



Currents

THE SIDEBAR

Remembering Front Street

The Blue Earth County Historical Society wants your stories about Front Street for a book and exhibit next spring. Every Friday in Currents we're publishing a new topic for you to reminisce about and submit your stories for the Front Street Project.

This week, the historical society wants your stories about the local characters you met on Front — shop owners, shoppers, clerks and anyone else you remember.

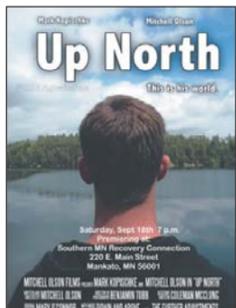
Call 345-5566; or e-mail your story to bechs@hickorytech.net; or mail it to Blue Earth County Historical Society, c/o Front Street Project, 415 E. Cherry St., Mankato, MN 56001.

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Screening of 'Up North' to be held downtown

MANKATO — The new film "Up North" will be screened 7 p.m. Sept. 18 at Southern Minnesota Recovery Connection, 220 E. Main St. in Mankato.

"Up North" is a Mitchell Olson Films production. Olson, who is from Elysian, works for KSTP Channel 5 news.



About the film: "Following the death of his grandfather, Matt retreats to the solitude of his family's cabin, hidden deep in the Minnesota northern forests. During his time there, Matt tries to come to terms with his grandfather's death and figure out exactly what to do with his own life."

Admission is free.

Check this out

The competition is getting stiffer each week, as designer after designer is sent home. The "Project Runway" blog returns after a brief hiatus to dish on last night's drama. Visit www.mankatofreepress.com to link to the Katotainment blog.



Verbatim

"This year is about creating moments. So I can assure you we're saying to all of our celebrity friends this is not the year you can come on and just promote your book or promote your song. You have to create moments."

— Oprah Winfrey on her farewell season



— Free Press Staff and news services

Settling into a

NEW LIFE

Traditional singer Chris Young finds home in contemporary country world

By Jake Bohrod
Special to The Free Press



Waking up from a deep sleep, Chris Young startles. He's not in his bed back home in Murfreesboro, Tenn., 35 miles outside of Nashville where he grew up. He's not even in one place. No, the 25-year-old country music rising star is whipping down an unknown highway in the back of a bus, and despite its lingering unfamiliarity, it's somewhere that Young says he is continuously grateful for being.

"There are a lot of people who would give up a whole lot to be in that situation," said Young, who performs today in Mankato.

Young's second and latest album, "The Man I Want to Be," which just passed its one-year anniversary, produced two consecutive No. 1 "Billboard" country chart hits with "Gettin' You Home" last October and the title track earlier this year.

Committed to the music business from an early age, Young said it was a long road to where he is now, and a road nearly every musician must take.

"If you were trying to get a record deal and you didn't think about giving up at one point, something's wrong," he said laughing.

The hopeful, yet daunting and discouraging thing about attracting attention in the music business, he said, is the simple numbers.

"You only need one 'Yes.' You could get 8 million 'Nos; You only need one 'Yes,'" Young said.

Although, his 'Yes' came in 2006, when he was only 21 years old. A self-titled album through RCA Records, his current label, propelled him to national fame and set a fire under Young that demanded of him answers to questions that come with the job.

"Probably one of the best questions anyone could ever ask (a musician), and the hardest to answer, is, 'Hey, can you describe yourself as an artist?'" he said. "Once you figure out not really (how) to put yourself in a box, but to describe yourself at the core, it's all up hill from then."

Submitted photo

Country singer Chris Young is performing at the Verizon Wireless Center tonight.

Clarifying exactly what sets him apart from an over-saturated, fickle business was paramount to Young's success.

Before he opens his mouth, he's just another good-looking guy with a cowboy hat, but an uncharacteristically deep and pronounced voice differentiates him from the pack.

"A lot of that is an accumulation of what I listen to and stuff I choose to do on my own," he said.

