

The Gayville Hall Gazette

Johnny Cash Tribute, Monthly Jamborees, New Orleans Jazz, and Woody Guthrie Shows Queued Up at Gayville Hall

Gayville Hall's big 10th season continues on Saturday, May 29, at 8 p.m. with "A Celebration of Johnny Cash," starring our fabulous country foursome, John and Susan McNeill, Nick Schwebach, and Owen DeJong. The show attracted our largest crowd ever at Gayville Hall when it premiered two months after Cash's death in 2003. It remains one of our best and most popular shows. Come early and get a good seat. The box office opens at 7 p.m.

On June 5, our monthly musical variety show, "The Hay Country Jamboree," features a Gayville Hall favorite, country singer Brenda George, along with the Public Domain Tune Band, and our fantastic bluegrass duo, Dan Kilbride and Dalton Coffey, leading the show. When Brenda and the always-funny Daniel are on stage together, something special is bound to happen. Add Nick Schwebach singing great old tunes from the 1920s and '30s, the phenomenal fiddling of Owen DeJong, and Larry Rohrer's bass and backup vocals, and you've got an evening of great music, fun and entertainment. Don't even think about missing it. That's June 5.

"The Hay Country Jamboree" will continue on stage once a month through the fall with an additional five shows on July 10, August 7, September 4, October 2, and November 6. Each will include at least three acts on stage together throughout the show, trading songs and humor by turn. John and Susan McNeill will perform in all, as will Dan Kilbride and Dalton Coffey.

Guest stars at these Jamborees will include cowboy poet Ed Nesselhuf, who will make brief appearances at several shows; the not-to-be-missed young singer Jami Lynn (accompanied by Josh Rieck) on August 7 and Oct. 2; and Iowa's "Singing Farmer" Ervin Pickhinke (accompanied by Jim Clausen on dobro) and the legendary Folkways recording artist Bob Everhart, with wife Sheila Everhart, on dates to be determined.

Two shows in July require your special attention. The first, on July 17, is the return engagement of the Little Chicago Syncopators, out of Sioux City, which performed great traditional New Orleans and Chicago style jazz here on April 24 before an enthusiastic but too small crowd. We just had to have them back in order to get it right. These boys deserve



Pete Hittle and Murph Monahan of the Little Chicago Syncopators. The Syncopators will perform at Gayville Hall July 17. Don't miss it!

a big crowd, so help us out. If you like Louis Armstrong or old-time Dixieland or great band music of any kind, these great trumpet, cornet, saxophone, clarinet, banjo, bass, drum, and piano players will make your day, if not your week or month. Come on July 17 and enjoy.

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Bring Your Cameras to the Hall New Photo Opportunity Available In Front of Signs

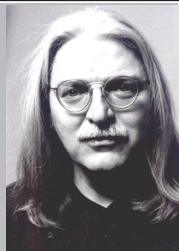


Gayville Hall proprietor Judi Sharples stands in front of a new "photo opportunity" outside Gayville Hall. The postcard mural behind Judi is one of four new signs added to the outside of Gayville Hall this year. The signs were created by Irene artist Greg Preheim.



One of the new signs in front of Gayville Hall

From the HOUSE



by Gayville Hall Proprietor Doug Sharples

Art, Entertainment Venues Are Risky Bets

Gayville Hall is a labor of love first and foremost, but it is also a business that I constantly strive to make financially and artistically successful. It has to be both for me, but figuring out what balance of shows works best to reach that goal is more difficult than I would like.

Though it is not wildly profitable now (what is?), the dreamer in me believes that Gayville Hall can be an economic success. Consistently put on good shows and people will come, the dreamer in me says. When we put on shows that are good, we derive great satisfaction. If a show draws a great crowd, the satisfaction is multiplied.

I haven't played poker since college and have never bought a lottery ticket in my life, but business ventures and especially entertainment, music and arts ventures like Gayville Hall are almost always a risky bet. The odds are against them. Not even public subsidies or non-profit status, neither of which Gayville Hall has sought, can insure success.

The recent financial troubles of the venerable, old Black Hills Playhouse, the 65-year-old summer theatre founded by Warren M. "Doc" Lee in Custer State Park, sadly proves it. Without the Black Hills Playhouse, Gayville Hall wouldn't be here. The playhouse first attracted Judi and me to South Dakota to be members of its troupe during its 19th and 20th seasons. It was already an iconic South Dakota institution and the pride of the USD College of Fine Arts, with which it was affiliated.

