

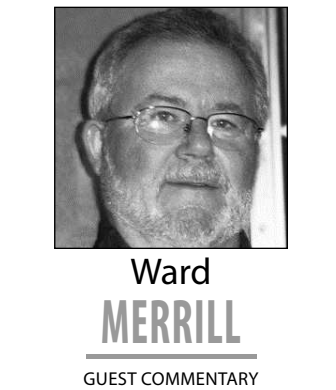
OPINION

Backus Community Center flush with activity

This week Backus fired the massive boilers which had been lying dormant for some months in the bowels of the AB Building. The massive machines which had been installed in Alexander Baker in 1912 began pumping steam into the Backus Building for its 77th year. Heat began to warm the immense concrete, brick, block, plaster and steel building again as we entered another fall and winter season. As the building warmed up I sat in Mr. Helleloid's old principal's office writing an article for our Fall Newsletter. The article reviewed the past nine months of 2014 and grew to some length. As usual, I asked our Board Member Marcia Bringedahl to proof-read the writing. When she phoned back with a few corrections Marcia was amazed at how many people, young and old, had been impacted by our programs and activities in recent months.

Reviewing those programs briefly even I was impressed with the impact Backus is having on the community. Our school outreach programs have brought visiting performing artists such as Chris Koza, "Woody Guthrie" and Monroe Crossing to almost 2,000 students and staff in Indus, Littlefork, Northome, Falls and St. Thomas schools including home-schoolers. Jeanine Coulombe's moving play THE MILL, depicting the people and events of the 1989 mill expansion and unrest was seen by over 700 people. A new community theater group sparked by Beth & Doug Lowthian is engaging dozens of youth and adults. They present an evening of one-act plays on October 18.

Backus meal programs continued to grow with the Summer Food Service Program now serving 8,158 meals to children and parents for an average of 127 lunches each summer day. One parent commented on a survey, "I appreciate the ongoing emphasis on fresh fruits and salads – keep up the good work!" Our Open Gyms during the summer and weekends draw hundreds of kids and parents annually. Beginning in December 2012 the "Community Café" has been serving



a free nutritious meal to anyone experiencing food insecurity. Each Tuesday and Thursday over 70 meals are served to seniors, adults and children. The "Café" has served over 11,500 free meals to date. Since we began our meal programs Backus has served over 42,000 free meals to kids and adults in our area!

For the past seven seasons Backus has sponsored the "Community Market" which provides an outlet for local growers and vendors to sell their products. Averaging 12-15 vendors, the market now features an electronic benefit transfer system allowing for the use of debit/credit cards and SNAP cards. The market also accepts "Market Bucks", "Fruit Bucks" and "Senior Select" vouchers.

Backus projects also extend beyond the walls of our building. For the past two summers the Falls Rotary Club and Backus have sponsored Riverfest at the Irvin N. Anderson Amphitheatre. "The Little River Band" and "Lamont Cranston" drew a crowd of 500 this past summer. Backus Event Coordinator Robin Bjorkquist is spearheading a "Pennies for Play" project with the Rotary which will renovate Green Acres Playground in South Falls. The effort has already raised almost \$6,000 towards that goal.

Part of our mission is to promote and celebrate the arts and to that end Backus continues to offer a Summer Arts Week and Afterschool Art for kids of all ages. Kids can participate in both visual arts and performing arts.

Backus has hosted several community meetings recently which have drawn groups of 160 and 65 to two "Call to Action" events. The effort is building momentum and community energy for an initiative called,

"Voyage Forward – Journey to Success" which will focus on the future of our area, revitalization, economic development and forward thinking.

Backus has grown immensely since the organization acquired the two buildings for \$850 in the fall of 2002. Our activities and programs really provide "meat on the bone" to our mission statement which proclaims, Backus Community Center, the heart of International Falls, where all generations celebrate arts, culture, recreation, wellness and life-long learning.

When you support Backus – you touch the lives of literally thousands of your fellow citizens. Your dollars, whether through a donation, membership or sponsorship, you help support a multitude of programs and services that benefit people of all ages. Hundreds of area youth are involved in programs such as: 4-H, Darcie's Dance Studio, 7th & 8th grade girls' & boys' basketball, summer band, afterschool & summer art, Backus Kids Club, Summer Food Service, Community Café, Icebox Days activities, Pennies for Play, Treat Street, school outreach programs and the Dungeon. Hundreds of people are impacted by services or programs located in our building: Senior Linkage Line/Area Agency on Aging, Driver's License Testing, Community Café, Northland Art Society, Rainy River Recovery, Replenish Yoga, KCC-TV, Northland Counseling and Icebox Radio Theater.

Backus is a real example of what a small group of dedicated people can accomplish in a community for the common good. You may be a Falls Alumnus, a parent, grandparent, a supporter of the arts, youth recreation, feeding the hungry or a person who thinks old buildings should be preserved and re-used – whatever your point of contact with Backus – you can find a reason to support Backus. Please make that choice today. Become a member, donor, supporter or attend a performance. Help support Backus and the quality of life in our community.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

No-decision on marriage may prove decisive

An adage demands: Lead, follow or get out of the way. The Supreme Court on Monday eyed the movement to legalize gay marriage and opted to get out of the way.

The court declined to hear appeals of rulings from three different circuit courts of appeals striking down five state bans on same-sex marriage. The court's decision not to decide opens the door at the very least to the legalization of gay marriage in six other states covered by those appeals courts.

It also signals to the appellate courts that have yet to rule on cases in their jurisdictions: There is no argument against these rulings strong enough for us to consider.

