

BACKUS Community Center

Volume 10, Issue 2

June 2018

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From the Director's Desk

As I write this on June 1, our staff is preparing for our ninth year of the Summer Food Service Program. Volunteers and staff will welcome children ages 1-18 on Monday for a free, hot, nutritious meal sponsored by the MN Department of Education. In addition to a healthy meal kids and parents can enjoy a two-hour open gym from 11:30am to 1:30pm. If you're a grandparent, parent or childcare provider you're encouraged to help your youngsters take part in this great summer program.

The last two weeks in June kids can take part in a two-week Summer Arts experience including art classes and Prairie Fire Theatre's "Pinocchio" June 18-23 and "The Z Puppets Rosenschnoz" workshop/performance from June 25-29. The "Puppets" are sponsored through a \$31,000 Minnesota State Arts Board Arts Learning grant.

All things happening at Backus are not necessarily as visible as Summer Lunch, art classes and children's plays. Prior to Darcie's Dance Recitals in May volunteers labored dozens of hours updating our stage curtains, rigging and catwalk above the ceiling. New tracks, booms and curtains were added providing "rotating" side curtains for better use of the stage. New fir timbers and planking will be installed above the ceiling enhancing the safety of those working from the "catwalk."

On June 25 members of the Koochiching County Housing Collaborative (a group organized by Backus and KOOTASCA Community Action) will meet with consultants from Community Part-

ners Research, Inc. of Faribault. The firm was hired with funding from stakeholders including nonprofits, cities and agencies throughout the county. The group will conduct a county-wide housing study with a focus on each community. Results from the study will help attract developers and funders for housing projects throughout Koochiching County. The study is also needed as Backus and KOOTASCA move ahead with development plans for the Alexander Baker Building. Initial ideas for AB include non-profit office space on the ground level with affordable housing on the second and third floors.

Initial work is also underway to develop a "scope of work" to renovate the drain pipe system in the basements of Backus and the AB Building. A first phase will include "bore scoping" the drain systems in both buildings.

June 30 provides another great opportunity for community fun with Backus sponsoring a revived "Tug of War" across Rainy River, the Dragon Boat Festival and other events, activities, games and food. Among the unique activities featured will be an "Escape Room."

The Backus Arts and Programming Committee has scheduled a unique, varied and quality Performing Arts Series for 2018-19. The season begins with the play "Ishmael" on September 22 which was a "sell-out" for almost every performance at the Jungle Theatre in Minneapolis last winter. "Little Shop of Horrors" by the Borealis Bards follows on October 26-28 and is funded in part by a grant from the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council.

WARD



More From the Director’s Desk—Backus Budget by the Numbers

Backus Community Center’s annual budget for income and expense is \$624,551. That averages to \$52,045/month; \$12,010/week or \$1,711/day. That’s a staggering amount of income that needs to be generated throughout the year.

Did you know?

- The electric costs per month average \$1,952
- Natural gas to heat the building totals \$24,413/year or an average of \$2,034/month
- Backus spends \$19,233 on insurance every year
- Water & Sewer costs \$540/month
- Interest expense on loans for the third floor renovation cost \$2,000/month
- In 2017 \$31,000 were spent on repairs and maintenance
- In 2017 a \$68,000 boiler re-build project was completed



Funding Backus Community Center:

- Backus is not part of the school district, the City or the County
- Backus has no taxing authority
- Our largest source of revenue comes from building leases and rental – 26% or \$156,463 in 2017
- The City of International Falls has contributed \$60,000/year for the past number of years
- For 2018 City funding was reduced to \$50,000 annually
- Koochiching County Provided \$19,500 in 2017 and \$15,000 for the Boiler Project
- In 2018 Koochiching County funding increased to \$24,500
- Backus relies on grants for general operating support, programming and projects
- The largest single source of grant funding is the Otto Bremer Trust which accounted for 10% of Backus income in 2017
- A number of Backus programs are “revenue neutral” – they are done as a community service with the hope of breaking even and not making money – Ruby’s Pantry, Community Café and Summer Lunch are prime examples
- Backus relies on a multitude of revenue sources to support maintaining the buildings and programming: rents, admissions, grants, donations, special events, etc
- Backus Membership accounted for 6% of Backus income in 2017
- While our number of members grew from 417 to 431 in 2017, actual member dollars contributed decreased by \$4,500

Other factors impacting our revenue in 2018 include:

- The impact of the 2017 Federal Tax and Jobs Act
- The pending loss of a major building tenant in 2019/2020
- Potential decrease in funds from various sources



At right: The Backus garden in 2017. Head Cook, Rick DeBenedet has been rebuilding the garden this year to make it more productive for Community Café and Summer Food Service programs.

