

# The Gayville Hall Gazette

## “The Hay Country Jamboree” leads Hall’s 8th season Season debuts April 12; Old time country music dominates spring schedule of shows

Gayville Hall opens its eighth season on April 12 with our new country music extravaganza, “The Hay Country Jamboree,” starring John and Susan McNeill, the Public Domain Tune Band, and Daniel Kilbride with James Kjelstrup. The show will be a fast-paced celebration of traditional American country music, humor, and nostalgia.



Daniel Kilbride

Gayville Hall pioneered the format on a larger scale in 2004 and 2005 at Okoboji, Iowa, and in Gayville through late May of 2007 with our original show, “The Dakota Opry.” A promoter and part-time musician from Sioux Falls subsequently appropriated our title last year, despite our prior use and protests, and

has continued to use the title, despite public confusion. Unfortunately, the bogus group has so “stunk up” a rental facility in Tea with their version, that a great name, “The Dakota Opry,” has been muddied and ruined.

We tried out an alternative title for our shows -- ‘The Hay Country Jamboree’ -- twice last fall, and will now hang our hat on this name and on country music in general during our spring 2008 season with additional “Jamborees” and tribute concerts to Merle Haggard, Johnny Cash, and Hank Williams.

“Hay Country Jamborees” will be presented on May 10, May 31, and yet-to-be-announced later dates. The May 10 show includes the talented, young duo from Minneapolis, Roma di Luna, who will be making their second appearance at Gayville Hall. They perform Carter Family standards and other old time classics.



Above: Owen DeJong, Nick Schwebach, and the McNeills

Right: Channy Moon Casselle of the duo Roma di Luna



The long-awaited “A Celebration of Merle Haggard,” which John McNeill has been trying to stage here for nearly a year, is April 26. Its scheduled debut last December had to be cancelled because of a snowstorm, the first ever such cancellation

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## The end of the Gayville Hall postcard era? Probably.

### Other possible changes in the works for Gayville Hall

For seven seasons, we’ve filled your mailbox with postcards announcing upcoming shows. Now, those postcards, which have been very popular with some patrons, may be a thing of the past.

### The Gayville Hall Gazette

This season, we’re trying a new way to spread the word about our shows; we hope you will enjoy this newsletter in place of the postcards. Use this newsletter as a reference for the first seven shows in our 8th season. A second newsletter, outlining additional shows, will hit your mailbox later this summer

For your convenience, we’ve included an easy-reference guide to the first seven shows on page 4. Cut this out and keep it.



Gayville Hall

### Revamped Website

As a companion to this newsletter, we’ve updated and expanded our website ([www.gayvillehall.com](http://www.gayvillehall.com)). On the site, you can browse photographs from previous seasons, read about the history of Gayville Hall, find bios of frequent performers, and buy Gayville Hall merchandise. The site even features a list of every show produced at or by Gayville Hall, with commentary by proprietors Doug and Judi Sharples.

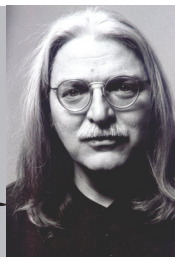
We hope you’ll use our new website as a way to keep in touch with Gayville Hall in between newsletters. Sign up for our electronic mailing list to receive alerts about added shows as they happen (you will still receive these “hardcopy” mailings, unless you indicate otherwise). To be added to our electronic mailing list, send an email to [mailinglist@gayvillehall.com](mailto:mailinglist@gayvillehall.com).

Possible future web additions include commentary space, “exclusive” content for electronic mailing list subscribers, and a free e-newsletter.

### Your feedback is needed!

Other possible changes are coming. Before we change too many things, though, we want to know what you think! We need your suggestions and honest feedback. We hope you’ll help us gather this data by filling out an anonymous survey when you come to Gayville Hall. Thanks for your help!

# From the HOUSE



by Gayville Hall Proprietor Doug Sharples

## What happened to jazz?

The first concert at Gayville Hall on May 16, 2001, was by the then 80-year-old Preston Love, an Omaha jazz legend. Love played lead alto sax in Count Basie's band in the 1940s and had a long career in big band, jazz, and rhythm-and-blues music until his death in 2004. I considered him a friend and am sorry he only made one appearance at Gayville Hall.

Jazz is my favorite type of music, so I am shocked (and certainly sorry) to realize that I have neglected jazz at Gayville Hall for several years, especially in light of the four great concerts that the South Dakota Jazz Quintet played at Gayville Hall from 2001 to 2004.

Christopher Kocher, the leader of that quintet and a professor of music at USD, is a phenomenal jazz saxophone player, capable of wonderful improvisation and ensemble work. It is a thrill to have him and the other accomplished players of the South Dakota Jazz Quintet in South Dakota.

