

folk forum

Winter/ Spring 2016

*They roll on roads... over fresh green grass,
The lorry loads... burning petrol gas,
And we make them long, and we make them tough,
But they just go on and on... and you can't get off.
I know we've come a long way,
We're changin' day to day,
But tell me, where do the children play?* - Cat Stevens

Hey Pilgrims, Hobbits...and Munchkins!

I'm sorry we are slow getting this spring newsletter written, printed, mailed, and handed out. With the mild weather it was feeling like winter never got here. Still, there was more than enough to do here in Oak Center. If there's a chance of things being close to normal this year, spring is just around the corner. (Not that nature has a lot of corners). It has been difficult for me to not feel angst when making plans that depend on a measure of normalcy. Interesting concept isn't it...that concept of normal? We all know some normal people. There are all those fanatic, extremist, greedy, war-mongering, fear mongering, anti-social, hostile aggressive, racist, folks that are ABNORMAL, right? If normal means a significant number...what does the presidential campaign tell us about what is "normal" in America? The news around the world has been telling us for years that it isn't just the weather and climate that is... 1) out of balance, 2) in danger of melt-down, 3) seriously in need of miracles, 4) seriously in need of rescue by God, 5) can only be rescued if humans MELLOW OUT and become responsible stewards of Creation.

Years ago the only thing I believed would stay "normal" was not the human species, but some of the more predictable aspects of nature. Lately predictable may be out of date terminology for climate and weather. As for the humans, are we seeing more aberrant behavior in present times? Humans have acted pretty insanely since before Moses was up on the mountain talking to burning bushes and his people were about to perceive themselves as God's only chosen people. Think how much differently things would have turned out if they would have followed those commandments. AND what if the burning bush would have included a footnote that stated: the killing, stealing, coveting rules apply to ALL God's children, and that God's People are the ones that learn to live in harmony with each other AND the creation. In our time, "Bushes" decided to set the whole mid-east on fire while a modern day Moses from Hollywood held up a gun (instead of stone tablets) proclaiming to the NRA disciples "from my cold dead hands!" Yes, religion still perverts God's role among humans and uses it to recruit and manipulate for ungodly ends.

It is curious that candidates proclaim that "if we elect them, they will make us proud of our country again". Don't take any

wooden nickels or buy that snake oil. If they claim allegiance to God with messages of greed or hate, ignore justice, the poor and disenfranchised...well, D.T. got endorsed by Jerry Falwell Jr. just when Ted Cruz thought he had the Evangelical votes sewed up! Trump must have been pumping cash to Falwell Sr. to purchase some influence. If we read the signs of the times, money seems to Trump most everything else with these so-called "Evangelical Christians"... along with NRA, Anti-government, racist sentiments. What is truly alarming is how deep the divisions are becoming in our nation and the number of people who are hateful, angry, AND ARMED. Are they entertaining revolution and purges as possible options against those of us who try to promote truly authentic "Christian" values? Of non-materialism, peace, justice, good stewardship of the earth and creation, mercy, and goodwill toward all of God's diverse children?

"When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food...they call me a communist."

Don Helder Camara

and

"Even as you do to the Least of these...you do unto me."

Jesus Christ

Are we seeing new trends or does technology magnify the affects, both real and perceived? Understanding the coincidental affects of rapid communications, transport, and mass cultural diffusion/dilution, the loss of cultures, family and community structures, in the face of the ravages of war, economic collapse, and resource disruption or depletion is a challenge that descends upon us. It will take time, insight, patience, and fortitude. Minds are like parachutes, right? They don't work if they aren't open. By the grace of God may we have the luxury of enough time to sort it out and create effective strategies.

Which brings to mind the election/campaign issues this year. Given the stakes, is the election circus a distraction from the real work and real issues that face us or an opportunity to sort out and understand what is happening in America?

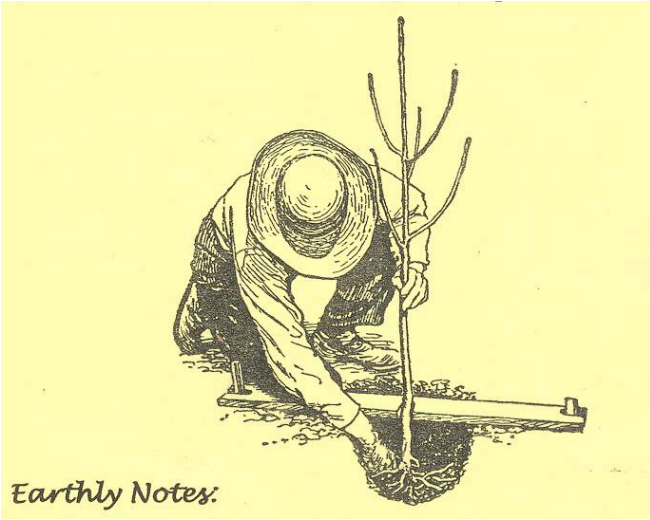
In the meantime... While sorting it out or choosing a life boat...

