Register by June 15

For more details and updates, visit www.backusab.org or stop by the office at 900 5th Street

**Auditions:**  
Monday, June 19  
**Rehearsals:**  
Tuesday June 20 to Friday June 23  
**Performance:**  
Saturday, June 24
Board of Directors
Sherrie Lessard, President
Gail Rognenud, Vice President
Tracy Laner, Secretary
David McKee, Treasurer

Board Members
Barb Albert, Emeritus
Kay Arnold
Patti Ballan
Julie Bartkowski
Carol Bryant-Bushing
John Faith
Derek Foss
Danna Frederickson, Emeritus
Beth Loughlin
Kendra Schmidt
Tim Wegner
Ward Merrill, Executive Director
Hoa Sobczynski, Business Manager
Robin Bjorkquist, Event Coordinator
Julia Herbert, Marketing
Jill Malone, Event Staff
June Wilson
Mary Ann Lien
Cooks
Rick DeBenedet
Wanda Linder
Custodians
Joe Kenny
Jerry Valher

What does Backus Mean to You?
Community Members Answer the Question “How Backus Community Center is making a difference in our community or in your life!”

Eric Norstad-Head Coach Falls School Trap Team
“I am the head coach of the Falls School Trap Team. The team is renting a classroom in Backus for winter training of the High School Team. We had been looking for five months for some place to hold our winter training, when it was brought to us that we could rent a room. It has been wonderful using Backus, once you are there a lot you realize how much it gets used. I was surprised at how many groups and people use the facility. It is buzzing with activity all the time. This place is the central gathering place for our community. I would call it our only Community Center. There is no other place for all of the programs that use Backus to go. It is such a diverse group using this facility, from sports, arts, music, U of M extension (4-H), community café and many social activities that have banquets there and many other activities. Before Backus there was nowhere for all of these activities. This community would not have the concerts it has now without Backus. If Backus wasn’t here we wouldn’t have a place to hold all of these events. Thank you for letting us use this wonderful facility!”

Backus Show Tickets
Our tickets make the perfect gift for every person and any occasion! Backus Gift Tickets can be used at any Backus Sponsored show and do not expire. Backus offers a wide variety of shows that are sure to entertain people of all ages. Stop by the office at 900 Fifth Street to purchase your next great gift!

THANK YOU
MARSHALL N. KNUDSON FAMILY COMMUNITY FUND FOR GRANTING $2,500 TO THE SUMMER ARTS PROGRAM AND $3,500 TO THE YOUTH ART GARDEN
**Backus Flashback**

A grass-roots group of dedicated individuals called Citizens for Backus AB bought the buildings on September 3, 2002 from the International Falls School district and opened Backus Community Center. This year will mark 15 Years since opening Backus Community Center.

Pictured Above Falls School Board Chairman Jerry Bolstad, left, hands the keys to the AB/Backus School complex over to Citizens for Backus/AB committee member Kay Arnold.

**The Backus Bite**

**Baked Chicken**

**Ingredients**
- 10 oz. Jar Apricot Preserves
- 8 oz. Bottle Russian Dressing
- 1 envelope Onion Soup Mix
- Chicken, Diced

**Directions:**
Spray a shallow pan with non-stick pray, and place the diced chicken in the pan. In a bowl mix together the apricot preserves, Russian dressing and onion soup mix. Pour the mixture over the chicken. Bake uncovered at 350 for about 1 and a half hours.

Recipe from
Mary Ann Lien
Backus Kitchen Supervisor

**From the Director’s Desk**

As I write this on a spring-like Friday afternoon, our auditorium is being readied with sets, sound and lighting for another fantastic production by Darcie Schulz and almost 200 dancers of all ages. This year’s theme of “Welcome to Las Vegas” holds the promise of another dazzling performance as Darcie celebrates twenty years of annual recitals.

Although I claim no artistic or performing talent whatsoever, I have always been impressed not only with Darcie’s staging of the event but also with the poise and self confidence her program instills in these young dancers. Darcie’s dance classes and recitals are a prime example of what the “performing arts” can add to the quality of our lives and to that of our community.

This issue of our Newsletter focuses on Youth and our upcoming summer activities. This week and next hundreds of “2017 Summer Arts” flyers will go out to area school children listing a dozen arts and music classes children can take part in during the week of June 19-24. We also feature Prairie Fire Children’s Theatre’s production of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” which will engage youth from ages 7-18 with two professional actors in the production and performance of this timeless William Shakespeare play. Prairie Fires week-long residency is sponsored in part by a grant from the Marshall N. Knudson Family Community Fund. The Arts Week ends on Saturday, June 24 with a 6pm student Art Show and the 7pm performance.

