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■ To get a news item published on this page, contact Travis Gulbrandson at 665-7811 (x121) or e-mail travis.gulbrandson@yankton.net

Jamboree Finds Home In Gayville

COURTESY PHOTO

"Singing Farmer" Ervin Pickhinke will be one of the featured performers at Saturday's "The Hay Country Jamboree" at Gayville Hall. The monthly variety shows are celebrations of musical heritage and regularly showcase prominent area musicians such as John and Susan McNeill, Dan Kilbride, Owen DeJong and Nick Schwebach.

Monthly Shows At Gayville Hall Turn Into Popular Musical Celebrations

BY JUSTIN RUST
justin.rust@yankton.net

GAYVILLE — Johnny Cash, Hank Williams and Merle Haggard ... three singers who have never performed at Gayville Hall.

But thanks to Doug Sharples, their music resonates throughout the building and in the ears of area music fans a couple times a year.

For the last nine years, Sharples has worked to bring in singers and variety groups to pack Gayville Hall, which he co-owns with his wife Judi. One of the most frequent shows is the Hay Country Jamboree, which he presents once a month. Other shows are tributes to singers of the past, like Cash, Haggard and Williams.

"It's a fast-paced show that has three acts to as many as five acts, and usually those acts are on the stage at the same time and they trade songs. It's several acts, and there is a lot of humor to it, as well."
DOUG SHARPLES

This Saturday, the monthly Hay Country Jamboree tradition continues at Gayville Hall starting at 8 p.m.

Sharples has been putting on variety shows since 2002, which included a show called the Dakota Opry.

"I wanted to create a show that people would show up regularly so the promotion wouldn't be as hard," he said. "I produced some shows in Gayville Hall and Okoboji, Iowa."

The Dakota Opry was presented until 2005, when another group in Sioux Falls started using the same title.

Sharples tried to get the Dakota Opry name back, but after a while, he decided to take an easier route.

"I said, 'The heck with it,' and came up with another name," he said. "Since Gayville Hall is in Gayville, and Gayville is the 'Hay Capital of the World,' I thought the Hay Country Jamboree would be a good title."

Sharples rechristened the show in 2006, and it has been going strong ever since, as it performs on the first or second Saturday from March to November.

"I define it as a musical variety show that features old-time American songs," said Sharples about the type of music that is performed. "It's a fast-paced show that has three acts to as many as five acts, and usually those acts are on the stage at the same time and they trade songs. It's several acts, and there is a lot of humor to it, as well."

Sharples has put on the show with the help of his longtime friend John McNeill and his wife Susan of Springfield.

"I started working with them when I was a filming documentaries, and John laid down a lot of the music tracks for me," Sharples said. "This was another way to work with them."

Sharples added that the McNeills have turned into the hosts of the show.

"John is like the musical host, and in recent years, he has become more interested in country music, so I call them our country hosts," he said.

Dan Kilbride is another frequent performers in the show.

"Dan is originally from Wakonda. He is a bluegrass banjo player (with) a wonderful, funny stage personality," Sharples said.

This Saturday, the McNeills and Kilbride will be joined by Ervin Pickhinke, known as the "Singing Farmer."

"Ervin farmed all of his life in northwest Iowa and is now retired," Sharples said. "He is a terrific performer and our audiences love him. It will be his third or fourth performance."

Some of the past performers include singer-songwriter Jami Lynn and cowboy poet Ed Nesselhuf.

"Jami is pretty popular in the area. We had her for our August show and she was terrific!" Sharples said. "She will be in our Oct. 2 show, and we are hoping to have her in a few shows a year because she is a great talent."

Sharples also likes to sprinkle his calendar with tribute shows, with the next one on Sept. 18. This show will be "It's Been Good To Know You: The Songs Of Woody Guthrie."

"This will be the first tribute show that we do to him, and I have wanted to do a Woody Guthrie show because his songs are tremendous," Sharples said.

The McNeills will help put on the tribute along with Owen DeJong and Nick Schwebach.

"Nick and Owen are very accomplished, masterful musicians," Sharples said.

Sharples is also bring in Evie Johnson to perform some of Guthrie's songs.

