

Norberg explores the great 'North'

Watercolorist's work featured at Aitkin gallery, Page 2E

Q Gallery to host 'Salute to the Arts'

New work by 30 area artists featured, Page 2E

Entertainment

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CD REVIEW

Wayne's world opens up on new album



The Wayne Renn Band includes Steve Renn (left), Ernie Renn, Wayne Renn, Lyla Renn and Greg Todd. The band, which recently released a new album, will perform Thursday-Saturday at the Iron Rail in downtown Brainerd.

Four songs have "love" in the title, and two more are explicitly about his desire to write a hit song. Listening to "Lucky 13," it's clear what's on the mind of Brainerd country crooner Wayne Renn.

On his eighth album, Renn takes advantage of his band's professionalism and his own skills as a wordsmith to crank out a handful of songs that should be hits on Country Music Television. Fortunately, a lot of the tunes come from the heart; Renn is no Kenny Chesney knock-off. His most autobiographical song, the beautifully reflective "Maple

Street" — about his connection to Brainerd airman Leo Mustonen, who died long before Renn was born — has already become a word-of-mouth hit on the Internet (see sidebar on Page 3E).

Country songs often put a negative spin on love, but Renn will have none of that. "Nasty Old Sad Song" is exactly the opposite of its title. Renn sings: "I made a decision since you walked out like nothing/That I'm gonna get famous with a happier tune."

"Don't Mess with a Cowboy Singer" transcends the clichés with its fun vibe: "Good morning, heck/My wife just left, and moved in with her high school sweetheart/She left the yard a mess,



JOHN HANSEN

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If you spin

Artist: Wayne Renn
Album: "Lucky 13"
Genre: Country
Label: Independent
Highs: The album is a nice mix of would-be hits and songs from the heart. The lyrics are clever and the instrumentation is polished.

Lows: It's a little too commercial to win over all country-haters.

Grade: A-

On the Web

To listen to "13 Kisses" and "Maple Street," visit brainerddispatch.com.

BEST BETS

Our picks for this weekend and the week ahead

FRIDAY-SATURDAY: MUSIC

Fiddling old-school

The ninth annual **Nisswa-stamman**, featuring traditional Scandinavian music from the United States and abroad, will feature the following events:

- **7 p.m. Friday** — Gala Opening Concert and Dance, Lutheran Church of the Cross, Nisswa, \$15 at door.

- **9:30 p.m. Friday** — Old-time Dance, Nisswa American Legion, \$5 at door.

- **10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday** — Nisswa-stamman main festival, Nisswa Pioneer Village, \$10 (adults), \$1 (15 and younger) at gate. Bring your own blankets or lawn chairs.

- **4:30-7:30 p.m. Saturday** — Smorgasbord, Nisswa Community Center, \$15, tickets available at other Nisswa-stamman events.

- **7 p.m.-midnight Saturday** — Old-time Dance, Nisswa American Legion, \$5 at door.

SATURDAY: MUSIC

Tunes over dinner

Live music will fill the air from noon-midnight Saturday at **Street Fest on 7th** (formerly the Great Northern Barbecue) in downtown Brainerd. Rib Fest will begin at 7 p.m. Admission is free to the overall event and \$5 to Rib Fest.

MONDAY, TUESDAY: BOOKS

'Pieces' and 'Ruminations'

Two notable authors will discuss their new books early next week. **Jim Klobuchar** will chat about "Pieces of My Heart: Everyone Has an Everest" at noon Monday at the Brainerd Public Library. And **Win Borden** will ruminate on "Ruminations: Memories & Tales of a Furrowed Mind" at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Crosslake Community Center. Admission is free to both events.

GOING OUT | DANCE

TAPPING

into something special

New Jersey's Michael Minery will be the guest star at Music General's Spring Dance Revue

By **JOHN HANSEN**
Entertainment Editor

If Michael Minery didn't earn a living as a tap dancer, perhaps he could be a tap historian. When a reporter mentioned that it's the 25th anniversary of Michael Jackson's "Thriller," Minery — in a rapid-fire New Jersey accent — explained how those famous dance moves were influenced by tap.

"A lot of the things Michael Jackson took were from tap dancing," Minery said in a phone interview. "The Moonwalk was from a tap dancer from vaudeville from the '20s — Jackson made it a little hipper."

"If you look at Motown, Cholly Atkins was a tap dancer — he did choreography for the Temptations, the Jackson 5. A lot of tap dancers were out of work in the '60s and '70s. In the '80s it came back, and now it's strong. But tap dancing has pretty much always been around."

The 31-year-old Minery, who will perform three or four numbers as the special guest of Music General's Spring Dance Revue Friday and Saturday, caught the tap bug at age 3. By 18, he was teaching others how to tap. He grew up in Totowa, N.J. — where he still lives — not far from For Dancers Only, where he regularly conducts workshops.

Minery hasn't pulled up his roots, but he certainly has traveled. His various jobs in the tap dancing field — teaching, choreographing, and performing in his own show, "Tapaholic," have brought him to 46 states (all except Vermont, Montana and the Dakotas).

"I think it's a passion," Minery said when asked about his knowledge of tap history. "You have to know where it comes from to do it well, and to give back to it a little bit. Hopefully someday kids will read about me and I will have contributed something myself."

"It's a very solo-oriented art form. You need to show your own personality. Ballet is more about conforming to the same thing. Tap is more freelance, more open to interpretation. It's the most musical of the dance forms. You're sort of a percussionist."

Tap dancing is often referenced in pop culture, usually for laughs. In a recent episode of "The

See **MINERY**, Page 5E

Michael Minery will be the special guest performer at Music General's Spring Dance Revue.