This summer will also see a re-building of our “Kid’s Art Garden” on the east side of the building. With the help of a $3,500 grant from the Marshall N. Knudson Family Community Fund, Ariana Daniel (Summer Arts Coordinator) will involve kids in re-building, planting, growing and harvesting fresh produce to be used in our Summer lunch program and Community Café. In addition, a composting project and earthworm project will be initiated this summer. Watch for the addition of youth artwork over the summer as the garden continues to be a source of food and pleasure for those who view it.

On Monday, June 5 our seventh year of the Summer Food Service begins with a free, nutritious lunch served to all youth ages 1-18 from 11:45am to 1:15pm. A supervised “open gym” period runs from 11:30am to 1:30pm. The program is sponsored by the MN Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Since June 2010 over 37,000 meals have been served through this program. The Indus School will be holding “Summer School” sessions at Backus again with classes beginning Monday, June 5 and running Monday-Thursday from 8:30am – 1:30pm. Sessions run the weeks of June 5 & 12 and August 7-9.

Backus continues to have an emphasis on youth and youth programs. The University of Minnesota’s Extension Service has conducted 4-H programming in the building for many years. We continue to collaborate with 4-H through an Otto Bremer Trust grant that funds both 4-H and Backus. 4-H youth programs are funded in part throughout the county with Otto Bremer dollars.

This year Backus also welcomed local Boy Scout Troop 150 to our building with meeting space provided in Room 209. The Scouts were in need of new meeting and storage space and were invited to become part of the “Backus family” by our Board of Directors.

Continued on page 4
From the Director’s Desk Continued

The Falls H.S. Trap Club has also found a winter home in the building to hone their trapshooting skills. The Junior Bards community theatre group has also flourished thanks to the dedication of Beth and Doug Lowthian. A series of Junior Bards one-act plays drew “sell-out” audiences on March 24-25. The delightful short plays were chosen by youth, directed by youth and featured cast members all under the age of 18. Backus has been pleased to support this thriving community theatre troupe. Joined by the “adult” actors in the Borealis Bards, the company drew over 1,500 people to last fall’s performance of “The Wizard of Oz” and plans to stage Roald Dahl’s “Willy Wonka” in October 2017.

Whenever possible Backus has provided quality arts outreach programming to Indus, Littlefork, Falls and St. Thomas Schools. Shaun Johnson and his “big band” visited all three schools in September. Oz characters made promotional trips to the schools while the James Sewell Ballet engaged 40 members of the Falls H.S. Band onstage in their performance of “Band It” in February. Randy Noojin, a New York playwright and actor, toured his performance of “Hard Travelin’ with Woody” to the Falls, Indus, Littlefork, Kelliher and Blackduck Schools. Well over 1,000 students were impacted by these artists.

While we close out our “school year” activities, Backus will experience a brief break prior to our summer programs. In that brief respite, we plan to re-finish the gym floor again and strip and wax our main floor. Our summer staff will increase as we staff the kitchen for summer lunches, open gym, our art programs and our Community Market EBT system. The Kid’s Art Garden will start to grow and a newly designed garden will bloom between our two front entry areas. We encourage you to take part in Backus programs, become a member, renew your membership and encourage others to do so. Our thanks to all of you who support Backus in so many ways.

Ward Merrill, Executive Director

Our Special Thanks to the City of International Falls for their consistent support of Arts & Culture programs at Backus

NOT A MEMBER YET?
Stop into the office at 900 5th Street or go online to www.backusab.org
Memberships start at just $60. All Memberships are Tax Deductable.
Members get 10% discount on room rentals, invitation to the annual meeting/dinner each February, “Member’s Only” events, Quarterly Newsletter, Discounts on Season Tickets with two free “Bring a Friend” tickets upon purchase, complimentary Members only lounge at performances.

Rainy Lake Triathlon
International Falls, Minnesota
Saturday
August 12, 2017
9:00 am Start

Register at the Backus Office, 900 5th Street, Int’l Falls
(218) 285-7225 or online at www.rainylakeraces.com

Community Market
June 14 - October 11
Wednesdays
4:00 to 6:30 pm
Accepts Credit/Debit Cards, SNAP (EBT) cards,