"Evie actually went to New York City to the Woody Guthrie archives and got a scholarship for it," he said. "She was in the Hay Country Jamboree in July, and she has sung a lot of his songs before."

Sharples said Gayville Hall can hold 160 people comfortably, but he added that they have had as many as 250 people there.

The Gayville Hall season winds down in December with its annual Christmas show with the Poker Alice Band.

National Suicide Prevention Week Honored In S.D.

Suicide Prevention Week for 2010 is set for Sept. 5-11. The HELP!Line Center is preparing to hold a series of events to raise awareness during this week.

The HELP!Line Center is the only crisis center in South Dakota that answers the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number, 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) for the entire state. It is the only South Dakota suicide prevention service accredited by the American Association of Suicidology, with trained staff answering calls from across the state 24 hours every day.

Each year, about 35,000 people in the United States die by suicide, with a suicide occurring every 15.2 minutes. An estimated 4.6 million Americans are survivors of the suicide of a family member, friend or loved one.

In honor of the National Suicide Prevention Week, the HELP!Line Center has the following planned:

• Sioux Falls Mayor Mike Huether will be issuing a Mayor's proclamation declaring Suicide Prevention Week at 7 p.m. on Sept. 7 at the Sioux Falls City Council Meeting.

• Gov. Mike Rounds will issue a proclamation declaring Sept. 5-11 Suicide Prevention Week for the State of South Dakota.

For interested persons who live in or near Sioux Falls, the following activities are planned:

• The HELP!Line Center will offer a free QPR class (Question, Persuade and Refer), teaching the basics of suicide intervention and prevention. This class will meet at the Siouxland Libraries Downtown, 200 N. Dakota Ave., Sioux Falls, on Thursday, Sept. 9, from 6:30-8 p.m. This class is open to the public and free of charge. To register, call 605-274-1401.

• There will be a Surviving After Suicide potluck picnic for people who have lost a loved one to suicide, celebrating the lives of the people they lost from noon to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 11, at Rotary Park (26th and Southeastern Drive) in Sioux Falls. Survivors are asked to bring a dish to share, and the HELP!Line Center will supply the meat, plates and utensils.

• Surviving After Suicide Educational & Support Classes focus on the unique aspects of survivor grief, and allow survivors to share their stories in a a group setting. The free classes are held over a nine-week period three times per year, with the next class starting Tuesday, Sept. 7, from 7-9 p.m. Pre-registration is required. Call 605-339-4357 or dial 2-1-1.

For more information on suicide prevention and aftercare services provided by the HELP!Line Center, or for more information on Suicide Prevention Week, visit www.helplinecenter.org or call 605-339-4357 or dial 2-1-1.

Board Of Pardons And Paroles Chosen As Learning Site

SIOUX FALLS — The South Dakota Board of Pardons and Paroles has been selected as a Learning Site by the National Parole Resource Center (NPRC). The board will receive technical assistance from NPRC on release and revocation decision making, as well as Parole Services receiving assistance with post-release supervision.

South Dakota is one of four state paroling authorities to be selected as a Learning Site, along with Pennsylvania, Georgia and Connecticut. A total of 17 states applied for the NPRC assistance. South Dakota and Pennsylvania were selected to receive Category 2 assistance, which involves additional training and technical assistance for the paroling authority's supervision partners.

"Along with my fellow board members, I am fully committed to the goals of the technical assistance and the implementation of recommendations resulting from such assistance," said Dennis Kaemingk, chairman of the board of Pardons and Paroles. "We are dedicated to reducing recidivism in this state and are confident this technical assistance will advance us into a position of being a national model in the field of parole."

The Learning Site initiative is a targeted and intensive technical assistance effort with a focus on using empirically-based tools to assess the risks and criminogenic needs of offenders and developing evidence-based, policy-driven decision making tools and practices. States receiving Category 2 assistance will receive training and technical assistance directed specifically toward offender supervision to facilitate successful community reintegration.

Plans call for the board to begin its work with NPRC via a teleconference to review the process and then set up dates for on-site work.

The NPRC is funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance and operated as a partnership among the Center for Effective Public Policy, the Association of Paroling Authorities International and the Urban Institute.

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