

NOVEMBER 13, 2015 - JANUARY 17, 2016 | STACKNER CABARET

GUYS ON ICE

THE ICE FISHING MUSICAL!

Books and Lyrics by: **Fred Alley**
Music by: **James Kaplan**
Directed and Choreographed by:
Jeffrey Herbst



Play
Guide

The Rep
MILWAUKEE

Executive Producers:
Elizabeth and Peter Gottsacker

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Milwaukee Repertory Theater Presents



Books and Lyrics by: **Fred Alley** | Music by: **James Kaplan**
Conceived and Researched by: **Fred Alley And Frederick Heide**
Directed and Choreographed by: **Jeffrey Herbst**
Executive Producers: **Elizabeth and Peter Gottsacker**

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CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM



Bo Johnson
Ernie



Doug Mancheski
Marvin



Steve Koehler
Lloyd

Jeffrey Herbst, *Director/Choreographer*

James Kaplan, *Composer/Music Director*

Jim Maronek, *Scenic Designer*

Neen Rock, *Costume Designer*

Jason Fassl, *Lighting Designer*

JC Clementz, *Casting Director*

Christian Gero, *Sound Designer*

David Alley, *Original Sound Designer*

Daniel J. Hanson, *Stage Manager*

SYNOPSIS

'Tis the season for one of the popular outdoor winter pastimes in Sturgeon bay, WI... ice fishing!

Two long time friends, Lloyd and Marvin, meet at Marvin's shanty, as has been their tradition for years. Marvin has exciting news to share. This afternoon, the men will be featured on a local cable TV program about ice fishing. The next eight hours the men wait for Cubby, the TV host and his camera crew to arrive in the shanty for the interview. Through songs and dance men bond as they dream of becoming local celebrities and all the positive effect this exposure will have on their life, including impressing a Pick 'n Save cashier whom Lloyd has been admiring for some time. However, moods change when local oddball, Ernie the Moocher, shows up to do what he does best, mooch off of Marvin and Lloyd's Midwestern generosity. Ernie, though unbeknownst to him, is generally the bearer of bad news, manners, and self-written diddies.

Will Lloyd figure out another way to make a good impression on Bonnie the cashier? Can Marvin put his pride aside to win back his wife's favor? Where is Cubby? Let us see what a day on the ice brings...

LLOYD: *So, Marvin, did you hear de one about de guy who goes ice fishing and brings home two fifty pound cakes of ice? (MARVIN laughs) No dat's not de funny part, see, his wife fried em, and dey both drowned.*

PRODUCTION HISTORY

In 1998, to celebrate Wisconsin's 150th year as a recognized state, Milwaukee Repertory Theater and Door County's American Folklore Theatre (now Northern Sky Theater) teamed up to produce an original musical comedy that would capture and honor the heart of Wisconsinites. Partially inspired by Frederick Heide's research into the world of ice fishing, *Guys on Ice: An Ice Fishing Musical Comedy* was the brainchild of AFT's co-founder, the late Fred Alley, and Milwaukee Rep's own James Kaplan.

They knew they had a winning play on their hands when by opening night at The Rep, the entire run was sold-out. Since 1998, *Guys on Ice* has played to packed houses in Ephraim, Sturgeon Bay, Green Bay, Milwaukee, Madison, and even to audiences as far away as California, New York, and Oregon.

The Milwaukee Rep has hosted productions in 1998, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, and sent out tours in 2007 and 2009.

Originally, the play was only a one-act, but when Oregon Cabaret Theater wanted to pick it up, they requested two acts to fit their theater's format. You can thank this request for Ernie's Half-Time Show and a few extra scenes and songs.

The actors who play Lloyd and Marvin, Steve Koehler and Doug Mancheski, are icons of the show. Doug began his *Guys on Ice* career performing opposite of Fred Alley, the book writer and lyricist, back in 1998. Steve is a Milwaukee area high school physics and drama teacher and has performed the role of Lloyd over 1,000 times since 2003 along with Doug Mancheski. The two have even been featured in a performance for Wisconsin Public Television, which is true life mirroring fiction, since during most of the play the two fishermen are waiting for a camera crew to show up!

