

NORTHERN WATCH



“NORTHWEST MINNESOTA’S REGIONAL NEWSPAPER”

August 29, 2026



Red Lake Falls native Terry Derosier (pictured) will perform throughout the region Monday, Sept. 14 through Friday, Sept. 18 with Newfolden native Ethan Elseth. (Submitted)

From a traumatic brain injury to the stage

Most people would call a ten-foot fall from the second story a tragedy. For Terry Derosier, a 1981 Lafayette High School graduate, it was a “blessing in disguise” that changed his life’s direction.

It now finds him and Newfolden native Ethan Elseth performing during a show titled “Cowboy Singers & Guitar Pickers – A Tribute to the Roots of Country Music.” Hosted by the

Northwest Regional Library, the show will be held:

- Monday, Sept. 14 at 6 p.m. at the Warroad Public Library
- Tuesday, Sept. 15 at 6 p.m. at the Roseau Public Library
- Wednesday, Sept. 16 at 6 p.m. at the Godel Memorial Library in Warren



Newfolden native Ethan Elseth (pictured) will perform throughout the region Monday, Sept. 14 through Friday, Sept. 18 with Red Lake Falls native Terry Derosier. The Northwest Regional Library is hosting the show, which is titled “Cowboy Singers & Guitar Pickers – A Tribute to the Roots of Country Music.” (Submitted)

From a traumatic brain injury to the stage/Continued

(Continued from Page 1)

- Thursday, Sept. 17 at 6 p.m. at the Thief River Falls Public Library
- Friday, Sept. 18 at 5 p.m. at the Red Lake Falls Public Library

The performances are free, open to the public, and appropriate for all ages.

Because of Ethan’s talent, some of their upcoming releases have a cinematic sound to them. “Ethan is an amazing guitarist and composer. He can write symphonies. He also tours internationally with some big acts,” Terry said.

Ethan was in LA for three years learning the craft of film scoring, but he returned to the Twin Cities last year. This is when the two earnestly focused on refining their craft and made a plan to release new music. Their first song release this fall is called “Clover Hill” and will be released on Spotify and Apple Music on Friday, Sept. 11. Terry said, “It’s a vibey feel good song about summertime.”

For 12 years, Terry, son of George and JoAnn Derosier, was a fixture in the construction world, building Window World Twin Cities into a powerhouse alongside his wife, Mary. As a local businessman, he was the voice behind the popular radio jingle that everyone was singing. But, his life took a dramatic turn in 2012 while working on his remote cabin near Thief River Falls. He fell from unsecured scaffolding and landed on his head. It left him with a traumatic brain injury and several crushed vertebrae. “It could have been much, much worse. I should have died!” Terry said.

As Mary stepped up to lead the company, Terry began a grueling recovery that yielded an unexpected side effect: A surge of creative energy. “I couldn’t think clearly for many years. But I remembered reading an article about how music can be a great healer of the brain,” he said.

Previous to the construction business, Terry had directed church music for 12 years. “I thought that maybe a little update in music would be beneficial,” said Terry, who decided to enroll at McNally Smith College of Music in St. Paul.

It was at McNally Smith where Terry met Ethan. “When we first met and I learned where Ethan grew up, I immediately knew the cloth he was cut from, and we started working together,” Terry said. They lost track of each other after the school closed. They reconnected in 2020 and began co-writing.

Reflecting on the healing journey and the bleeding on the brain he suffered, Terry said, “I’m not sure if some of the wires in my brain got crossed, but I began to hear words and see images that would instantly transform into songs.”

At McNally Smith, he took lessons with Jeff Harrington, a retired Nashville and LA songwriter. Jeff helped him shape his song writing and brought him to the studio to record several songs that were released in 2018. One of these songs, “Thunderin’ Down The Road,” has garnered more than 200,000 streams.

During this time of healing, he reflected on his years growing up as a child in this area. “I thought of the rich family roots that I have in the Red River Valley. I have countless relatives and I am part of a long line of farmers, carpenters and musicians. Some of my earliest music memories were going to wedding dances and seeing Linus, Alois, Eddie and Jimmy Schmitz in the band and even Father Jerry Noesen joined in sometimes. These were really happy occasions that primed my own musical journey. Music was for celebrations!”

Terry also credits Lafayette High School music directors Ed Dahle, Mary Jane Kurpius and Sharon Fortier with encouraging his musical development.

When Terry entered college at North Dakota State University, he thought he was to become an electrical engineer. After one semester, however, he quickly turned to the arts. It took almost 10 years and five colleges, but he couldn’t shake the “music bug,” finally finishing a Bachelor of Arts degree in music at the University of North Dakota in 1990.

Drawing from his rural roots on the family farm in Terrebonne, Terry has a deep well of family stories to draw from. He also gains inspiration from the sights and smells of the open road on his motorcycle. Terry is emerging as an artist in the country rock genre. With a vocal style reminiscent of a cross between Johnny Cash, John Mellencamp and John Denver. His lyrics and melodies paint vivid pictures of a life-of-trials, the beauty of creation and hope rediscovered.

While a catastrophic fall ended his career in construction, it started a new chapter in song. For Terry, the music was there all along – it just took a clobbering to the back-of-the-head to shake it out.