

The Gayville Hall Gazette

Nine Fall Shows Will Complete Hall's 10th Season

Five big tribute shows, gospel, Hay Country Jamborees, and Poker Alice scheduled

The dusty roads and hard times of the dirty '30s inspired Oklahoma's legendary country troubadour Woody Guthrie to write and perform some of the greatest hard-time tunes in all of folk or country.

On **Saturday, Sept. 18**, at 8 p.m., rediscover the wonderful tunes of Guthrie, classics like "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You" or "Goin' Down the Road Feeling Bad," or the American anthem "This Land is Your Land," at Gayville Hall's two-hour tribute to the great songwriter and singer.

John and Susan McNeill, Nick Schwebach, and Owen DeJong, our fabulous country foursome, will star. Please read John's column about Guthrie in this same issue (below). He has been preparing the tribute for several months now.

A special guest at the show will be the lovely, young Evie Johnson of Vermillion, who researched Woody Guthrie

at the Guthrie Archives in New York City and toured schools across Nebraska and South Dakota singing Guthrie's songs for children. She will perform several of her favorites.

Gayville Hall's fall season continues on **October 2** with the first of two more "Hay Country Jamborees." The sensational young singer Jami Lynn, accompanied by the talented, multi-instrumentalist Josh Rieck (of Snakebeard Jackson fame), returns to join the McNeills, Dan Kilbride, and company in another fast-moving evening of old-time American popular songs, country, bluegrass, and humor.



Woody Guthrie

A month later, on **November 6**, we'll stage the season's last Jamboree, featuring our regular stars and super guests from our ever-growing list of great talent located right here in this region.

We are very excited about the talent that has started to turn up here, especially some of the young talent. It is exciting to find young musicians who appreciate the great old-time music.

We are identifying the best musicians we can find and mixing them in with our established stars.

Our Fab Four -- the McNeills, Schwebach and DeJong -- return to

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Singer, Songwriter Woody Guthrie: Icon of the Working Man

We look to poets to learn about ourselves and the world we call "home". And the poets who are most compelling often recite their lines while strumming a guitar. Poets-singers-strummers. People pay more attention when there's a little music in the mix. Some of America's most erudite poets have been singers with a six string guitar.

One must consider Woody Guthrie when wanting to know what this land was all about in the last century. He ambled and rambled around the country with his eyes and ears open. What he saw and heard he often put into songs. The simple songs caught a lot of people's attention. As they listened to them, they felt as though somebody was really "singing their song." Woody was a mouthpiece for a lot of folks, saying things that he was convinced needed to be said.

It's not likely Guthrie was registered

From
the
STAGE



by Gayville Hall MC John McNeill

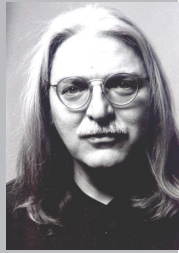
as a Republican. He wasn't a political conservative. In fact, he was held in serious suspicion by people in Washington who were certain Guthrie was one of the enemy agents we had lurking behind every American tree. And he was a lightning rod for negative opinion because of his iconoclastic manner and outspokenness. Guthrie was grieved by plutocracy, by oppression, and by what he believed were the myths of supply-side politics. And, he wasn't the kind to keep his views to himself. He was

a poet-spokesman. He believed things needed to be brought out into the open so common folks could truly have a fair shot at the pursuit of constitutionally promised rights. And so Guthrie sang up a storm. Literally.

He had the ability to put his lines to catchy melodies, and sing in an unvarnished, unpretentious manner. Folks took to it. People who didn't pay much attention to music generally took a hankering to Guthrie music specifically. So much so, in fact, that his songs became American folk songs with unprecedented quickness. It was as if a new Woody Guthrie song had been around for ages. As if you knew a Woody song before you ever heard it for the first time. Once in a while a poet/songwriter/singer comes along who can do this. Not too often, though. There's only a Woody Guthrie or two in any given culture per century.

There are songs we know well that
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From the HOUSE



by Gayville Hall Proprietor Doug Sharples

The Musical Variety Show at Gayville Hall

Although our first event at Gayville Hall in 2001 was a concert (by the late Omaha saxophonist Preston Love), I never wanted Gayville Hall to be a concert hall per se. I wanted to put on “shows,” as I called them, which would be more interesting to me than “booking a concert” or concerts, which would ultimately bore me.

Three weeks after our first concert, we staged “A Celebration of Music and Song,” starring John and Susan McNeill, the Public Domain Tune Band, and Nikki Abourezk.

I really liked the idea of having three acts in a show. If audience members didn’t like one act, there were two others that they might like. It also provided variety, keeping the show fresher and livelier.

The expense of hiring three acts made it difficult to mount many such shows during our first several years. Mostly our musical hosts, the McNeills, would “open” for another act that was traveling through or was a locally prominent “headliner.”

