

Folk Forum

Fall/Winter 2025

Dear Friends,

Hello to all, and welcome to this brand-spanking-new year...

We felt so much joy in 2025 for the truth that, after multiple years of sitting desolate, the Oak Center General Store was filled with people again! You brought with you warmth, connection, and a sense of community; live-giving things in brutally dark times. This is what keeps us going, and helps us progress towards improving the space, along with doing all of the maintenance and repair and janitorial efforts living here requires. As a family, we have been adjusting to my dad Steven's new living situation: a family friend's extra apartment in Millville, overlooking the Zumbro River. Gus is living there as a caretaker, since he is bedridden and receiving hospice care. We are all getting acquainted with my dad's more silent and reflective phase of life. My favorite way to spend time together these days is by watching the bird feeder outside of his window, and witnessing the stunning, and, at times, amusing exhibition of visitors. One morning my dad called me over from the kitchen to see a big, huge buck eating from the birdfeeder, closer than I've ever been able to see one alive. I immediately scared it away with my clumsiness, and we both laughed, but I felt guilty for bringing that enchanting moment to a halt. My dad has reached the ideal nature-observing state; Silent, still, always watching. He's seen the deer several times since then.

We have a nice full schedule for this Winter/Spring Folk Forum season. Amidst the brutal chaos we are all bearing witness to everyday, the growing economic insecurity, the cruel separation of families, the recent murder of Renee Nicole Good in south Minneapolis, a genocide in Gaza, corporate control of the news, facsist propaganda confronting us

constantly, floods and fires and endless wars, through all of this, getting together becomes as important as breathing. To know the people who live around you in person, face to face, attempting to quell the unbearable loneliness that plague so many, is vital to our well-being and longevity, and to our humanity. We are being manipulated to hate each other, to set aside our compassion and conscience, and to sell out our communities. We must resist this at every turn! A form of resistance we can all practice is seeking out connection with each other. Coming to a folk forum event surely will not solve all the world's problems. But you could meet somebody, you could dance, you could laugh, you could learn something, and you could take it with you. My hope is that we can bring a little goodness and light to your lives. You sure do bring it to ours!

I have one New Years' resolution. To meet and connect with as many of you fine folks as possible!! So much love and well wishes to you and yours in the New Year,
From the janitorial staff

Me (Hope), Cy, Laci, Gus, Rosie, Porkchop, Freckles, the Chickens, and Mao

P.S. Let it be known that I will never use A.I. to write a newsletter. Let all of the mistakes in this document speak for themselves!!

We had some really great volunteers in 2025. Thank you Lisa, Gail and Larry, Lynn, and Troy and Sirena! Interested in volunteering? Email us at oakcentergeneralstoremn@gmail.com. We also accept help thru donation, which can take place on our website, or via a check in the mail.

David Huckfelt**Saturday, January 9, 7:30 pm**

David Huckfelt (formally of The Pines) will once again grace the “Big Room” stage in cold & dark January to warm us up with his poetic, original songs! Huckfelt’s musicianship goes hand in hand with his social justice activism as he has collaborated with John Trudell, Winona LaDuke, Kieth Secola, Gary Farmer and others. He has shared the stage with Emmy Lou Harris, Greg Brown, Iris Dement, the Avett Brothers, and more! We are lucky to have David back. Let the musical stylings of David Huckfelt spark resilience in each and every one of us heading into this new year.

Todd the Victrola Man**Friday, February 6, 7:30 pm**

(special free event!)

We are looking forward to hosting this free Victrola listening session! Todd of Dream Acres Farm in Wykoff will be bringing his vintage phonograph to our historical Big Room and playing his collection for us. "My record collection includes thousands of 78's from 1900 to the 1950's. This time span covers early american songbook, to dance orchestra, to big band, to swing, to jazz, to blues, to early country, to hillbilly, to folk."

Bay City Folk Dance**Saturday, February 14, 6:00 pm**

Although not held at the Oak Center General Store, we have organized another square dance to be held at the Bay City Town Hall on Valentine’s Day! With a live band and caller, no experience is necessary to come to this dance. In days gone by, rural dances were where you'd go to mingle with potential suitors. What better day to continue this tradition than the fourteenth of February?! \$10 cover and a dish to share!

Dean Magraw & Bruce Henry**Saturday, February 21, 7:30 pm**

Dean Magraw is a family favorite amongst the Schwen family. The guitar virtuoso comes this time with Chicago vocalist Bruce Henry! The union of these two extraordinary talents is sure to bring magic to the Big Room, and a seamless flow between jazz, folk, and blues, through storytelling and improvisation.

Sophie Hiroko & Betty Won’t**Friday, February 27, 7:30 pm**

Sophie Hiroko is an up-and-coming singer/songwriter raised on the North Shore. She describes her music as elemental grunge poetry, and was the 2025 recipient of Trampled by Turtles’ Palomino grant! Following Hiroko will be Betty Won’t, the tender, twangy rock n roll 5 piece based out of Minneapolis! This band is a powerful dose of Minnesota honky tonk punk, possibly the first of its kind to play at our historical venue.