More From the Director's Desk—Backus Budget by the Numbers ... continued

What can you do to help?

- If you're reading this newsletter it means you are a **current Backus Member**, Donor or Sponsor. (46% of our members are in the \$60 to \$100/year level). You could do several things:
 - Increase your membership donation by one category: from \$60 to \$100/year or from \$100 to \$150/year
 - Invite family members or friends to become Backus Members
- If you're reading this and you're **not sure** if you are a member – Call our office at 218-285-7225, ask us and then become a member
- If you're reading this and **your membership has lapsed**, call us or go online and renew your membership.
- Become an Auditorium Seat Sponsor. Sponsorship range from Annual - \$100, Five or Ten year to Lifetime at \$1,000 which includes a permanent metal plaque on the seat. This is a great way to honor or memorialize a loved one.



What else can you do?

- Purchase a Season Ticket for our 2018-19 Performing Arts Season
- Purchase a Season Ticket as a gift for someone else
- Attend Backus performances and events and invite others to do so
- Make a donation to a specific Backus program: Community Café, Summer Food, Ruby's or to Summer Arts Scholarships for kids
- Become a Backus Volunteer – during 2017 1,195 volunteers contributed 9,520 hours of volunteer service
- Spread the good word about all that Backus does for our community and our area
- Pick up or request our Annual Report and share with others

Backus impacts our community far beyond the walls of the building:

- In 2017 we partnered with Koochiching County Public health on a \$48,575 Super Bowl grant to install new playground equipment at Green Acres Park
- Each Tuesday and Thursday evening our Community Café feeds an average of 60 guests a free, nutritious hot meal
- Each summer thousands of school-age kids enjoy free summer lunches at our Summer Food Service Program
- Every month Ruby's Pantry serves almost 300 guests or 1,200 area people
- This year we partnered with the International Boundary Waters Dragon Boat Festival to host a festival on the American side of the border with the intention of making it a destination event. More visitors to the area bring more tourist dollars to all local businesses.

Backus depends on wide-ranging community support to operate – I encourage you to help support all that we do in as many ways as you can.

Ward Merrill, Executive Director



Online at www.backusab.org

Facebook: **Backus Community Center**



**MISSION
STATEMENT:**

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

Backus is more than a building. We are a dedicated group of Board Members, Staff and Volunteers who want to improve the community one event and project at a time.



Backus’ partnership with Housing Coalition

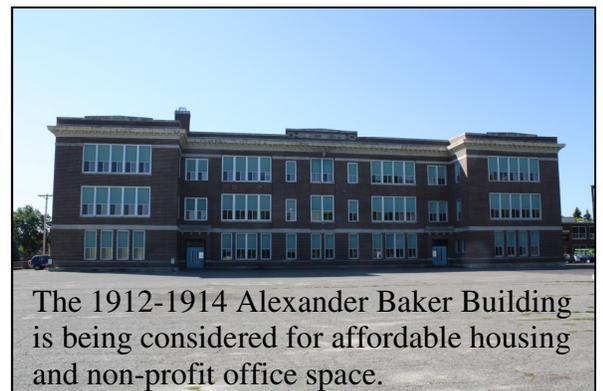
Last spring Backus Community Center and KOOTASCA Community Action, recognizing significant challenges in our local housing environment, came together to collaborate and bring stakeholders together to discuss housing needs in Koochiching County. In support of that effort, Minnesota Housing Partnership, MHP, committed significant expertise and resources to bring training to our community and offer its assistance to build capacity among local stakeholders to enable us to attract new development, improve existing housing, and meet housing needs and demand in our county. MHP has over 30 years of experience in housing and community development.

Together we have formed a Koochiching County Housing Collaborative — inviting core stakeholders to the table. These include: nonprofits – Koochiching Aging Options, Friends Against Abuse, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA), KOOTASCA, Backus, Servants of Shelter, Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV), Koochiching Economic Development Authority (KEDA), Koochiching County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA); cities: International Falls, Littlefork, Ranier, Northome, Big Falls; Koochiching County commissioners; County Public Health, Voyageurs National Park; I-Falls Commercial & Residential Housing Advisory Committee, Rainy River Community College and Minnesota Housing Partnership.