Guys on Ice continues to be well-loved Wisconsin winter tradition.



ICE FISHING SHANTY sometimes known as "bob houses," are portable sheds light enough to be used as shelter for ice fishermen. Some shanties are more of a home away from home, complete with generators, kitchenettes, beds, and even satellite TV.



ICE FISHING TIP-UP a small flag rigged to this device pops up when a fish has taken the bait. (Image Credit: Red L Sports)

ICE FISHING TIPS, FACTS, AND HISTORY

- 1) Pike:** To catch a Pike, try the end of the season when they migrate from winter deepwater to shallow spawning bays. Big pike are attracted to vertically jigged rattle baits. Flutter spoons are similarly enticing.
- 2) Perch:** Perch are finicky fish. They do not always feel the desire to eat, like humans. But sometimes it is a matter of what food is being offered. Some perch like worms, some like shrimp and some like minnows. Also, sun position is important to a perch. Middle of the day or night might not be attractive feeding times to perch.
- 3) Walleye:** To lure in a Walleye, try record angler Grant McAllister's 'cat on a string' technique. Draw the Walleye out of deeper areas by dangling the bait close to their head. Keep the Walleye's attention by shaking the bait until it eats it.
- 4) Quick Thinking:** Watch out for thin ice! New ice is normally stronger than old is. White ice is not as strong as clear ice. Ice near shore is normally weaker than that in the middle of the lake. But, do not be fooled! Booming and cracking ice is not necessarily dangerous.
- 5) Ancient Ways:** Long, long ago, fish hooks were made from animal bones and lines made from animal hair. Native Americans used spears to stab their fish.



Pike.



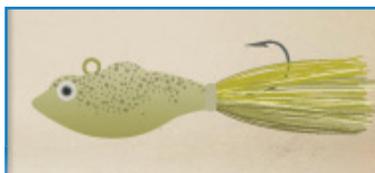
Perch.



Walleye.



FLUTTER SPOON. A type of bait that mimics the actions of a minnow. The wriggling motions enhance the appearance of colorful scales on this metal lure. (Image credit: Fish USA)



JIG BAIT WITH RATTLE. These lures have metal heads and a tail. The tail can be made of a variety of material such as animal hair, plastic, feathers, or rubber. Sometimes a fisherman hides a little extra yummy treat to entice a fish such as pork rinds. (Image Credit: Take Me Fishing)

WISCONSIN CULTURE

What makes a cheesehead? Hospitality, endurance, friendliness, and diligence— these are the generally accepted qualities of a Wisconsinite, but here are some lesser known facts about our shared passions and history.



AARON ROGERS. Quarterback for the Green Bay Packers. Born in California, but Rodgers has become a true Wisconsinite, publicly cheering on the UW Madison Badgers men's basketball team as they fought their way through the 2015 Big Ten Championship. (Photo Credit: *International Business Times*)



CHEESE CURDS. They are thought to have been discovered accidentally by a nomad traveling in a Middle Eastern desert. The extreme heat had curdled the milk he brought along, and yet, it was still delicious!



FISH FRY. A Friday tradition, complete with potato pancakes, applesauce, tartar sauce, rye bread, French fries, and coleslaw. Originating from Wisconsin's Catholic heritage and the state's proximity to the Great Lakes, fish fries picked up steam in the 1920s and 30s when local pubs were trying to make money when alcohol sales were prohibited.