Corpse Reviver**Saturday, March 7, 7:30 pm**

Made up of Adam Kiesling on banjo and guitar, Mikel Beckman doing percussion, and the fiddle stylings of Jillian Rae, this sweet & mega talented trio will be filling the Big Room with sounds from Harry Smith’s Anthology of American Folk Music.

Caitlin Angelica & Joe Devito**Friday, March 13, 7:30 pm**

We are excited to host who we believe are two of the finest up & coming songwriters of the day. Caitlin Angelica is a Minneapolis based musician with a raw talent for writing heartbreakingly beautiful songs. We suggest you look her up and read her story in anticipation for this show you won’t want to miss! Sometimes performing with her punk band “Makin’ Out”, Angelica will join us solo to share the in-person rendering of her newest work. Coming down for night from Yonkers, songwriter Joe Devito, whose impressive picking and witty poetic lyrics are sure to knock you out brain dead. Just kidding about the brain dead part, but this is going to be a real sweet show!

Joe & Vicki Price**Saturday, March 14, 7:30 pm**

Come bare witness the return of the Iowa blues legends in person! Joe & Vicki Price have been here before, and we will have ‘em as long as they want to keep coming, they are that good. Prepare to have your feet stompin’ and your bones rattlin’!

Cornbread Harris and his Band**Saturday, March 21, 7:30 pm**

98 years young and still spouting magic out of his fingertips is Minnesota's own CORNBREAD HARRIS and his full band! Coming out to our little unincorporated community?! You must be joking! Lucky are we. Come dance the night away or just sit and tap your feet to trad blues and jazz and all good things.

Dean Magraw & Joe Schwen**Sunday, March 22, 7:30 pm**

The family favorite jaw-droppingly talented and quick-witted Dean Magraw makes a welcome return with Zumbro Falls' own bass-playing extraordinaire Joe Schwen! This is a Sunday afternoon show, a great time to come down with all the kids and grandmas and grandpas and enjoy the sweet musical stylings of this dynamic duo. A rare opportunity to observe these two, don't miss it!

Sweet Milk and Peaches**Saturday, March 28, 7:30 pm**

A year prior we had Sweet Milk & Peaches play for our first show back in business! It was a raging success, and we can't wait to have them back. Hailing from Driftless Wisconsin, this band plays a mix of traditional American old-time, and original country songs that will make you laugh and cry.

Bob Bovee**Friday, April 10, 7:30 pm**

Few things I treasure more than my Pop Wagner & Bob Bovee record. Bob Bovee has graced the Oak Center stage since the 1980s, and is making his return this spring! Authentic cowboy songs, ballads, old time tunes, yodels, and storytelling are just a little of this dynamic man's repertoire.

Pieta Brown with Liz Draper**Saturday, April 11, 7:30pm**

Internationally prominent singer/songwriter Pieta Brown is making her way back to our little wooden music box! She brings with her our favorite bassist, Liz Draper. If you make the mistake of wearing socks to this Saturday night show, you must fasten them down the best you can, or they are sure to be rocked off. See you there.

Jeff Ray & Hurricane Harold**Friday, April 17, 7:30 pm**

This resonator guitar and harmonica duo pack a PUNCH! Described as "delta meets Dead with a little zen thrown in", these two men are adept in the blues and sure to cast a spell over the audience on April 17th!

Lone Piñon**Saturday, April 18, 7:30 pm**

What?? A New Mexican Stringband in tiny Oak Center, Minnesota? You heard that right. Lone Piñon will bring fiddles, upright bass, guitars, accordions, vihuela, and bilingual vocals to the Big Room stage.

Chris Acker & The Growing Boys**Sunday, April 19, 7:30 pm**

From New Orleans to Oak Center, we welcome the witty and hilariously honest songwriter Chris Acker, and his band, to the stage. He has been described as a torch-carrier for the legacy of the late John Prine, and if that doesn't make you want to come to this Sunday afternoon show, we don't know what will. Just try to make it, dang it!

Paper Wings**Friday, May 29, 7:30 pm**

This late May show is a bit of an outlier, but we just couldn't resist the chance to have this lovely duo play while they are in town. Sincere and delicate songs rooted in old time and bluegrass with harmonies to make you bawl, what better way to revel in spring time glory than in the evening in Oak Center with Paper Wings?

Calendar in Brief

January 10 - David Huckfelt

February 6 - Todd The Victrola Man
14 - Bay City Folk Dance
21 - Dean Magraw & Bruce Henry
27 - Sophie Hiroko & Betty Wont

March 7 - Corpse Reviver
13 - Caitlin Angelica & Joe Devito
14 - Joe and Vicki Price
21 - Cornbread Harris Band
22 - Dean Magraw & Joe Schwen
28 - Sweet Milk & Peaches

April 10 - Bob Bovee
11 - Pieta Brown & Liz Draper
17 - Jeff Ray and Hurricane Harold
18 - Lone Pinon
19 - Chris Acker & The Growing Boys

May 29 - Paper wings

Oak Center General Store
67011 US-63,
Lake City, MN 55041