So, what happened to jazz at Gayville Hall? I don't really know. All five jazz shows of ours drew large-enough crowds to suggest that at least an occasional booking of jazz might have an audience. I've lost more money on folk shows by a long shot. The South Dakota Jazz Quintet's former vocalist, Sue Ann Stutheit, moved to Kansas, and I may have been waiting for word that another great jazz vocalist had shown up. Has one? I'll have to give Mr. Kocher a call. Jazz is not dead yet, if I have any say.

### VISIT:

[www.gayvillehall.com](http://www.gayvillehall.com)

- To read the latest about upcoming shows at Gayville Hall
- To sign up for our free electronic mailing list
- To see photographs from previous shows

## Is Gayville Hall a country music venue now? Tell us; help us plan the future

Whether you are a fan of jazz, gospel, country, rock, folk, Tin Pan Alley, or kazoo, we'll soon be asking for your feedback and musical interests through an anonymous survey you can take when you visit Gayville Hall this season. We would truly like to know what you think about the music, facilities, and experience at Gayville Hall.

John McNeill has persuasively argued that we should "give the folks what they want" and declare Gayville Hall a country music venue. Is he right? He may be. He and Susan have been out there playing a long time and have their ears to the ground, and our country shows at Gayville Hall have done pretty well.

In order to find out definitively, we offer our forthcoming survey and an even more potentially persuasive measurement: our country-heavy spring schedule at Gayville Hall -- seven country-

flavored shows from April 12 through June 21. In this real life survey, you can vote with your patronage. Hope to see you this Spring at Gayville Hall!

## The days of bargain tickets are numbered

There has not been a ticket price increase at Gayville Hall in six years. Unfortunately, to remain financially viable, it appears that ticket prices at Gayville Hall will need to go up in the near future. The handwriting has been on the wall for a while now.

The good news is that for the first seven shows of Season 8 (the shows announced in this newsletter), ticket prices will remain at the bargain rate of \$10 at the door/\$12.50 in advance.

As we face this rate increase, we will take your thoughts into consideration. So please, let us know what you think!

## Season Eight: Happy to be Here

My husband Doug and I started Gayville Hall seven years ago and have found much enjoyment putting on these music shows, if not a lot of financial profit. It has been a great opportunity to work with our dear, old friends, John and Susan McNeill, and with other great musicians like Owen DeJong, Nick Schwebach and Daniel Kilbride.

At this time a year ago, I started to walk with a limp. Little did I know that this was the beginning of multiple serious health problems that would change our lives.

Our 7th season at Gayville Hall started out as usual in March with six spring shows, but as my health deteriorated, we had to cut back. Our summer schedule was axed, and we only had three shows in the fall, making season seven our smallest one by far, with only nine concert dates. The tenth, our long awaited Merle Haggard tribute, was cancelled because of snow.

As season eight approached, the thought crossed our minds that it would be easier and cheaper not to open the hall, but by March, I realized that it would leave too great of a void. We would miss the great music and the gaiety of a big Saturday night at Gayville Hall.

So, despite some adversity, we are happy to be here once more and look forward to seeing you at Gayville Hall during our eighth season. We hope that, with a little help from our friends and patrons, Gayville Hall will survive and prosper.

-- Judi Sharples



## Season Eight dominated by great country music and the new "The Hay Country Jamboree" shows

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of a Gayville Hall concert.

The stars of the Haggard show -- John and Susan McNeill, Owen DeJong, and Nick Schwebach -- will perform Johnny Cash songs on May 17 and Hank Williams tunes on June 14. These will be "all-music and little talk" shows, featuring many additional songs that haven't been played at earlier presentations.

Poker Alice, the swinging five-piece band led by Nick Schwebach and Owen DeJong, takes the stage on June 21 for a thrilling concert with South Dakota's great country singer, Brenda George. It is not to be missed.



*Poker Alice with Brenda George*

Support this country music season with your attendance and let us know what you think. Postcards will not be sent to remind you of upcoming shows, so please clip our spring schedule (page four) for your refrigerator or bulletin board.

## Musicians bring rich experience to Hall

The Public Domain Tune Band is comprised of seasoned musicians **Owen DeJong, Nick Schwebach, and Larry Rohrer**. DeJong, the director of programming and classical music at South Dakota Public Radio, has played fiddle with numerous bands since first performing professionally in 1968. He and Schwebach, a professional guitar player since the 1970s, formed the Public Domain Tune Band in 1979. Public radio personality Rohrer joined in 1989. All three are also members of Poker Alice, which Schwebach and DeJong formed in the 1980s.

Gayville Hall crowd-pleaser **Daniel Kilbride** has been playing the banjo for 30 years. He bought his first banjo at a garage sale in the late 1970s and studied with several high-profile banjo aficionados in Tennessee and Arkansas.

Gayville Hall musical hosts **John & Susan McNeill** have been playing together since the 1960s. For many years, they ran a "family band" that included their three children, Annie, Matthew, and Jane. John has served as emcee at Gayville Hall for seven years.