ZEBRA MUSSELS are a damaging aquatic invasive species found in Wisconsin waterways. Zebra Mussels disrupt the native ecosystem by smothering other mussel species, depleting food supplies from other organisms, living in tall grass that interferes with boating and swimming, and clogging industrial intake pipes. (Photo Credit: *National Agricultural Library*)



DAIRY COWS. The following statistics come from the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service:

Number of Dairy Cows in WI= 1,280,000
Av. Number of Cows / Dairy Farm= 130
Tot. Monthly Milk Production in WI= 2.4 bil. lbs.
Monthly Milk Production / Cow= 215 gallons
Daily Milk Production / Cow= 7 gallons of milk



MARTIN MINE, BENTON, WI. Wisconsin is nicknamed the "Badger State," but this refers not to the state animal but to its early miners who often lived, not in houses, but in temporary caves cut into the hillsides.



A BADGER, the Wisconsin state animal.



PICKLED EGGS. Start by hard boiling eggs. Then set them in a container of boiled vinegar and water. Some optional ingredients are: beet juice, cinnamon, brown sugar.



LEINENKUGEL BEER LABEL. Since the early 1800's, due in part to the influence of German immigrants, Wisconsin had a thriving beer brewing industry. It was practically a requirement that each community had at least one brewery. At its peak, Wisconsin boasted over 300 breweries. Sadly, Prohibition decimated that number, and Wisconsin brewing is slowly recovering, though the number has yet to top 200. (Photo Credit: *Leinenkugels.net*)

ERNIE'S GUYS ON ICE PLAY GUIDE QUIZ SHOW!

HELLO AND WELCOME TO OUR VERSION OF ERNIE'S HALF TIME QUIZ. CHALLENGE YOUR FRIEND, NEIGHBOR, OR PARTNER TO ANSWER SOME OF THE WISCONSIN FACTS IN THE QUIZ BELOW.

QUESTION #1

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WAS **NOT** A HARDSHIP FOR SETTLERS IN DOOR COUNTY?

- A) Being located so far north without highways made it difficult to keep supplies stocked.
- B) The cost of shipping out goods would often cut into any profit.
- C) The Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) kept everyone awake at night.
- D) River boats often had a hard time maneuvering the waters in winter.
- E) The war in 1856 kept any immigrants and business from the region.

QUESTION #2

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WERE DOMINANT OR INFLUENTIAL NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES IN THE REGION?

- A) Potawatomi
- B) Winnebago (or Ho-Chunk)
- C) Ojibwa
- D) Sauk
- E) All of the above

QUESTION #3

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS **NOT** TRUE ABOUT THE DOOR COUNTY ISLANDS?

- A) Door County is comprised of a chain of three islands.
- B) Once called the Potawatomi Islands, they are now known as the Grand Traverse Islands.
- C) Sturgeon Bay is a peninsula.
- D) Both A and C
- E) Door County is comprised of a chain of 5 islands.

QUESTION #4

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS **NOT** A TYPICAL INGREDIENT FOR PICKLED EGGS?

- A) Soft Boiled Eggs
- B) Bratwurst
- C) Cheese-Curds
- D) Beer
- E) All of the above

QUESTION #5

WHICH IS **TRUE** OF THESE WISCONSIN FAVORITES?

- A) Rennin is the enzyme used to help curdle milk, creating cheese.
- B) Wisconsin was considered a Beer state before it came to be known as a Dairy state.
- C) Bratwurst literally translates to "meat without waste."
- D) All of the above

QUESTION #6

WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE HORSE JACOB LEINENKUGEL USED TO HELP DELIVER HIS BEER?

- A) Bob
- B) Kate
- C) Duke
- D) Daisy
- E) Elsa

THANK YOU FOR PLAYING OUR QUIZ! IF YOU ENJOYED THIS, THEN YOU ARE IN FOR A WHOLE LOT MORE FUN DURING THE SHOW. AFTER INTERMISSION, ERNIE MC'S HIS OWN QUIZ SHOW AND AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION IS HIGHLY ENCOURAGED.

WISCONSIN LOCALES MENTIONED IN THE PLAY

Wisconsin is almost another character in *Guys on Ice*. Take a peek at the history of some of the places mentioned in the play.

