

# Red Lodge Music Festival

## Continuing the Legacy

by **Kenneth Gilstrap** | *President and Artistic Director* | Red Lodge Music Festival

The idea six decades ago to have a music festival in Red Lodge, showcasing a combination of great performances as well as coaching and enrichment for young people, was a great thought. However, I doubt the founders in 1964 imagined that in 2024 the Festival would still be going stronger and better than ever.

Even though the bulk of the finances to run the Festival are driven through student enrollment and tuition, we continue to rely upon the generous support of donors and the Red Lodge community to foster this longevity and stewardship of the Festival.

In 1966 it cost \$3,690 to run the Festival with 43 students – an increase from 9 students in 1964. In 2023 there were 247 students in attendance with \$142,975 in expenses. Fifty-five students (22% of those enrolled) received scholarship money to attend, lessening the financial burden on their families.

The Festival Board has always been careful to balance access and affordability for all students with the need to provide a superior experience for both students and faculty. Our faculty travel from across the United States to perform and teach. Faculty stay in home spaces donated by Red Lodge residents. Delicious meals are served at the cafeteria and a busy schedule of teaching and rehearsing is navigated by all. Top level performances take place, many are featured regionally on Yellowstone Public Radio and even nationally on Performance Today.

Student musicians in grades 7 through 12 travel to Red Lodge to work with professional faculty and hone their music skills. Students stay in Red Lodge hotels with a counseling staff providing expert supervision. They receive ensemble coaching, participate in master classes, and perform in orchestras, bands and jazz ensembles. In 60 years, the Festival has served over 7,000 students.

We thank you for your ongoing donor support. The Festival wouldn't happen without you!



# The Magic of Amy Russell

by **Bill Morgan** | Board Member/Red Lodge Music Festival

An important piece, and perhaps one of the most critical keys to a highly functioning Red Lodge Music Festival, can be found in the kitchen of the Roosevelt Middle School cafeteria. This is where Amy Russell and crew keep over 275 musicians well-fed and nourished throughout the Festival – all without missing a beat.

Amy grew up in a large construction-based family in the Lovell area. With a family this large and on the move, she says, “I did a lot of cooking – but (with a wry smile) no baking, that’s for someone else.” After observing Amy and her team each year, one starts to fully grasp that the Festival is very lucky. When asked how she can seamlessly feed this many people over an 8-day period, Amy simply says, “It’s easy – be efficient and don’t get behind.”

Organization aside, one of the most commented on “chow line” experiences for new students and faculty is Amy’s abundant salad bar. This is not your normal ice-berg lettuce/baby carrot variety. Amy likes to use fresh and local greens from Greybull Valley Produce and arranges for specialized deliveries during the camp. Throughout the year, Amy also works with a state-wide steering committee with the goal of achieving better pricing and nutrition for students.

Ever humble, when Amy was the head chef for the Luther School west of Red Lodge, the school was awarded the Gold Award of Distinction from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for healthier foods. “My first restaurant job in Red Lodge was at the Café Regis, so it looks like I haven’t gone very far,” says Amy with a slight smile. We are going to disagree with Amy on that.

One of the amazing skills displayed during the Festival week is Amy’s ability to magically repurpose left over sauces and vegetables and roll them into another quality meal. “Don’t tell the kids, but I like to include whenever possible fresh vegetables in my recipes. For instance, the meatball sub sauce becomes transformed to a spaghetti sauce, but with pureed fresh vegetables - so nothing goes to waste.” Amy has really helped the Festival remain affordable by keeping her food costs low; her skill at minding the bottom line is very much appreciated by the Board.

It is clear when interacting with Amy and her dedicated kitchen crew that they enjoy being a part of the Festival. “We just love to be chopping and cooking while listening to the kids rehearse,” Amy told me. The feeling is mutual: Without Amy and her crew, the Festival would be lost – and not getting our vegetables!



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# Faculty Housing

by **Betty Hecker** | Board Member and Faculty Housing Coordinator / Red Lodge Music Festival

Red Lodge is a community filled with people who love music and are incredibly generous. For more than 50 years, community members have opened their homes to Red Lodge Music Festival faculty. Since the festival's beginning, faculty members have stayed in homes and enjoyed the hospitality of festival friends. Over the years many hosts and faculty have developed friendships that span many miles and they look forward to the festival each year when they can renew this friendship. The bonds that music builds grow each year.