Monthly meetings began in October 2017 and are held the third Monday of the month. The meetings have been well attended with great discussion, input, and buy-in. Information and expert assistance from Minnesota Housing Partnership has been extremely beneficial.

Following in-depth discussion of the need for a housing study at the November and December meetings, the collaborative stakeholders reached a consensus that a countywide housing study should be undertaken. The first step for any significant housing effort — and one that is mandatory if you expect to attract developers and funders — is to complete a third-party housing study — the last housing study for our area was done 13 years ago. To that end we asked stakeholders and core institutions in our community to commit their support to this effort to raise the \$35,000 needed for a “countywide” housing study. The “countywide” study is viewed as being much more cost effective versus a study focused on a single community such as International Falls. Cost of a city-only study is estimated at \$20,000 to \$25,000. Countywide support from a wide range of stakeholders makes this an extremely cost-effective tool for housing development.

Quality affordable housing is a concern to all of us in our community and we are excited about the broad-based participation in this community effort.



The 1912-1914 Alexander Baker Building is being considered for affordable housing and non-profit office space.

Backus Board Member Spotlight: Patti Ballan

Why I became a Backus Board Member

I have been a Backus Board member since it was first established. I am a strong supporter of saving historic buildings in our community, so I initially got involved in "saving Backus/AB" from demolition. Historic buildings are classic examples of how our community was started and what it has become today. Imagine how difficult it was to build the AB building in 1912 and Backus in 1936. The structures have many beautiful architectural features that we could not afford to incorporate today.

Backus/AB has become an important Community gathering place for Arts, Recreation, Food & Social Pro-

grams, and many more Community activities which enhance our quality of life in Intl Falls. I want to give back to the community where I was raised, help be a "caretaker" of a historic structure, and successfully pass it on to future generations.

Patti Ballan

At right: Patti poses with her portrait painted by Gene Ritchie Monahan at the art exhibit hosted by Backus last September.

Monahan, a Duluth native, first visited Rainy Lake in 1931 with her future husband, George Monahan, whom she met in 1930 when they were students at the university. Monahan earned many local, regional and national awards in a career spanning more than 60 years. She died in 1994 at age 85.



Memorials

- Donna Frederickson in **Memory of Alyce Thureen**
- Jim & Sherrie Lessard in **Memory of Anne Ramsey**
- Doug & Karen Franchot, Joan Benedix & Craft Group, Gary & Carolyn Davison, Doris Pullar, Patricia Olson, Susan Swendsen, Sharon Reuter, Carolyn McDougail, Stany & Katsy Hendrickson, Iverne Kuryla, Jack & Katie Valentine, Bill & Barb Johnson, John & Becky Sirois, Patty Vita, Butch & Betty Lepper, Joan Mannausau, Judy Gielarowsky, Ed & Joan Currier, Al & Susie Braaten, June Anderson, Rick & LouAnne Faulkner, Tony & Zelah Imhof, Jim & Vicki Giauque, Shermoen & Jaksa Law Office, John & Karen Wilson, Sue Collins & Mark Trompeter, Sue Worthman, Robert & Janet Nelsen, Richard & Pat Bjorum in **Memory of Carol Vohler**
- Doug & Karen Franchot in **Memory of Donald Lowthian**
- Jim & Sherrie Lessard in **Memory of Edna Doris**
- Kay Arnold, Beverly & Chuck Leistico, Lynne Larson, Einar & Julie Johnson, Doug & Karen Franchot, Wayne & Peg Christie, Gerald & Yvonne Frank, Donna Frederickson, Ward & Linda Merrill, Byrne & Carole Johnson in **Memory of Janet Larson Shickell Schutheis**
- Al & Wanda Linder in **Memory of Jeff Otto**
- Marilyn Larson in **Memory of Yvone Nevanen**

Summer Arts @ Backus



Prairie Fire Children's Theatre present "Pinocchio"

June 18 to 22 with a performance June 23 @ 7 pm
All kids who register for theatre have a part in the play!
Open to kids ages 7 to 18 \$55 per child

Art Classes for kids ages 5 to 18 June 18-22
Morning Classes 10 am to noon | Afternoon 12:30 to 2:30 pm
Lunch Provided! \$25 per class

Art Classes Include:
Music & Movement
S.T.E.A.M.
Cupcake Art
Garden Art
Messy Art—**Class FULL**
Jewelry Making
3-D Woven Sculptures

June 25-29 features special puppet workshops from Z Puppets Rosenschnoz of Minneapolis!

