

### **By Amber Hanneken**

Staff Writer

HUGO — The love of music brought Bill Burkhalter and Crystal Rushin together, she loves to sing and he writes songs and plays instruments.

Burkhalter met Rushin through Hugo High School music teacher Carla Rabon. Burkhalter was a coach and teacher at the school. Rabon said Rushin, her student, had a lot of talent and he remembered hearing her sing in past performances.

“When I started to get back into music after I retired, I called her and said, ‘hey you want to sing?’ She said, ‘yes’ and we’ve been doing it off and on ever since — about four or five years now,” Burkhalter said.

Burkhalter has his own music studio next to his house where he can record and produce CDs. He started playing in bands at 12 years old and writing lyrics in college.

Rushin, 26, began singing at the age of 5 in church and school. She grew up around music, as her grandfather, aunt and mother are also singers and had their own gospel band that traveled and performed. Rock music is what she really enjoys singing, but she said she is able to sing any kind of music and she also plays guitar.

“I want to get my music career going and be able to travel and sing,” she said.

Right now, Rushin and Burkhalter are working with a professional in music production to get their talents noticed. Stan Manning, of Houston, is currently pushing her demo CD in New Hampshire, Houston and Colorado. Burkhalter, who has written more than 200 songs, wrote seven of the songs on the demo and plays the instruments. The song titled, “The Other Side” was written by Rushin and there is a cover of “Unchained Melody” by The Righteous Brothers. The entire CD was created in Burkhalter’s studio. Their music can be listened to on their MySpace site at [www.myspace.com/makburk](http://www.myspace.com/makburk) or people can get a copy of the CD by calling Burkhalter at 317.3082.

“(Manning) has the connections that we don’t have,” Burkhalter said. “Of course, living in Hugo, it’s hard to get connected with anybody that can do anything for you. A couple of years ago, I went to Nashville with a bunch of songs and there are so many talented people there that unless you have an inside foothold in something, you’re probably not going to be recognized.” They’ve sent out hundreds of copies of their CD but are mostly relying on Manning to be their connection in the music industry. One local radio station, K95.5, has agreed to play their music between 4 and 5 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 27.

“I have no aspirations of becoming a rock star or anything like that. I love to write music and I love to record and play music,” Burkhalter said. “Crystal is an excellent singer and that’s what I would like to see come out of anything I do. She is young enough and talented enough that someone should know about it.”

The two recently performed at Burkhalter’s Christmas family reunion and Rushin said they will perform for anyone who asks.

Twice, Rushin auditioned for American Idol, once in Memphis, Tenn., and the other time in Dallas.

## Two Hugo residents hope to make it in the music world

Thursday, 24 December 2009 16:22

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