It was truly shocking for Judi and I to recently discover, during a

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George Wows Patrons With Her Voice



Sometimes, musician Brenda George wishes life were like a musical.

"Wouldn't it be great," the Avon, SD, vocalist and guitarist says, "If we could just burst into song at any moment as we go throughout the day?"

George, who admits that musicals are among her favorite things, does burst into song when she has a chance -- and those around her love it. George, who is particularly known for her powerful voice, wows crowds with her beautiful singing. This season, patrons will have the chance to hear George on June 5, when she appears with Dan Kilbride and the gang in "The Hay Country Jamboree," on July 24 with The Poker Alice Band, and later in the fall for a special Christmas show.

"I love playing at Gayville Hall," says George, who usually plays at the Hall two or three times each year. "It's such a loving atmosphere and everything is so up-close and personal there"

Music has always been an important part of George's life. George grew up in north-western Iowa, one of seven children. Her siblings all played instruments and sang, and at the age of 8 or 9, her father taught her to play the guitar.

"I remember people always playing and singing when I was growing up," George says. "And we listened to a good variety of music."

Today, George plays guitar, electric bass, and baritone saxophone (although she admits she's a bit out of practice on the sax). Of course, she also sings. Her favorites to play and sing include the old country tunes and cowboy songs, although she's had experience singing and playing rock, folk, and popular music. Her favorite vocalists include Patsy Cline and George Strait. Her "absolute all-time favorite" group is Riders in the Sky because of the way they mix comedy with really great music, she says.

George has written two original tunes "Dakota Boy" and "The Longhorn Waltz." "Dakota Boy" is always a favorite at Gayville Hall and is requested frequently.

George has been a part of several bands and groups over the years, including The Poker Alice Band, which she was a member of from 1984 until 1986 and then again in the early 1990s. She spent four years in Nashville in the late 1980s before returning to South Dakota. Once she had children in the 1990s, George put her music aside to concentrate on child-rearing and her nursing career. Today, George sings and plays every chance she gets (which isn't enough, she says). She appears with The Poker Alice Band on special occasions and sings with the Avon Easter Cantata every year.

"I can't imagine a life without music," says George. "I wouldn't know what to do if I didn't have music. ... I wouldn't be me without music in my life."



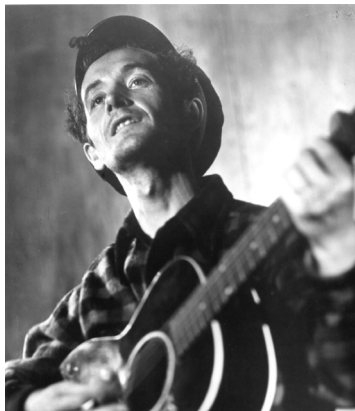
Brenda George and The Poker Alice Band

Many Great Shows This Summer, Fall at GH

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Nick Schwebach's and Owen De-Jong's incredible Poker Alice band takes the stage on July 24 for a concert of country swing, jump blues, and old-time country and popular classics. Brenda George performed with the band in the 1980s and will rejoin the band once again at Gayville Hall.

September 18 will be a special date at Gayville Hall. John McNeill has been working on a tribute show to the great and influential songwriter and folk singer Woody Guthrie, which we will unveil that Saturday night. Everyone knows one or two Guthrie songs from "This Land Is Your Land" to "Oklahoma Hills (Where



Woody Guthrie - Photograph by Robin Carson; The Guthrie Archives

I Was Born)," but many of the other songs he wrote or performed are also part of a great national legacy which inspired Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, and other folk, rock, bluegrass, and country stars.

A full schedule of music shows will continue through the fall, including tributes to Hank Williams, Merle Haggard, Johnny Cash, and Waylon, Willie and the Boys. A later *Gazette* will provide details on the fall schedule. Check the Gayville Hall website at www.gayville-hall.com for the latest.

All shows are on Saturdays starting at 8 p.m. sharp. Tickets are \$12.50 at the door, or \$15 reserved. Call 605-267-2859.

From the House: Fall of Black Hills Playhouse Astounding

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trip this month to the Black Hills with our grandchildren, the playhouse theatre building, erected in 1956 at the old C.C.C. camp that was the playhouse's home, and its associated dorms, mess hall, scene and costume shops, snack bar, and other buildings, all posted with notices by the state barring occupancy. All were locked up tight behind barricades at the compound's entrance.