When I took responsibility for finding housing for faculty at the Festival, I felt intimidated and pretty nervous. Finding housing for more than 30 people for 10 days in early June seemed like a daunting task, especially because I had no budget. I spent hours thinking about people I know and asking friends for names of people who might be hosts. As I like to say, "one of my favorite things to do is call people I do not know and ask if I can use their house for 10 days, for free." Well, the results of all those calls have been amazing! People in Red Lodge have been willing to share their homes, guest houses, and cabins all in the spirit of helping the Festival. I have been overwhelmed by the generosity and support of our hosts. Every year I have a week of panic when I am sure I am going to come up short, but then I calm down and think about Red Lodge and how much the Festival means to the community, assuring myself that it will all work out - and it does.

Here are a few examples of the amazing hosts that help make the Red Lodge Music Festival a success. There are hosts I have never met in person and every year they say "Oh yes, we want Luis to stay with us, we love him." Two hosts are threatening to stage a fight to see who gets to host next year. I hope it does not come to that, maybe I can divide them between the two. Some hosts trust me with the key to their vacation home for the entire year just so I know we can use it next June. One host sleeps in the loft so Festival staff can have the bedrooms and get good rest during the busy week. When I have people who cannot host for one reason or another they always say, "keep us on your list for next year." Another host wants to adopt the young men who stayed in their home. One year I was truly in a panic because on the first day of the Festival, the house I had was not suitable for the two faculty I was planning to have stay there. I called a generous friend and she actually paid for a vacation rental for the faculty. I knew then that the Festival was in good hands.

I cannot say enough good things about the hosts - without whom the Festival could not happen. I am so grateful and appreciate the wonderful home we call Red Lodge.



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**“Every drop of water is welcome in the ocean.”**

*—Mother Teresa*

# The Enjoyable Carl Rath

by [Bill Morgan](#) | Board Member/Red Lodge Music Festival

"You just always need to have fun in music to fully contribute and teach." This statement pretty much defines the personal and musical identity of Carl Rath, long-time bassoon faculty at the Red Lodge Music Festival. His enjoyment – of the students, fellow faculty, staff and the community – has kept Carl coming back to the Festival for 42 years. But boy does Carl like to have fun!

While visiting with Carl, he can seamlessly spin off story after story about past years' hijinks, which as he says, "takes the pressure off of performing and learning." There are stories about clowns blowing bubbles, circus music, heavy metal stars, and a wooden kitchen spoon named Sammy used as an orchestral baton.

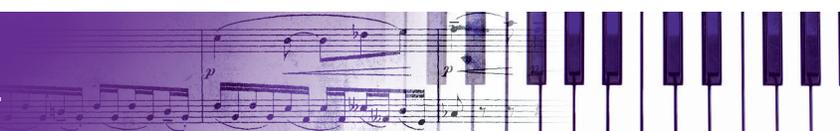
However, Carl is also very quick to note the serious musicianship and ensemble by fellow staff and students over the last four decades. Some of his students, namely Doug Brown of Red Lodge, have gone on to professional performance and education careers. "Bassoon kids," Carl says, "have challenging and exposed literature to master, so I try to keep them musically engaged through having fun – both in the literature I select for them and in their approach to learning. This is what keeps them coming back to the Festival."

At one time in the mid '70's, Carl literally cashed in a life insurance policy to pay for a flight from Milwaukee to Denver, where he landed an assistantship. In Carl's words "it was a life changing event." Along with the bassoon, I was teaching percussion and music composition and theory. Plus, I had never seen a mountain before," quipped Carl.

Carl first arrived on the shores of Red Lodge in 1980. Steve Patton - the Festival's Camp Director - remembers Carl well during the many faculty/student softball games next to the Civic Center. "Carl has the ability to switch seamlessly between serious double reed playing and being the guy that can crack you up," says Steve. "He definitely knows how to relate to our kids."

It is amazing to reflect upon the sheer math of Carl's tenure. The Festival just wrapped up its 58th Season and Carl has been involved over 70% of that time. Just as monumental, Carl recently retired from 48 years of teaching at the collegiate level – 31 years at the University of Oklahoma and the past 12 years at Lawrence University (Appleton, WI). All with a huge smile still on his face and always willing to take students on in a softball game.