At this point, the high court has a plausible argument for staying out of the issue. Since the court struck down key parts of the Defense of Marriage act last year, no state ban has survived federal court review. As Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said last month in a speech at the University of Minnesota Law School: "When all the courts of appeals are in agreement, there is no need for us to rush to step in."

That may change in short order. The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, which handles cases from Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee, had been viewed as likely to uphold state bans in a ruling expected shortly.

Perhaps Monday's development will prod the 6th Circuit to follow its

brethren elsewhere. If so, the Supreme Court will be satisfied to stay out of it.

This is a piecemeal victory for marriage equality. As matters stand today, a same-sex couple that marries in Minnesota (where legalization came through legislative action, not judicial fiat) and moves to South Dakota will find their union unrecognized by their new state.

That's not ideal. But everybody, on and off the court, can also see the direction the politics are going. Gay marriage will eventually be recognized in all 50 states. This week's non-decision says the court is willing to let that happen without leading the parade.

The Free Press of Mankato, Oct. 8

FALL SAVINGS

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|--|---|---|
| <div>2014 DODGE JOURNEY SXT</div> <div></div> <div>FWD, White, 15K <b>\$18,995</b></div>               | <div>2014 CHRYSLER TOWN &amp; COUNTRY</div> <div></div> <div>Touring, Billet Grey, 11K <b>\$24,500</b></div>        | <div>2014 FORD ESCAPE SE</div> <div></div> <div>AWD, 4DR, White, 10K <b>\$20,995</b></div>              |
| <div>2012 FORD FOCUS SE</div> <div></div> <div>4 Cyl, Black, 53K <b>\$11,495</b></div>                 | <div>2012 FORD FOCUS SE</div> <div></div> <div>4 Cyl, Green, 30K <b>\$11,995</b></div>                              | <div>2012 FORD FUSION SE</div> <div></div> <div>6 Cyl, White, 56K <b>\$13,495</b></div>                 |
| <div>2011 FORD FIESTA SE</div> <div></div> <div>4 Cyl, Lime, 46K <b>\$10,995</b></div>                 | <div>2010 CHEVROLET IMPALA LS</div> <div></div> <div>6 Cyl, Black, 50K <b>\$10,995</b></div>                        | <div>2009 DODGE JOURNEY SXT</div> <div></div> <div>6 Cyl, Sandstone, 75K <b>\$12,995</b></div>          |
| <div>2009 DODGE JOURNEY SXT</div> <div></div> <div>6 Cyl, Silver Steel, 68K <b>\$12,995</b></div>      | <div>2009 CHRYSLER TOWN &amp; COUNTRY</div> <div></div> <div>LX, Silver, 78K <b>\$10,995</b></div>                  | <div>2008 CHEVROLET TRAILBLAZER</div> <div></div> <div>LT, White, 115K <b>\$9,795</b></div>             |
| <div>2008 CHEVROLET UPLANDER</div> <div></div> <div>LT, Brown, 63K <b>\$9,995</b></div>                | <div>2008 MERCURY SABLE</div> <div></div> <div>6 Cyl, Ice Blue, 75K <b>\$9,495</b></div>                            | <div>2006 DODGE GRAND CARAVAN</div> <div></div> <div>SXT, Silver, 84K <b>\$7,495</b></div>              |
| <div>2006 FORD FOCUS ZX5</div> <div></div> <div>SES, Maroon, 118K <b>\$5,495</b></div>                 | <div>2006 FORD TAURUS SE</div> <div></div> <div>6 Cyl, Gold Ash, 101K <b>\$5,295</b></div>                          | <div>2006 JEEP LIBERTY 4X4</div> <div></div> <div>Limited, Black, 146K <b>\$7,995</b></div>             |
| <div>2005 GMC ENVOY XL 4X4</div> <div></div> <div>SLE, 6 Cyl, White, 135K <b>\$7,995</b></div>         | <div>2005 CHRYSLER TOWN &amp; COUNTRY</div> <div></div> <div>Touring, 6 Cyl, Black, 143K <b>\$3,995</b></div>       | <div>2004 FORD F150 CREW CAB XLT</div> <div></div> <div>Wedgeood Blue, 98K <b>\$10,995</b></div>        |
| <div>2004 FORD TAURUS SE</div> <div></div> <div>6 Cyl, True Blue, 106K <b>\$4,495</b></div>            | <div>2004 CHEVROLET 1500 SILVERADO</div> <div></div> <div>Z71, Ext Cab, 4x4, Grey/Pewter, 128K <b>\$9,995</b></div> | <div>2003 CHEVROLET CAVALIER</div> <div></div> <div>LS, Sport, Red, 134K <b>\$3,500</b></div>           |
| <div>2003 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE</div> <div></div> <div>Laredo, 4x4, Pewter, 102K <b>\$6,995</b></div>    | <div>2003 CHEVROLET CAVALIER</div> <div></div> <div>4DR, White, 97K <b>\$3,995</b></div>                            | <div>2003 FORD EXPLORER 4X4</div> <div></div> <div>Limited Edition, V8, Grey, 106K <b>\$6,995</b></div> |
| <div>2002 DODGE RAM 1500 4X4</div> <div></div> <div>SLT, Quad Cab, V8, Blue, 104K <b>\$6,995</b></div> | <div>2002 FORD TAURUS SE</div> <div></div> <div>Wagon, V6, Arizona Beige, 100K <b>\$3,995</b></div>                 | <div>2001 DODGE RAM ST 4X4</div> <div></div> <div>Quad Cab, V8, Red, 75K <b>\$7,595</b></div>           |

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