Describing himself as "progressive traditional," Young named slightly older artists such as Randy Travis and Keith Whitley as inspirations. Country pioneers imparted on Young an appreciation for the vocal and lyrical aspect of the genre of music he loves.

"I think one of the biggest things about country music is the relationship that country artists have with the fans," he said.

And although catchy beats and flashy attitude tend to define today's country more than the style Young speaks of and advocates for, he said the personal connection between musician and fan has never been compromised.

"That's something that's really special to country," he said.

Young's defense of the rapidly reforming country music scene extends to the stereotypes-turned-staples of the genre — think trucks, tractors, beer and whiskey — that only exist as tools to tell a story, he

said. Those recurring images are significant points of reference for the country music culture but should not outweigh other characterizing components of his livelihood, he said.

"Those songs are important to country," Young said, but "the relationship song is a big part of country music, too. What better way is there to tell someone you love them?"

When it comes to staying relevant in the years to come, Young's commitment to his sound will be put to the test. But the musician seems poised for the challenge. After working as determinedly as one does to establish something influential in the music world — "I've been home nine days this year," he said — it'd be

If You Go

What
Country singer Chris Young
Where
Verizon Wireless Center
When
7 p.m. today
Tickets
\$25 at the Verizon Wireless Center ticket office or any Ticketmaster location; by phone at 800-745-3000, or at ticketmaster.com.

odd not to shoot for the top and to make it there without constant evolution.

"I don't think that my sound will change too much, but would I collaborate with someone from another genre? I think everyone ends up doing that at some point," Young said.

Rock Bend celebrates 20th anniversary

The kick-off of Rock Bend Folk Festival in St. Peter today is actually a little bittersweet.

Just as Songs on the Lawn is my own personal beacon of summer, Rock Bend is that of fall.

Don't get me wrong, fall is my favorite season. But after last year's blustery, snowy winter, I can't help but look ahead at what's quickly on the way — cold — and pray summer sticks around a little while longer.



AMANDA DYLSIN
Free Press
Features Editor



Submitted photo

Rock Bend Folk Festival is this weekend in Minnesota Square Park.

Still, I realize there's no stopping time.

Plus, Rock Bend can easily make one forget about such worries when the music starts and everybody's having a good time.

This year of Rock Bend is particularly special. It's the 20th anniversary of the free outdoor festival, which takes place in Minnesota Square Park.

The line-up looks great. As always, it includes national, regional and local acts on two stages.

Without further ado, here's a look at this year's schedule.

Today, Richard's Pub

8 p.m. — One Fast Move

Saturday, Main Stage

Noon — One Fast Move
1 p.m. — The Wild
Goose Chase Cloggers
2:15 p.m. — The Abalone Dots
3:45 p.m. — City Mouse & Friends
5:15 p.m. — April Verch
7 p.m. — Willie Murphy
8:30 p.m. — Levee Town

Saturday, Joyce's

North Tree Stage
11:30 a.m. — Bothy Folk Club Open Stage
12:30 p.m. — Halvorson Family Band
1:30 p.m. — Minnesota Zoo
2:15 p.m. — Bothy Folk Club Open Stage
3:15 p.m. — Fendermen
3:45 p.m. — Minnesota

Zoo Encore

4:30 p.m. — Wild Goose Chase Cloggers
5:30 p.m. — Flathead

Cats
6:30 p.m. — Wooden Nickels

Sunday, Main Stage

Noon — The Divers Company
1 p.m. — Peppino D'Agostino
3:45 p.m. — Crooked Still
5:30 p.m. — The Brass Kings

Sunday, Joyce's

North Tree Stage
11:30 a.m. — Flash Bandango
12:45 p.m. — Bothy Folk Club Open Stage
2 p.m. — Hart, Lieberman and Smith
3 p.m. — Peter Bloedel
4:30 p.m. — Rain Dogs