We meanwhile discovered the concept of doing “tribute shows” after John McNeill suggested that we do an “all Hank Williams show” for our fourth event.

The McNeills, Nick Schwebach, and Owen DeJong starred in “A Celebration of Hank Williams,” which has been presented on the road and once-or-twice yearly here ever since. Tributes to Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, and Waylon Willie and the Boys followed.

In 2004, I finally brought back the idea of a musical variety show (with a minimum of three acts), which I called “The Dakota Opry.” We presented the

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the Gayville Hall stage to perform tributes to **Hank Williams** on Oct. 16; **Merle Haggard** on Oct. 30; **Waylon, Willie and the Boys** on Nov. 13; and **Johnny Cash** on Nov. 20.

On October 23, the foursome and guests will perform “An Evening of Old-Time Country Gospel.”

Our season will end on December 4, when we present “**A Poker Alice Christmas with Brenda George.**” Nick and Owen’s eclectic band will perform great tunes from their regular repertoire, including western swing, country, jump blues and pop, as well as some Christ-



Gayville Hall’s “Fab Four” (Owen DeJong, Nick Schwebach, John & Susan McNeill) will appear in five tribute shows this fall.

mas favorites Brenda will pick out to sing with the band.

Our doors always open at 7 p.m., and shows all start at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$12.50 at the door, or \$15 for a reserved seat. Call (605) 267-2859.

Guthrie Show Will Have Everyone Singing

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we didn’t know were Woody Guthrie songs. Traditional songs that just always seemed to exist. Woody Guthrie wrote them. Maybe in a railroad boxcar, or in a cheap rooming house, or sitting around strumming his guitar with a few of his like-minded friends. Woody would debut one of his new songs, and before its last chorus everybody would be singing along, certain they’d known the song all their lives.

Woody Guthrie got in a lot of miles

in a short lifespan. His contribution to our nation’s musical oeuvre is considerable. A lot of American musicians play and sing the way they do because of the influence of Woody Guthrie – whether they know it or not.

We’ll have a Woody Guthrie retrospective at Gayville Hall this fall on September 18th, and play two hours of Woody Guthrie songs, and songs about Woody Guthrie. We hope you’ll come and enjoy this show. It’ll be all about “this land which was made for you and me.”

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show at Gayville Hall on June 12 and a grander version on July 31 at the Lauridsen Theatre in Okoboji, Iowa, starring the Poker Alice Band, the McNeills, and Bob and Sheila Everhart. I wanted to create a show that we could eventually present monthly, or even more frequently, that people would come to on the basis of its name and reputation alone.

By the spring of 2007, however, during which we presented two “Dakota Oprys” on our stage, individuals in Sioux Falls started using the same name at a rental facility in Tea. After some very unpleasant contacts between myself and these individuals and their lawyer and subsequent research through the federal registrar of trade names, I abandoned

the name to the unpleasant individuals in Sioux Falls with full knowledge that, legally, the word “opry” is a registered trade mark of the corporation which owns the Grand Old Opry, Opryland USA, and the Carolina Opry.

I staged the first two “Hay Country Jamborees,” my new name for Gayville Hall’s recurring musical variety shows, in the fall of 2007. We did six more in 2008, another six in 2009, and will have presented eight during this season.

The shows are getting better all the time and livelier, especially since we have started putting four or even five acts in some recent shows, allowing us to bring you many new and exciting performers to our stage. Thank you for your growing support for “The Hay Country Jamboree.”

New Faces at Gayville Hall Bring Variety, Talent to Stage

This season, several new faces have joined the Gayville Hall “family” on stage, bringing variety and new talent to the Hall. They include Cowboy Poet Ed Nesselhuf, singer, piano-player, and guitarist Jami Lynn, and singer, guitarist, and flutist Evie Johnson, all of whom debuted during Hay Country Jamborees this past spring and summer.

“The format of the musical variety show works well to introduce new talent,” says show producer and Gayville Hall proprietor Doug Sharples. “It’s fun to see how the new acts will interact with our other performers on stage.”

So far, the three are fitting in just fine. Gayville Hall patrons will have a chance to hear the new talent again this fall during upcoming Hay Country Jamborees. Please check the show schedule on page 4 for details.

Ed Nesselhuf

Ed Nesselhuf brings a new type of entertainment to the Gayville Hall stage: the cowboy poem.

Nesselhuf, a retired pastor and former rodeo competitor, recites rhyming poems, mostly original works, that center on cowboys, farming, and rural living.

“I guess I had enough dust and rodeo and horses in my lifetime that I have a few stories to tell,” says Nesselhuf, who became interested in the cowboy poetry genre in the 1990s and has become a cowboy poetry competitor since then. “I really enjoy it.”

So far, Nesselhuf says he’s found Gayville Hall patrons to be very receptive to his poetry. For those who haven’t heard him, he describes his poetry as “ballad-type poems,” each with a certain rhyme and meter that are generally about 5-6 minutes in length.

