

Folk Forum

Fall/Winter 2025

Dear Friends,

some of you reading this may be new to this whole operation, and some of you have been coming here a long time, and read many of the bi-annual newsletters written by my dad, where he would give updates on the farm and family life, and the upcoming folk forum season, and he'd give his take on the state of the world, with its wars, and climate disasters, as well as music, movies, poems, and so on.... Well, us here now in the old building at the intersection of highway 63 and county road 82 want to keep this newsletter part of the old ways going, but how will we will ever to live up to what it was before I'm not convinced is possible... we will have to do it our own way. This is Hope writing this, I'm Steven's youngest offspring. My partner Cy and I moved here two years ago to attempt to keep things going after my dad moved in to a care center in Lake City. If you know my dad, you may be aware that he likes things to be a certain way, and he doesn't like getting rid of things. For these reasons, the property and each of the buildings within it acquired a lot of STUFF, none of which could ever be moved while he was here. I love my dad, but I don't know why you need to keep every phone book from 1990-2020, or every box for every appliance he ever bought, sometimes with the used and broken appliance inside with a note that says "NEEDS REPAIR" scrawled on the side... many things I can understand why he kept, such as our childhood drawings and report cards and teeth and letters... he's a VERY sentimental person and I appreciate that about him. All of that irreplaceable stuff has been saved. But the other clutter deemed "non-useful" was burned or disposed of as quickly as possible and it has allowed new light and air to enter this building. We've exposed walls and parts of the floor that haven't been seen for over 40 years. The bucolic pictures of the land, or my Dad in his amish hat, using horsepower, or doing woodworking, which

were stowed away, we blew off a layer of dust off of, put in frames and hung on the freshly painted walls so we can appreciate what this place has been and what has been accomplished here. We went to the fields, which were overwhelmed with ragweed, wild parsnip, comfrey, and boxelder trees, and we sowed buckwheat and sunflowers and spread manure, attempting to impede weed growth and add nutrition to the soil, so we can start growing food and being self sufficient again. We cleared around huge monster apple trees covered in frost grape vines and attempted to control them, sometimes successfully and sometimes we wished we had just let them be wild until they died on their own rather than disrupting their beautiful unruliness... we've invited many people in, reconnected with neighbors, and hosted musicians, in attempt to bring life, connection, and vibrancy back. My brother Gus and his partner Laci are living here now too, helping us with the workload and bringing with them what sometimes feels like the entire Minneapolis Powderhorn neighborhood. Often times when our ideas feel too pie-in-the-sky, or we become overwhelmed with the daunting task we are facing, we speak aloud the phrase "keep it simple, stupid!" to remind us to take things day by day, task by task, and also to enjoy life, spend time with loved ones and in nature, and avoid burnout. We have a long way to go, and many goals that feel far off still, but the progress we are making feels more and more tangible every day. To conclude this ramble, here is an excerpt from my dad's 1993 Fall newsletter, the sentiment of which I believe can still inspire the people of today:

"What options do we have other than to wallow in our collective or individual miseries, swallow the new anti-depressant drugs and lose ourselves in material pursuits, TV and videos? We can stand up

together. We can imagine, dream, and hope. We can lift each other up. We thank all of you who have thought of us this summer and offered support and encouragement. You have given us the strength to carry on. You have lifted us up. Let us come together with love and song in our hearts, but in earnest, with collective strength and commitment to create and build relationships and a world based on justice, a world guided by SPIRIT and CONSCIENCE FORCES, not market forces. Let us answer the questions by living the answers.”

So now, in the spirit of those who tended this building and land before us,
With the intention to continue their mission while also staying true to ourselves,
Love and Peace from....

The Janitorial Staff

SOME NOTES:

It wouldn't be a newsletter without a long list of gratitudes for all of the amazing human beings who have made this all possible. Thank you to our Russ, Denise, Charlie, Henry, Fred, and Aaron, Susan and Wayne, Steven, Laurie, Dave, Manda, Lynn, Maggie, Lauren, Max, Miriam,

On purchasing tickets! Some folks have expressed having a hard time purchasing tickets online. Although this is the best and most direct method for us, there are other ways. You can mail in a check made out to “Oak Center General Store LLC”, or you can stop in the store and holler for someone to come help you... we do welcome walk-ins, provided the show has not already sold out. If it is sold out, we will announce this on the internets, as well as to our email list, as well as post it on the outside of our building!

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.