When you experience unexpected kindness, or nature's symphony hits you just right, say **WOW!** You got kissed by God. Turn to someone else who needs it, and pass on that blessed kiss.

Love and peace,

Maintenance and repair

Quiz: Which candidates today ask why the poor have no food, challenge the corrupting oppression of money and power, advocate for the sick, the homeless, the hungry, and those in prison? They'll probably call that individual a communist, a socialist, an idealist, and unrealistic bleeding heart.



Earthly Notes.

Thank you

- We owe a lot of thank you's to folks for being able to continue on here. Generous gifts from Lawrence and Mary Schwanke, Alan Knaeble and Sophie on behalf of Alan's deceased uncle Jerry, Peggy Menzel, Michael Perry, Cy Champa, Nancy Moltaji, Ron and Nancy Drude, Mary Stursa, Jim Perry, Betty Oudal, Karl Most, Jeff Swegarden, Boehlke 's Homestead Honey, and all those that sent in 5 or 10 dollars for mailing costs or donated unused ticket money. Your support for this magical shared journey was significant and is appreciated
- A SUPER big thanks to all the dedicated folks – Kathy, The Lynn's, Todd a.k.a. Dr. Oz and Gretchen, Mandy, Lori, Maggie, Hiromi, Nikki, Matt, Val, Hope, and all you other great friends and community members who lend welcome hands, giving of themselves and their time to help make this magic happen. It COULD NOT go on without your help.

Building needs/Volunteers/SOLAR

PROJECT —We have a BIG LOAN OUT on the solar installations to take advantage of an opportunity for federal and utility incentives so that Oak Center can renewably produce the energy required to continue running these programs. The process has been mostly completed but the loan amount was already getting pretty scary. Folk forum has always been run on a lean budget with generous help from volunteers and subsidized from the farm. We have kept the admission costs affordable and provided some great food most times below cost. It was not a goal with folk forum to make a lot of money...and we didn't. We do not have enough cash to complete these necessary upgrades without your help. It is challenging to do all these fine programs without the generous help from you. Please consider donating money and/or time to help sustain the future of folk forum. Solar, wind machine repair, replacement of wood boiler, new roof, and a lot of weatherization/and windows are all still on THE list and have become more crucial as time passes. **IF you would** like to help, checks can be made out to folk forum and mailed in or dropped off. (507)753-2080, e-mail: folkforum@riverland.org. Thanks for being part of this. If you have more time than money, please come out and give us a hand. We have a sign up list.

***Mailing List:** If you would like to be on it, please make a small donation of ~\$5/yr or more and fill out the form on the insert in this newsletter. If you have donated recently and didn't get on it, please let us know. Our apologies!!

Concerts: \$5-\$15 pay what you're able; kids freewill donation

THE MENU

PETER OSTROUSHKO & DEAN MAGRAW

Saturday, Feb. 6th, 8PM

Extra-terrestrial folk- jazz

Composer, arranger, producer, guitarist Dean Magraw has fine-tuned his "Heavy Meadow" approach to music from years of performing and recording with some of the finest musicians in the United States, Europe, and Japan. His musical passion transcends all boundaries, yet the vital essence of his distinctive style remains. He is joined tonight by Peter Ostroushko. As one reviewer put it, "Let's start with the word 'brilliant' and move on from there." Over the course of a long and outstanding career, mandolinist/composer Peter Ostroushko has come to be regarded as one of the finest players in acoustic music. He has been lauded by critics and music lovers worldwide. A dazzling mastery of stringed instruments and a flair for composing have earned this born-and-bred Minnesotan an international reputation. From Pistol River, Oregon's Community Hall to Carnegie Hall, Peter has done thousands of concerts across North American and Europe. Don't miss them together at Oak Center for an intimate performance kickin' out the jams and laughin' away your blues

RAD LORKOVIC'S VALENTINE'S SHOW

Saturday, Feb 13th, 8PM

Homegrown, Folk, Blues Zydeco and Love Songs

Radoslav comes again to do his amazingly diverse and artistically performed collection of originals in all the musical genres of the planet. It just gets better every time. He brings not only a great voice and incredible piano playing, but his shows jump to an other worldly level when he throws in Croatian folk songs on accordion! Come feel the love this Valentine's weekend at Oak Center.

