Upcoming Events

March
4 ~ “Hard Travelin with Woody” 7:00 pm
13 ~ Junior Bards Collection of One Acts 7:00 pm
24 ~ Junior Bards Collection of One Acts 7:00 pm
26 ~ Junior Bards Collection of One Acts 2:00 pm

April
1 ~ Ring of Kerry 7:00 pm
4-6 ~ WordPow! Workshop 6:30 to 9:00 pm
8 ~ Easter Bunny Breakfast 8:00-11:00 am
10 ~ Ruby’s Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
21 ~ Minnesota Deer Hunters Association Banquet
26 ~ FHS Band and Choir Concert 7:00 pm
29 ~ Room to Act Dinner Theater 7:00 pm

May
5 ~ Border Concert Twin Fiddle Express 7:00 pm
6 ~ WordPow! Workshop 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
8 ~ Ruby’s Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
13 ~ Dancin with Darcie Recital
14 ~ Dancin with Darcie Recital

Adult Volleyball
Tuesdays | 7:00 to 9:00 pm

For more details and updates, visit www.backusab.org or stop by the office at 900 5th Street
Looking Back at 2016 continued

Left– Falls High Football Players came to eat and play during Summer Food Service and Open Gym

Right– Members of the Rainy Lake Orchestra perform at a wedding

Below– Cast Members from the Wizard of Oz took pictures with kids at Treat Street

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?”

Willie Harala– basketball player– age 14
“I think it is an important building because it has a gym that we use because without it we wouldn’t know what to do. It also helps people with financial need because they have a cafeteria and they give free dinners twice a week.”

Willard Johnson, Ph. D.– Director of Operations, Northland Counseling Center
“The Backus Community Center has played a significant role in our community, with that role increasing exponentially since its inception...The Backus administration bends over backwards to be accommodating and to both develop new programs and to welcome in the programs developed by others...I am extremely impressed with the continued growth of Backus and with the variety of opportunities presented and realized because of the presence of Backus-opportunities that most likely would not exist or would be much more difficult to achieve, if we did not have this facility and the support of you and your staff.”

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!
Backus Flashback

This excerpt from the August 15, 1936 Daily Journal highlights an interesting fact about the Backus building. Did you know that in the cornerstone of Backus is a capsule with historic items? A copper capsule imbedded in the cornerstone of the E.W. Backus building when construction began.

From the Director’s Desk

This issue of the newsletter looks back on 2016 through a selection of photos. The year was a good one for Backus with a number of positive highlights. These included a positive budget balance, steady membership at 417 members (same as 2015), the addition of four new Board Members, the addition of Julia Herbert as our Fundraising/Marketing Coordinator, a variety of programs, concerts and events, and more improvements to the building and grounds. Our Event Coordinator Robin Bjorkquist continued fundraising efforts that will help bring major improvements to the “Green Acres” playground in South Falls.

2017 will be a significant year in the history of Backus. Eighty years ago on October 13, 1937 the new E.W. Backus Jr. High School was officially dedicated. The building was an investment in children and in the future of this community. At a cost of $391,000 ($176,333 provided by a New Deal PWA grant), the building was a showpiece of “modern” education. Replacement cost of just the Backus building today is estimated at over $8 million! What an investment this building turned out to be. When its use as a public school ended in the late 1990’s early 2000’s – both the Backus and AB buildings faced possible demolition. Imagine what a disaster that might have meant for this community. Historic preservationists would refer to the demolition of buildings like these as an “act of civic vandalism.”

Over ten years ago when former Executive Director Beckie Aitken and I presented a request for funding to the County Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Wade Pavleck made the comment that I’ve referred to frequently, “successful communities preserve their historic buildings.” This community pulled together over 80 years ago to construct Backus and it has continued to support its reuse as a vibrant community center which seems to pulse as the “heart of the community” today. That support needs to continue – whether it’s through your membership dollars, attendance at events, encouraging others to become members or participate or by volunteering. We value that support and we Thank You!

Ward Merrill, Executive Director
2016 General Operating Income and Expenses

**Performance Arts** 10%
**Learning Arts** 2%
**Fundraising** 5%
**Administrative** 3%
**Development** 2%
**Membership** 6%
**City Support** 10%
**County Support** 3%
**Contributions** 5%
**Miscellaneous** 1%

**2016 Expenses**

**Food Service** 2%
**Ruby’s Pantry** 15%
**Activity** 1%
**Community Café** 4%
**Development** 5%
**Fundraising** 4%
**Learning Arts** 2%
**Performance Arts** 9%
**Utilities** 9%
**Wages & Benefits** 29%
**Interest Expense-loans** 4%
**Other Expense** 3%
**Repairs & Maintenance** 5%
**Administrative** 3%
**Insurance** 3%

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**“HARD TRAVELIN’ WITH WOODY”**
**BY RANDY NOOJIN**
**MARCH 4, 2017 @ 7:00 PM**

This one-man multimedia play includes the music and artworks of Woody Guthrie, one of America’s iconic folksingers. Hop a box car through the Dustbowl with Woody, the saint-of-the-workingman and poet-of-the-people.

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**RING OF KERRY**
**APRIL 1, 2017 @ 7:00 PM**

This high energy Irish music group plays its Celtic music with a heart closer to its American home. The five musicians all sing and play several instruments. The group’s specialty is playing highly energetic and engaging stage shows that include a troupe of fully costumed Irish dancers.

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**2016-2017 Performing Arts Series Remaining Performances**

**NOT A MEMBER YET?**
Stop into the office at 900 5th Street or go online to www.backusab.org
Memberships start at just $60.

Members get 10% discount on room rentals, invitation to the annual meeting/dinner each February, “Member’s Only” events, and helping Backus to feed the hungry, encourage arts and expression, support local school and sporting events and restore the buildings.

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Individual show tickets will be sold at Backus Community Center, City Drug, J&D Family Foods in Littlefork and Betty’s in Fort Frances and at the door.

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These performances are made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.