Marinette, WI

The Algonquin tribe, aka the “wild rice people,” are the earliest known residents of this area. French-Canadian competition among fur traders brought the first white settlers. The city is said to be named after a Queen Marinette, a Native American common-law wife of one trader, William Farnsworth, who was a successful fur trader.

STURGEON BAY, WI

Jean Nicolet came to Sturgeon Bay to trade with Native American tribes. In 1835, Increase Claflin became first permanent settler in Door County as a fur trader. In the 1880s the opening of the Sturgeon Bay and Lake Michigan canals and the establishment of a railroad helped with goods transportation between Green Bay and Sturgeon Bay.

CHIPPEWA FALLS, WI

The location of Leinenkugel’s Beer company. Chippewa Falls dates back to 1836 when the first saw mill was built in the area by Jean Brunet.



The fair Indian maiden who adorns the Leinenkugel corporate logo.
(Photo Credit: Leinenkugels.net)

ALGOMA, WI

In 1879, the city was formally named Algoma, an Indian name, meaning “park of flowers.” Known as the salmon and trout capital of the Midwest, Algoma boasts a strong and vital charter fishing industry along with manufacturing plants that produce everything from hammocks to labels, doors to mops.



Algoma, WI. (Photo Credit: Algoma Chamber of Commerce)

ABOUT OUR PRODUCTION



The set dressing (props onstage that are not handled by the actors) comes from shops in Door County to lend even more authenticity to the story.

Snowmobile suits just do not come like they used to. You will not find Marvin and Lloyd's particular brand in stores anymore—which is why they have not been updated since the beginning of the production! You will still find the originals in the costume box of the show.

Though snowmobile suits have not been updated, there are two celebrity nods that have been. The worshipping of Brett Favre has been changed to Aaron Rodgers and Marvin now compares himself to George Clooney rather than the original, Mel Gibson.

Much of the dialogue was inspired by interviews that Fred Heide conducted with local Door County ice fishermen. In fact, some lines from those interview tapes were put directly into the play!

YOU KNOW YOU ARE FROM WISCONSIN IF...

Play this game with a partner or on your own to see how similar your pronunciations and word-choice match the general Wisconsin population.

1.) How do you pronounce the opposite of Uncle?

If you said "ANT," you are like 77% of Wisconsinites.

2.) How do you pronounce the substance created when sugar is heated and turns brown? Also used to coat apples to make a tasty fall treat.

If you said, "CAR-mel" with 2 syllables, you are like 70% of Wisconsinites.

3.) How do you pronounce the state that is home to Orlando and Tallahassee?

If you said, "FLOOR-ih-dah" as in "sore," then you are like 83% of Wisconsinites.

4.) What do you call food that you buy at a restaurant, but then eat at home?

If you said, "take-out," you are like 51% of Wisconsinites. 13% say "carry-out" and 33% use the terms interchangeably.



James Kaplan, the original composer for *Guys on Ice* will play the piano for this production!

In Fred Heide's research into Door County, he discovered a newspaper article announcing the performance of Gypsy Rose Lee, a vaudeville actress, known for her striptease. This inspired a song for *Guys on Ice* that was eventually deleted.



GYSPY ROSE LEE, a famous burlesque performer whose memoirs inspired the musical *Gypsy*.

Fred Alley, the writer, did not like to pretend that a play was not a play, which is why the piano accompaniment is in full view of the audience and the transformation of the shanty is done by Marvin and Lloyd. Originally, the piano accompanist also played Ernie.

THE WISCONSIN ACCENT

The Wisconsin accent is an important part of the play *Guys on Ice*, though linguists would argue that the 'up-nort' twang does not belong solely to the Wisconsinites. In fact, they would say Minnesota, eastern North Dakota, South Dakota, and north Wisconsin speak "Upper Midwestern English." For instance, replacing "there" with "der" is very common in cities that were founded by immigrants who did not have an equivalent for the "th" sound (thank you, Germans). You can attribute the long 'o' sound and the phrase 'uff da' to our Scandinavian ancestors, who were more populous in Minnesota, which accounts for their strong and longer 'o's.' When you put people in cities, language quickly merges and becomes less distinct. The true accents are found in rural, more sparsely populated areas, as in Sturgeon Bay where *Guys on Ice* is set.