REINA DEL CID

Saturday, Feb. 20th, 8PM

Sizzling folk

Faced with the question of influences, Reina del Cid cites literary rather than musical heroes. The songwriter commands a flexibility of language reminiscent less of Regina Spektor or Ingrid Michaelson, artists she is often compared to, but more of Virginia Woolf or Sylvia Plath. Yet there is a Newtonian balance of forces in Reina del Cid's band: for every droll phrase or inventive image, there is a corresponding musical contribution from the richly talented Toni Lindgren. The young guitarist is adept at orchestrating and fleshing out the skeletons of del Cid's songs into an engaging brand of pop rock. These lyrical and musical forces have never combined more compellingly than in the band's sophomore album, *The Cooling*. Recorded at the historic Pachyderm Studio in Cannon Falls, the new album is marked by "sizzling folk wisdom" (Maximum Ink), and "a chilling, string-kissed ode to the slipping from life to death . . . a delicious collection of songs"(Playback:stl).

BILL STAINES

Sunday, Feb. 28th, 3PM

Traditional and original folk

With "a sense of timing to match the best stand-up comic," Bill Staines' music is a slice of Americana, reflecting with the same ease on the prairie people of the Midwest and the adventures of the Yukon. Between original songs, Bill includes traditional folk tunes and more contemporary country ballads. Bill delights in having the audience participate in many numbers and never fails to please. His show is always a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

CURTIS AND LORETTA**Sunday, Mar. 5th, 8PM****Traditional and original folk**

Curtis & Loretta's music comes straight from the heart. The husband and wife duo's extraordinary harmonies and proficiency on a parade of stringed instruments create an alluring frame for their poignant original songs, and traditional pieces from America and the British Isles. The current menagerie includes mandocello, folk harp, guitars, clawhammer banjo, ukulele, and mandolin, plus a bit of kazoo, harmonica, and shakers. Curtis' down-home sense of humor and Loretta's theater background engage the audience in an experience that runs the gamut of rolling with laughter to holding back tears, with plenty of side-trips in between. Their new CD "When There's Good to Be Done" features original songs crafted with Loretta's poignant story-telling style, and presented with Curtis & Loretta's signature tight harmonies and array of stringed instruments.

CHRIS SILVER & THE GOOD INTENTIONS**Saturday, Mar. 12th, 8PM****Bluegrass with global rhythms and contemporary themes**

Led by Chris Silver, The Good Intentions deliver traditional bluegrass with polish and drive. The band plays songs from the bluegrass masters as well as material penned by Silver. Soulful original arrangements of their songs have already established the band in the hearts of the Midwest bluegrass community. Their success is based on the complimentary picking and singing skills of some of the best known names in the area's bluegrass scene.

Silver plays fiddle and mandolin with a deep appreciation for traditional bluegrass music, but it doesn't stop there. His solos stretch beyond the boundaries of bluegrass including hints of jazz, blues, and roots music. The quartet is rounded out with Banjo player Heath Loy, flatpicking guitarist Mike Cramer and J.D. Shaffer holding down the bass role with precision and tone. Bluegrass always sounds great at Oak Center!

BOILED IN LEAD**Saturday, Mar. 19th, 8PM****Electric Irish, Rock'n'reel & Punk folk**

Since 1983, BiL have been innovators in bridging traditional music from many cultures with the sound and attitude of a rock band. A Boiled In Lead concert is a combination of darkly-tinged folk ballads and originals alongside instrumental dance music from Ireland and elsewhere. The group and the individual musicians have won many Minnesota Music Awards, and toured throughout the US and in Europe. For 2016, core members Todd Menton, David Stenshoel and Drew Miller move forward as a quartet, adding drummer and multi-ethnic percussionist Michael Bissonette to the lineup. Michael has a wide musical vocabulary, and is heard around the Twin Cities with Katie McMahon, Laura MacKenzie, and Robert Everest (among others.) Enthusiastic, powerful, technically brilliant, playing a wealth of instruments with extreme dynamics, Boiled In Lead routinely demolishes genres with its highly-identifiable sound. ...even without amplification, Boiled In Lead can summon up furious punk-folk energy."

