



THE NORTH SHORE JOURNAL

Serving all residents, businesses and visitors in Lake, MN & Cook, MN Counties

Jerry J. "Hairy" Lavigne: A North Shore Legend

By [Krista Starkovich](#) January 7, 2026

322 0



Jerry LaVigne at the Soundboard, Jeff Slate & Friends, July 25, 2025 (Photo: Don J Olson for Rocky Wall Entertainment)

The North Shore has lost a true “gem.” Jerry J. “Hairy” Lavigne, born in 1956, was the kind of person who seemed to be everywhere at once. He always had a smile, a joke, and an infectious love for life. Whether he was known as: “Arena Jerry,” “Water Plant Jerry,” or “Sound Guy Jerry,” he left an indelible mark on the communities of the North Shore and the regional music scene.

Jerry’s passion for music began early, sparked by his mother’s own love for the art. That spark turned into a lifelong flame. He spent years performing in various bands, but his greatest musical joy was much closer to home: playing in a family band. To Jerry, family meant the world, and sharing the stage with them was a career highlight.

Beyond the stage, Jerry was a pillar of Silver Bay. He spent 26 years working for the city in various roles before retiring, and previously worked for the Reserve Mining Company. His dedication to his hometown extended to the sidelines, where he coached youth sports for many years, mentoring kids with the same patience and heart he brought to his music.

Jerry was the Master of Sound. He was perhaps best known as “everyone’s favorite sound guy.” He turned his technical talent into a business, North Star Sound, and became the backbone of the North Shore’s live music scene. For over 25 years, he ensured the sound was impeccable at Papa Charlie’s at Lutsen Mountains. If you were a musician who graced that stage, you knew Jerry, and you knew you were in the best hands in the business.

In 2018, Nelson French met Jerry when he was doing the sound for a benefit concert which Nelson had produced for the Armory Arts and Music Center. Jerry then teamed up with French of Rocky Wall Entertainment in 2021, to realize a long-held dream: bringing high-quality live music to his hometown. As the heart and soul of the Silver Bay Music in the Park series, he worked tirelessly to make it the premier outdoor music event on the North Shore, contributing to over 50 concerts between 2021 and 2025. No matter the event, Jerry was always there, smiling, ready to tell a joke, and setting the tone for a great evening.

Jerry’s generosity wasn’t limited to the summer concert season. Every winter, he transformed his home into a holiday wonderland. He created a massive, synchronized light display for the whole town and travelers to enjoy, even including a sign with the radio frequency so visitors could hear the music that went along with the lights. It was his way of spreading cheer to everyone who passed by.

Jerry was more than just a technician; he was a mentor. He took countless young musicians and aspiring sound techs under his wing, sharing his knowledge freely. Many of those “kids” continue to play and work in music today because of his guidance.

Jerry worked right up until the end, helping to pull off a successful concert just days before his passing. He lived a life that was “larger than life,” and while the music community has lost an ambassador and a legend, his legacy lives on through the family he loved, the students he mentored, and the countless memories of those who heard the perfect note because Jerry was at the soundboard.

He will be dearly missed, but never forgotten.