We had heard about the playhouse's struggle several months ago on public radio and more recently after a last minute "bailout" by the legislature was vetoed by the governor. We hope that the playhouse can hang on and prosper. Its demise or relocation out of the park would be sad indeed. Poor management at the playhouse

during a recent regime undoubtedly contributed to its troubles. Hopefully new management now in place will turn things around and facilitate a return of the playhouse, if I had my way, to the park complex where it was so long ensconced over these many decades. It wouldn't be the same at the Homestake Opera House in Lead, but that is one alternative being suggested.

The Playhouse's 65th season will be its smallest ever, with about 31 total performances of three plays being presented at high schools in Custer and Hill City, as well as at the Lead opera house. One does what one has to do in order to survive, and hopefully the spirit and vision of old Doc Lee can be resurrected to spur on another 65 years for the playhouse. We will be pulling for it.

From the STAGE



by Gayville Hall MC John McNeill

Live Music Endangered

In times past, "live music" was standard in American society. When there was an occasion, a celebration, a dance, a social gathering of almost any kind, live music was part of the affair. If it was to be special, live music was called in to make it special.

That was in times past. It's not that way these days. Now, live music is much more the exception than the rule. We could have seen it coming, what with the onset of electronics, the costs of maintaining a band, and the general hopelessness of modern music. It goes without saying that these days aren't like the old days – in many, many ways.

Very often now, when there is need of music a CD with some amplifiers and speakers will suffice. I attended a cantata not long ago. The singers sang very well, but to the accompaniment of a CD player. Recently I was at a wedding. The soloist soloed to a CD. And the bride and groom entered and exited to music from a CD player. Our local high school prom this year (as in years past) brought in the musical artistry of a DJ, who played CDs. And on it goes.

Listening, singing, dancing, marching, worshipping, et al to "canned" music got its foot in the door, and then barged-in whole hog. I was at an affair a few weeks ago and singers were singing their hearts out to a CD player. At the ends of the songs there was much applause from the audience, as the final strains of the professional 54-piece orchestra on the CD lingered well past the notes the singers sang. Who was the applause for? The singers, or the recording of the orchestra?

Thankfully, Saturday nights at Gayville Hall, live music lives on. Be sure to come out and enjoy it.

GAYVILLE HALL GALLERY ARTIST RECEPTION

**JUNE 5, 2010
5:30 - 7 P.M.**

*in honor of painter Karl Hermanson
Come view the paintings and talk with the artist*

GAYVILLE HALL'S SUMMER SEASON 2010

ONE OF GAYVILLE HALL'S MOST POPULAR SHOWS

May 29: "A Celebration of Johnny Cash"

starring John and Susan McNeill, Nick Schwebach and Owen DeJong

GAYVILLE HALL'S MONTHLY MUSICAL VARIETY SHOW

June 5: "The Hay Country Jamboree"

starring Brenda George, Dan Kilbride, Dalton Coffey, and
The Public Domain Tune Band

GAYVILLE HALL'S MONTHLY MUSICAL VARIETY SHOW

July 10: "The Hay Country Jamboree"

starring John and Susan McNeill, Dan Kilbride, Dalton Coffey, and guests

OLD-TIME NEW ORLEANS AND CHICAGO-STYLE JAZZ FROM THE '20S AND '30S

July 17: The Little Chicago Syncopators

starring Sioux City's Little Chicago Syncopators Jazz Band

COUNTRY SWING, JUMP BLUES, AND OLD-TIME COUNTRY AND POPULAR CLASSICS

July 24: The Poker Alice Band with Brenda George

starring The Poker Alice Band with Brenda George

EXPERIENCE THE GOOD OLD TUNES, BLUEGRASS, AND CLASSIC COUNTRY

August 7: "The Hay Country Jamboree"

starring John and Susan McNeill, Dan Kilbride, Dalton Coffey, and Jami Lynn

GAYVILLE HALL'S MONTHLY MUSICAL VARIETY SHOW

Sept 4: "The Hay Country Jamboree"

starring Dan Kilbride, Dalton Coffey, the McNeills, and guests

OUR FIRST SHOW DEDICATED TO THE LATE, GREAT SONGWRITER AND FOLK SINGER

Sept 18: "A Celebration of Woody Guthrie"

starring John and Susan McNeill and guests

GAYVILLE HALL, 502 Washington Street, Gayville, SD

Seats are \$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

Gayville Hall's 10th season continues



*Don't Miss
the new
Gayville Hall
signage!*

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