5.) What is a slang term for something that is diagonally across from you?

If you said, "kitty-corner," you are like 87% of Wisconsinites

6.) How do you pronounce a 25 cent piece?

If you pronounce it with a "kw," then you are like 62% of Wisconsinites. 29% pronounce it "COR-ter."

FEATURED ARTIST: JAMES KAPLAN, COMPOSER

"There is a certain kind of mythology to shows like this," begins James Kaplan, composer for *Guys on Ice*, speaking about a musical he wrote with the late Fred Alley more than a decade ago. With a tagline like, "An Ice-Fishing Musical Comedy," we are talking about a very particular kind of mythology – entrenched in the Wisconsin north woods and dearly beloved by those who are touched by the humor and heart of the Midwestern "anymen," Lloyd and Marvin.

For a guy without an ice fishing background, Kaplan sure knows a lot about it now. He universalizes the ice fishing experience by saying, "like a lot of things we do, ice fishing is an excuse to get away from things, drink a beer, and chat." And that is just what *Guys on Ice* is all about.

Kaplan and Fred started writing together six years before *Guys on Ice*, and developed a collaborative working relationship. "Fred was a great lyricist," says Kaplan, "...but he keeps his writing open. When you see a stage instruction that says 'insert brilliant dance break here' actors normally want a little more!"

Their writing relationship spanned many musicals, most of them originally written for American Folklore Theatre (now the Northern Lights Theatre). *Guys on Ice* was no exception, other than the fact that it caught the attention of The Milwaukee Repertory Theater where it was brought into heavy rotation at the Stackner Cabaret and Stiemke Studio throughout multiple seasons.

The inspiration for *Guys on Ice* came from the sesquicentennial commemoration of Wisconsin's statehood. Artists were challenged to create a new work that celebrated the spirit of Wisconsin, and what better medium than ice fishing?

Guys on Ice has evolved from its original iteration. When Oregon Cabaret Theater wanted to take it on, they requested a two-act show because of their company's intermission model. Fred Alley revived a scene that had fallen on the cutting room floor and added the half-time show that Ernie the Moocher hosts. When Kaplan first read the half-time show, he "literally fell out of my chair laughing."

Kaplan (cheekily) says he first began playing piano, "just because there was a piano in the house." His father had taken some music theory courses at Tufts and taught him a few music theory basics. Kaplan was hooked. By the time he was 18, he had written a musical that was then produced at Rutgers University. "I come at the music in a very mathematical way... It is a great pleasure to take a good lyric and fit it to music," says Kaplan.

He got his start on the east coast, originally from New Jersey, but has lived in Wisconsin now for 20 years. Moving to Wisconsin from California, where he was then located, was a big jump. He expressed doubts about Door County's advertising slogan, "The Cape Cod of the Midwest!" but given enough time, has come to love the dairy-state, saying, "real life is more possible here."

Kaplan says that "The One That Got Away" is his favorite song in *Guys on Ice*. "These are guys that if you asked them to talk about their feelings they would not know what to do, so they have to take a fish metaphor and use it to talk about the state of Lloyd's marriage."

The great thing about *Guys on Ice* is that it is incredibly relatable. It has played to sold-out theaters all across the nation. "People have this appetite for it," an appetite that has not waned for over a decade, which is good since Kaplan dropped a few hints about the possibility of a sequel... we will keep our fishing rods crossed!



Fred Alley (left) and James Kaplan (right) in Door County.

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VISITING THE REP

Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Patty and Jay Baker Theater Complex is located in the Milwaukee Center downtown at the corner of Wells and Water Streets. The building was formerly the home of the Electric Railway and Light Company.

The Ticket Office is visible on the left upon entering the Wells Street doors. The Stackner Cabaret is located on the second level and can be accessed via the escalator or elevator.



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