According to Nesselhuf, the cowboy poetry genre developed in the early to middle



Ed Nesselhuf

1800s. At that time, many drovers and cowhands were illiterate, so good stories were put to rhyme, making them easier to remember.

Nesselhuf is the author of one book, “Coming of Age.” All proceeds from sales of that book, as well as from his appearances at Gayville Hall, are donated to the prison ministry program, Prison Congregations of America, that Nesselhuf founded and ran for more than a decade.

He says that Gayville Hall patrons can remember him as the “Prairie Pastor Poet,” or “P Cubed.”

Jami Lynn

South Dakota farmgirl Jami Lynn has only played at Gayville Hall once, but she’s already in love with the place.

“It is so unique,” she gushes. “It’s so cool. I love everything about it. I was tickled to play there. You just feel like you’re stepping back in time at Gayville Hall. I wish my grandparents [in northern SD] could come see it.”

At her first Gayville Hall performance August 7, Jami Lynn, who just graduated from USD with a bachelor’s degree in music, belted out classic country and folk songs with style and grace.

She has been performing since she was in junior high and plays the guitar, banjo (but not that well -- she’s hoping to take some lessons from Dan Kilbride), and piano. She specializes in traditional folk music.

Jami Lynn, who accompanies herself on guitar, has aspirations of becoming a full-time musician. Her other love is organic gardening, which she is doing part-time right now.



Jami Lynn

Jami Lynn is currently working on her second album with friend and musical partner Josh Rieck of Sioux Falls. The album, to be titled “Sod Busters,” is due out in October and will feature “old folk songs from the upper Midwest,” she says.

She and Rieck hope to tour with the album next spring.

Evie Johnson

When musician Evie Johnson learned that Woody Guthrie had an influence on Bob Dylan, a musician she greatly admired, Johnson decided Guthrie was a songwriter and musician she wanted to study.

While a student at USD majoring in flute performance, Johnson studied at the Woody Guthrie Archives in New York City. Loving Guthrie’s children’s music in particular, she then spent several years touring South Dakota and Nebraska, performing Guthrie’s music for elementary children.

“I really enjoyed doing that,” says Johnson. “I love the energy of children, their enthusiasm, and laughter.”

Johnson will participate in the upcoming Woodie Guthrie tribute show. She first shared her talent as a singer, flutist, and guitar player on the Gayville Hall stage during the Jamboree July 10. She has been playing the flute since she was in 6th grade and plays a “mix of classical and jazz pick-up melodies on flute and guitar”.



GAYVILLE HALL'S FALL SEASON 2010

THE PREMIERE OF A BRAND NEW TRIBUTE SHOW

**SEPT 18: "So Long, It's Been Good to Know
You: The Songs of Woody Guthrie"**

starring John and Susan McNeill, Nick Schwebach and Owen DeJong

GAYVILLE HALL'S MONTHLY MUSICAL VARIETY SHOW

OCT 2: "The Hay Country Jamboree"

starring Jami Lynn and Josh Rieck, Dan Kilbride, the McNeills, and guests

GAYVILLE HALL'S POPULAR TRIBUTE TO THE LATE, GREAT MUSICIAN

OCT 16: "A Celebration of Hank Williams"

starring John and Susan McNeill, Nick Schwebach, and Owen DeJong

A WONDERFUL EVENING OF SONGS FOR THE SPIRIT

OCT 23: "Old Time Country Gospel"

starring John & Susan McNeill, Nick Schwebach, Owen DeJong, and guests

OUR POPULAR TRIBUTE

OCT 30: "A Celebration of Merle Haggard"

starring John and Susan McNeill, Nick Schwebach, and Owen DeJong

EXPERIENCE THE GOOD OLD TUNES, BLUEGRASS, AND CLASSIC COUNTRY

NOV 6: "The Hay Country Jamboree"

starring John and Susan McNeill, Dan Kilbride, and guests

ANOTHER POPULAR TRIBUTE SHOW FEATURING "THE OUTLAWS OF COUNTRY MUSIC"

**NOV 13: "A Celebration of
Waylon, Willie, and the Boys"**

starring John and Susan McNeill, Nick Schwebach, and Owen DeJong

OUR POPULAR TRIBUTE TO THE MAN IN BLACK

NOV 20: "A Celebration of Johnny Cash"

starring John and Susan McNeill, Nick Schwebach, and Owen DeJong

RING IN THE HOLIDAYS WITH THIS WONDERFUL BAND & SINGER

**DEC 4: "A Poker Alice Christmas
with Brenda George"**

GAYVILLE HALL, 502 Washington Street, Gayville, SD
\$12.50 at the door; \$15 reserved; Call 605-267-2859. All shows start at 8 p.m.

Gayville Hall
PO Box 249
Gayville, SD 57031
(605) 267-2859

Check out our fabulous
shows this fall!



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VISIT:
www.gayvillehall.com
for updated show information.