[Rachael Kilgour](#)

[Friday, September 5, 7:30 pm](#)

Celebrated Minnesota singer-songwriter Rachael Kilgour presents her heartfelt release, My Father Loved Me, as part of a one-woman storytelling performance. In the spare, often gutting language for which she is known, Kilgour poses questions about belonging, inheritance, and grief and triumphantly affirms the value of one ordinary working man's life.

[Dean Magraw](#)

[Saturday, September 13, 7:30 pm](#)

A certified Folk Forum favorite who has graced our stage many a time. Showcasing acoustic guitar that transcends genre.

[Mary Cutrufello & Dan Lowinger](#)

[Saturday, September 20, 7:30 pm](#)

With 30 years of experience in the music business, Mary Cutrufello is everything from Texas honky-tonk heroine and fiery Midwestern roots-rocker to a powerhouse acoustic performer.

[Pop Wagner's Bunkhouse Chorale](#)

[Saturday, October 11, 7:30 pm](#)

Oldtime, Jug Band, Country Blues and Rowdy Folksongs PLUS Lariat Tricks by Pop Wagner! (These fellas have a few tricks up their sleeves) Featuring:

Pop Wagner - 6 & 12 string guitars and fiddle
Drew Temperante - guitar, mandolin, harmonica and kazoo

Eldon “Smack” Young-Walser - fiddle

[Lone Rock Bride](#)

[Saturday, October 25, 7:30 pm](#)

Minneapolis band led by singer-songwriter Emma Fisher, fresh off the release of their debut album, Rosette. Taking inspiration from country luminaries spanning from Loretta to Lucinda, their sound melds narrative-driven lyrics with a wall of alt-country sound, pairing rock rhythms to soaring fiddles and steel guitar twang.

[Idle Rose](#)

[Saturday, November 8, 7:30 pm](#)

From playful to heartfelt, The duo brings original melodies and harmony-layered lyrics to the stage for a cozy, intimate gathering.

Fiddlin' AJ Srubas & The Signal Mountain Serenaders

Saturday, November 15, 7:30 pm

Join us for this once-in-a-blue-moon gathering of some of today's finest bluegrass pickers, together for a few nights only! Thanks to a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, this fall, award winning Minneapolis fiddler AJ Srubas (Steam Machine, Alum Ridge Boys & Ashlee) is excited to gather up some of the country's finest classic bluegrass pickers to help him cut his first solo album. While in town this not-to-be-missed ensemble will be playing a limited run of shows, and this is one of them! Come sit back and enjoy a hot night of music featuring Nashville mandolin favorite Reed Stutz (Alice Gerard, Bronwyn Keith-Hynes band), Georgia banjo virtuoso Trevor Holder (The Price Sisters, Five Mile Mountain Road, Alum Ridge Boys and Ashlee), and Chattanooga guitar wizard Conner Vlietstra (The Price Sisters, Five Mile Mountain Road, Chattanooga Dogs). Rounding out the band, local favorite Rina Rossi (Steam Machine, Alum Ridge Boys and Ashlee) will be holding down the low end on bass. It's gonna be a fun one!

Pistol Whippin Party Penguins

Saturday, December 6, 7:30 pm

Straight from the great Mill City comes the Pistol Whippin Party Penguins. Don't let the name fool you! This is not a violent group of flightless aquatic birds looking for a party, but rather 6 self proclaimed gentlemen, 2 guitars, a mandolin, a bucket of fiddles, bass, wheatstick drums, and a 4 part vocal harmony that will make a grown man cry.

Pop's Honky Tonk Christmas Show

Friday, December 12, 7:30 pm

Pop twice in one season? Yeehaw!!!! Honky tonk classics and originals. With more rope tricks. And plenty of tis the season splendor

Erik Koskinen

Saturday, December 13, 7:30 pm

Another Folk Forum favorite we are happy to have back. The Minneapolis Star Tribune calls Koskinen "the real deal" and "The best country songwriter in Minnesota"

Mumblin' Drew's Old Fangled Orchestrators

Saturday, December 20, 7:30 pm

Mumblin' Drew's Oldfangled Orchestrators (MOO) are purveyors of novelty, squeezed through a cheesecloth filter of eccentric entertainment. A string band at its core...but with a reed section - fiddle, clarinet, and saxophone play the pretty notes, while guitar and string bass hold down the rhythm.

Calendar in Brief

September 5 - [Rachael Kilgour](#)
13 - [Dean Magraw](#)
20 - [Mary Cutrufello & Dan Lowinger](#)

October 11 - [Pop Wagner's Bunkhouse Chorale](#)
25 - [Lone Rock Bride](#)

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