Next June, we will all again celebrate Music in the Mountains in Carl's 43rd season. Please look him up, he'll probably be the one having the most fun.





***We have hard work ahead and need your help.  
A gift to the endowment is a wonderful way to leave a legacy  
to our mission of music and education.***

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# Memorial Awards – 2023

Our memorial awards are created at the request of supporters who wish a monetary award be dedicated in the name of a special person for the benefit of festival participants. These awards are merit-based, specific to particular instruments, and decided upon during the week of camp. For those interested in establishing an award fund, please review the Red Lodge Music Festival Memorial Award Guidelines Resolution at [rlmf.org](http://rlmf.org).

## 2023 Richard A. Fox Memorial Award

### Given by Tim Fox

Jr. Violin: Adella Carter  
Sr. Violin: Moe Kobold

## 2023 Barbara Healow Peterson Memorial Award

### Given by Mike Peterson

Jr. Viola: Addie Christ  
Sr. Viola: Lindsay Abelin

Jr. Cello: Soraya Sachdeva  
Sr. Cello: Evan Guthridge

## 2023 Steve Stone Memorial Award

### Given by Don & Jane Stone

Sr. Bass: Isaac Ballif

## 2023 Kim Johnson-Garcia Memorial Award

### Given by Jeanne Johnson

Jr. Flute: Rosa Layton  
Sr. Flute: Amelia Thompson

## 2023 Forest Cornwell Memorial Award

### Given by Kristen Hoyer Tellcamp

Jr. Oboe: Lauren Fink  
Sr. Oboe: Ava Arrowsmith

## 2023 Gary Behm Honorary Award

### Given by his Former Students

Jr. Clarinet: Hallie Jeppeson  
Sr. Clarinet: Samantha Ramirez

## 2023 Jan Stone Memorial Award

### Given by Don & Jane Stone

Jr. Bassoon : Cevin Hightower  
Sr. Bassoon: Tony Ninichuck

## 2023 Russ Davis Memorial Award

### Given by Mary Davis McLean

Jr. Sax: Jackson Stricker  
Sr. Sax: Adam Rupsis

## 2023 Don McComas Memorial Award

### Given by Sharlene McComas

Jr. Trumpet: Rigel Beasley

## 2023 Jan Stone Memorial Award

### Given by Don & Jane Stone

Jr. Horn: Keegan Sullivan

## 2023 Dr. Kenneth H. Mueller Memorial Award

### Given by Carol Mueller

Jr. Trombone: Elijah Wilson  
Sr. Trombone: Jack Staton

## 2023 Edward Rath Honorary Award

### Given by Carl Rath

Jr. Piano: Julian Laurales  
Sr. Piano: Gabby Cutler

## 2023 James Robertson Memorial Award

### Dr. Dale & Judy Peterson

Jr. Low Brass: William Young  
Sr Low Brass: Kane Aberle

## 2023 Leonard Droste Memorial Award

### Given by Percussion Enthusiasts

Jr. Percussion: Oliver Perry  
Sr. Percussion: Aiden Felker  
Dan & Kay Peterson, Hansen Music, William Honaker, Pat Perrella, Mary Wells, Mark McGiboney, Rob & Rita Wells, Kari Drange, Megan Heinemann, Birdina Dapples, Matt DeWitt

## 2023 Honor String Ensemble

Elijah Leafy, Violin  
Isaac Ballif, Bass

## 2023 Honor Jazz Combo

Zach Broveak, Alto Sax  
Adam Rupsis, Alto Sax  
Frank Keller, Alto Sax  
Jillian Eakins, Tenor Sax  
Andrew Phillips, Trumpet  
Isaac Ballif, Bass  
Spencer Whitt, Keys  
David Miller, Vibes  
Braxton DeLean, Guitar  
Aiden Felker, Drums

## Six Year Award Recipients

Ava Arrowsmith, Brontë Bennion, Serena Fink  
Joelle Loomans, Jack Staton  
Jamie Tucker-Crockett, Reagan Wyatt

## Five Year Award Recipients

Miriam Frye, Hope Grundhauser, TJ Hogan, Ivy Keller  
Emily Mavencamp, Tony Ninichuck, Andrew Phillips  
Adam Rupsis, Julia Small, Gwen Thompson  
Lucas Widdison

# Red Lodge Music festival

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