THE BARLEY JACKS**Saturday, Apr. 2nd, 8PM****Acoustic Alchemy and Fiddle Wizardry**

"Synergy is the interaction of forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual parts." – an apt description for The Barley Jacks. The Barley Jacks sing original vocals and play jaw-dropping instrumentals in a spirit of excitement and fun. They are masters of the fiddle, guitar, bass and drum who meld their divergent backgrounds of blues and bluegrass, classical and Celtic,

R & B and bebop to inspire each other and create something entirely new. Front-man and fiddler Brian Wicklund is joined by Mike Cramer-guitar, Jim Chenoweth-bass, and Joel Arpin-percussion. Virtuosity, magic and a little danger combine to make every performance unique. The first thing an audience notices is how much fun the Barley Jacks have when they perform. These Minnesota-based veterans of years in the musical trenches enjoy making music together so much that they sometimes giggle like little kids completely lost in a moment of play

THE PISTOL WHIPPIN' PARTY PENGUINS**Saturday, Apr. 9th, 8PM****Midwest-stylized, blues/country/rock/bluegrass**

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 5 self-proclaimed gentlemen, 2 guitars, a mandolin, a bucket of fiddles, an upright bass, a banjo, and a 4 part vocal harmony that will make angels cry. This quintet from Minneapolis strives to maintain the original spirit of the "string band" while continuing to play new original music and creative cover songs. The combination of folk, rock, blues, bluegrass, and the occasional stage banter will create an experience that anyone can enjoy! Don't miss this night of music!!!

Brass Kings, bring quick finger picking acoustic and resonator
STEVE KAUL & THE BRASS KINGS – Rachael Kilgour opens
Saturday Apr. 16th, 8PM

Blues and folk with international influences

Blending influences from African, Indian and Middle Eastern traditions - as well as good old Blues & Folk - Steve Kaul and The Brass Kings, bring quick finger picking acoustic and resonator guitar playing to new heights with extended sets incorporating washtub bass and washboard. The energy and drive of this homemade band is impossible to ignore. Tonight, Duluth, MN artist Rachael Kilgour opens the show with her provocative, topical lyrics, passionate musical delivery, and a charmingly innocent yet witty stage presence. It promises to be a special night at Oak Center.

SAWTOOTH BROTHERS**Saturday, Apr. 23rd, 8PM****Bluegrass**

In the tradition of classic bluegrass brother harmonies, the Sawtooth Brothers Band, with two sets of musical brothers, melds the sounds of the original bluegrass masters with the fresh sounds of today. Tight vocal harmonies and precision picking are getting them recognition, as well as numerous accolades and awards. Combining close harmony vocals, driving instrumentation, and a sense of fun and high energy, they have a stage show that has audiences wanting more.

ANDRA SUCHY AND BAND**Saturday, Apr. 30th, 8PM****Country, rock, folk and blues**

Raised on a beef and wheat farm in North Dakota by folk musicians, Andra Suchy began touring and performing at festivals at a young age. Classically trained and a veteran of musical theater, the guitar-playing singer moved to Minneapolis in 1996, where she has gone on to make a name for herself as one of the finest vocalists around. A regular performer on A Prairie Home Companion, Andra has performed around the world, singing with such artists as Brad Paisley, Mindy Smith, Emmylou Harris, Chris Thile and soprano Renee Fleming. Although mainly known as a vocalist, Andra has been quietly honing her songwriting craft. Signed to Grammy-winning label Red House Records, she released her album Little Heart in March, 2012. Full of infectious originals, the album is a

twang-tinged mix of country, rock, folk and blues. She always brings great musicians with her.

For further information, please call The Oak Center General Store, (507) 753-2080 or email folkforum@riverland.org.

Thank you for your friendship and participation. New ideas are welcome; please contact us with your thoughts.

www.oakcentergeneralstore.com

folk forum

c/o Oak Center General Store
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Lake City, MN 55041



folk forum CALENDAR IN BRIEF Winter/ Spring 2016

February

- 6th, Sat. 8PM Peter Ostroushko and Dean Magraw
- 13th, Sat. 8PM Radoslav Lorkovic Valentine's Day Show
- 20th, Sat. 8PM Reina del Cid
- 28th, Sun. 3PM Bill Staines

March

- 5th, Sat. 8PM Curtis and Loretta
- 12th, Sat. 8PM Chris Silver and the Good Intentions
- 19th, Sat. 8PM Boiled in Lead

April

- 2nd, Sat. 8PM The Barley Jacks
- 9th, Sat. 8PM Pistol Whippin' Party Penguins
- 16th, Sat. 8PM Steve Kaul & the Brass Kings, Rachel Kilgour open
- 23rd, Sat. 8PM The Sawtooth Brothers
- 30th, Sat. 8PM Andra Suchy and Band