**Alexei and Channy Casselle**, aka **Roma di Luna**, are a talented, young husband-wife team from Minneapolis. Channy studied violin at USD and played in a bluegrass band in Vermillion. Alexei studied at the Perpich School for the Arts and had a career in hip-hop music before discovering traditional music.

**Al Remund**, who has played the drums for the Poker Alice Band for more than 12 years, has been playing the drums professionally since the early 1970s. Bandmate **Dennis Jensen** has played with Poker Alice for about ten years. He lives near Beresford where he operates the farm where he grew up.

**Brenda George** is a "Nashville-quality" vocalist who has been performing since she was a child. George sang with the Poker Alice Band for many years and has made numerous guest appearances with the group at Gayville Hall. She is always a crowd favorite!

- Saturday, April 12:  
**"The Hay Country Jamboree"**  
 The Public Domain Tune Band, the McNeills, and Daniel Kilbride
- Saturday, April 26:  
**"A Celebration of Merle Haggard"**  
 DeJong, Schwebach, the McNeills
- Saturday, May 10:  
**"The Hay Country Jamboree"**  
 Kilbride, the McNeills, Roma di Luna
- Saturday, May 17:  
**"A Celebration of Johnny Cash"**  
 Schwebach, DeJong, the McNeills
- Saturday, May 31:  
**"The Hay Country Jamboree"**  
 the McNeills, DeJong, Schwebach
- Saturday, June 14:  
**"A Hank Williams Tribute"**  
 the McNeills, Schwebach, & DeJong
- Saturday, June 21:  
**Poker Alice with Brenda George**

From  
the  
STAGE



by Gayville Hall MC John McNeill

Gayville Hall is beginning its eighth season. Many performances have taken place on this stage, and many memories have been fondly carried home from times spent at Gayville Hall.

In a day of all things modern, this theater has found its success in old time joys and traditions. In preservation. We've got air conditioning, running water, and electric lights, but not much else is modern at Gayville Hall. The music is out of the past, the décor is what you remember from an old country store, and the lingering spirit of a Saturday night from 70 years ago is alive and well in this place.

There was a time when country music was the music of country folks. They'd hear it live early in the morning on the kitchen radio out on the farm. A little country band playing a few country songs, sponsored by a flour company, and all before 7 a.m. They'd hear it live on Saturday night radio jamborees coming out of Louisiana or Tennessee. Reception would fade in and out, and there'd be static from every streak of lightning in every thunderstorm between here and wherever. But folks paid no mind to the interference. They heard their country songs, no matter. And the music country folks listened to then is still heard live at Gayville Hall.

This year we're going to hoe the rows here with Hay Country Jamborees and several of our theme performances. We'll re-visit the music of Hank Williams and Johnny Cash, with songs from their collections that will be new to this stage. And there's a Merle Haggard Tribute scheduled. Two hours of Merle's greatest hits will get dusted off for some raisin' of the roof.

So, as must the calendar be turned forward with the passing of each new day, plan to spend some Saturday nights at Gayville Hall this season and be able to turn the calendar backward for a change.

CLIP AND SAVE

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## Seven great concerts to kick off Gayville Hall's 8th Season

**1 Saturday, April 12, at 8 p.m.: "The Hay Country Jamboree"**  
 starring The Public Domain Tune Band, John & Susan McNeill, and Daniel Kilbride with James Kjelstrup

**2 Saturday, April 26, at 8 p.m.: "A Celebration of Merle Haggard"**  
 starring Owen DeJong, Nick Schwebach, and John & Susan McNeill

**3 Saturday, May 10, at 8 p.m.: "The Hay Country Jamboree"**  
 starring Daniel Kilbride with James Kjelstrup, the McNeills, and special guests Roma di Luna

**4 Saturday, May 17, at 8 p.m.: "A Celebration of Johnny Cash"**  
 starring John & Susan McNeill, Owen DeJong, and Nick Schwebach

**5 Saturday, May 31, at 8 p.m.: "The Hay Country Jamboree"**  
 starring John & Susan McNeill, Owen DeJong, and Nick Schwebach

**6 Saturday, June 14, at 8 p.m.: "A Hank Williams Tribute"**  
 starring John & Susan McNeill, Owen DeJong, and Nick Schwebach

**7 Saturday, June 21, at 8 p.m.: Poker Alice with Brenda George**  
 featuring DeJong and Schwebach's swinging band with the great country singer

GAYVILLE HALL 502 Washington St., Gayville, SD 57031      \$10 at the door, \$12.50 reserved. CALL 605-267-2859

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 PO Box 249  
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### Gayville Hall's 8th season begins April 12!



#### WHAT'S INSIDE:

Don't miss the enclosed pull-out survey! It's **your chance** to sound off about Gayville Hall!

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