



For immediate release
September 21, 2009

Civilian Conservation Corps Back to Work at Whitnall Park

Musical Theatre at Boerner Gardens Celebrates Legacy of 1930's Program

MILWAUKEE, WI— The “can-do” attitude of the historic Depression era is brought to life in *Camp We-Kan-Tak-It*, an original musical comedy created by Milwaukee Public Theatre and Voices Theater. The multi-media show about Wisconsin’s Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) will be performed in Milwaukee at the Boerner Botanical Gardens in Whitnall Park, one of Wisconsin’s early CCC camp sites, on October 15 (for school groups) and at 2:00 and 7:00 pm on Friday, October 16 (public shows).

“We Can Take It” was the national slogan for the Civilian Conservation Corps, one of the well-known “alphabet soup” of public works programs created by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. From 1933 to 1942, the CCC gave jobs to three million unemployed young men, brought relief to their families, and helped conserve America's natural resources.

Based on Wisconsin CCC camp newspapers, *Camp We-Kan-Tak-It* incorporates original photographs, drawings, songs, and stories from the 1930’s, bringing to life the reality many young men faced during the Depression and emphasizing the positive environmental effects of the project. Audiences may discover a hidden legacy of family members who served in the CCC but never shared their stories. Post-show discussions with historians Michael Gordon (2 pm, Oct. 16) and John Gurda (7 pm, October 16) will give audiences additional opportunities to reflect on how this experience relates to contemporary environmental concerns.

Boerner Botanical Gardens is within Whitnall Park at 9400 Boerner Drive, Hales Corners. Tickets are \$8 in advance/\$10 at the door/\$5 children, seniors, and those with disabilities, with a 20% discount for groups of 10 or more. An optional dinner catered by Bartolotta’s is available on Friday, October 16, at 4:00 pm and 5:30 pm for a separate fee. Please contact Bartolotta’s directly at 414-525-5635. For show tickets and information on group sales contact MPT at 414-347-1685.

The play opens as Geezer and Smitty, two enrollees at Camp We-Kan-Tak-It, prepare songs and sketches for the camp’s Entertainment Night. They share their experiences surviving the Great Depression and working to restore Wisconsin’s forests, express gratitude for the CCC wages which help their families, and express the good-hearted humor found in everyday camp life. Songs such as “CCC Wizard Oil,” “Debate a Skunk,” “Three Cheers for F.D.R.” and “Hunt the Snipe” entertain while offering an historical perspective for comparison with the hard times facing America today.

Camp We-Kan-Tak-It is a collaboration of Rogers Keene, Mary Schueller, Barbara Leigh, David Peterson, Jim Pekol and Patrick Porten, and is co-directed by Rogers Keene and Patrick Porten. The show is touring in September and October to Portage, Vilas, Price, Marathon, Ashland and Dane Counties to help raise awareness of the CCC and stimulate discussion about its enduring legacy. An extensive resource guide is included. For details on the venues outside of Milwaukee, contact k.keene@charter.net or 715-748-5218 or see www.milwaukeepublictheatre.org.

The project is partially funded through grants from the Wisconsin Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Wisconsin Humanities Council supports public programs that engage the people of Wisconsin in the exploration of human cultures, ideas and

(more)

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values. Additional support comes from the Triskeles Foundation, the Plum Creek Foundation, the Wisconsin Arts Board with funding from the State of Wisconsin, the National Endowment for the Arts, Milwaukee County CAMPAC, the United Performing Arts Fund, and Milwaukee County Parks.

Milwaukee Public Theatre is a professional not-for-profit touring company that increases awareness of current social issues, promotes cultural diversity, and provides healing arts resources. Voices Theater is a non-profit, grassroots community-based theatre of human relations, which writes and produces original drama on issues of social concern.

Milwaukee Performances:

Friday, October 16, 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm
Boerner Botanical Gardens, Whitnall Park
9400 Boerner Drive, Hales Corners
Tickets: \$8 advance/\$10 at the door/\$5 children, seniors, those with disabilities
20% discount for groups of 10 or more
Optional dinner catered by Bartolotta's: Friday, October 16, 4:00 pm and 5:30 pm ; separate fee
Contact Bartolotta's Restaurant: 414-525-5635

School shows: Thursday, October 15, 10:00 am and 12:30 pm; Friday, October 16, 10:00 am

For tickets contact MPT: 414-347-1685

Making Wisconsin Home Statewide Tour

Most shows are free ... Donations are appreciated

Friday, September 18, 7:00 pm
The Garage at Emy J's
1009 First Street, Stevens Point

Thursday, September 24, 7:00 pm
First Congregational United Church of Christ
105 N. First Street, Eagle River

Friday, September 25, 7:00 pm
United Methodist Church, Spirit
in the Social Center built by CCC
10 miles east of Ogema on Hwy 86,
on the south side of the road

Saturday, September 26, 5:00 pm
Stoney Acres Farm
7002 Rangeline Road, Athens

Saturday, October 3; 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm
Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center
Martin Hanson Theater
29270 County Highway G, Ashland
Sponsored by Wisconsin Historical Society

Wednesday, October 7, 7:00 pm
Mazomanie Community Building
9 Brodhead St., Mazomanie
Sponsored by Mazomanie Lions Club

Thursday, October 8, 7:00 pm
First Congregational United Church of Christ
1609 University Ave., Madison

Sunday, October 11, 3:00 pm
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
321 N. Park Ave., Medford