Z PUPPETS ROSENSCHNOZ



The weeklong camp will host two groups. In the morning youth (ages 7-12) will learn shadow puppetry. In the afternoon, youth (ages 7-12) and their adult companions will learn blacklight puppetry. The afternoon session will include accommodations for

youth with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), although it will be open to youth of all abilities. Many people with ASD find blacklight soothing. At the culmination of the weeklong camp, both groups will perform alongside the professional artists as the Sailor Chorus in one sensory-friendly performance of Monkey Mind Pirates, a stage performance on Friday, June 29 at 7 pm. Youth emerge from camp with puppets they created as well as skills in mindfulness that will fuel and sustain the artistic process throughout their lives. Pick up registration forms at Backus Community Center or download at www.backusab.org. Scholarships available. Stop by the Backus office or call Ward Merrill at (218) 373-3002.



Puppet Workshops made possible ...
by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.





International Tug of War

Join TEAM USA at the Pat Roche Boat Landing, Highway 11 East, on Saturday, June 30 to tug against Canada for the trophy! As part of the Dragon Boat Festival, activities will start at 9 am and include vendors, yard games, obstacle course, Escape Room, flower ceremony, live music, dragon boat races and tug of war! For more information visit www.internationaltugofwar.org

Help us bring these wonderful performances to the Backus stage, become a sponsor today! Call Robin (218) 373-3004

2018-2019 Backus Performing Arts Season:

- Ishmael—September 22, 2018
- Borealis Bards "Little Shop of Horrors"—October 26-28
- The Hunts—November 9, 2018
- Rhythmic Circus Holiday Shuffle—November 27, 2018
- Tuey Wilson, Comic Juggler—February 1, 2019
- Sam Miltich: The Improvised Life: Exploring Intersections of Mental Health and Creativity Through Jazz—April 12, 2019

Free Kids Lunches Served!

Lunch Serving Times: 11:45 am to 1:15 pm

This program offers **free** summer meals to children age 1 to 18, Monday through Friday, June 4 to August 31.

- There are no income guidelines or eligibility requirements.
- Parents may eat with their children at no charge if they are Food Shelf clients or have a need for Food Shelf services.
- Regular adult meals are \$4.00 per meal.
- This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Ruby's PANTRY

Food Distribution Program

Receive an abundance of grocery items
Everyone who gets hungry qualifies!
Registration begins at 4:30 pm
\$20 US cash donation

2018 Distribution Dates

- July 9
- August 13
- September 10
- October 8
- November 12
- December 10

Open Gym

Monday through Friday | 11:30am to 1:30pm
(Children under 5 need parental supervision)

This activity made possible in part by funding from:
Minnesota Department of Education and

Otto Bremer Trust

NO OPEN GYM

June 18 through 29





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

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Upcoming Events

June

- 4—Summer Food Service Program Starts
Lunch served 11:45 am to 1:15 pm
Open Gym Starts 11:30 am to 1:30 pm
- 11—Ruby’s Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
- 12—Command Performance by Anna Schwartz 7:00 pm
- 18-23—Summer Art Week Classes and
Prairie Fire Children’s Theatre “Pinocchio”
- 25-29—Z Puppets Rozenschnoz Workshop Week
- 30—International Dragon Boat Festival and
Tug of War @ Pat Roche Boat Landing

July

- 4—Happy Fourth of July! Backus Building Closed
- 9—Ruby’s Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
- 27—Christian Motorcycle Association Concert 7:00 pm

August

- 13—Ruby’s Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm

September

- 3—Backus Building Closed for Labor Day
- 10—Ruby’s Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
- 22—Backus Performing Arts Series “Ishmael” 7:00 pm
- 30—Harvest Dinner 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

October

- 8—Ruby’s Pantry Food Distribution 5:00 pm
- 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
- 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

Summer Lunch Monday—Friday | 11:45 am to 1:15 pm
Open Gym Monday—Friday | 11:30 am to 1:30 pm
Community Café Tuesday & Thursday | 5:30 pm to 6 pm

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