



### Voices Theater

141 S. Third St., Medford, WI 54451  
715-748-5218 k.keene@charter.net

a non-profit, grassroots community-based theatre of human relations, which writes and produces original dramas on issues of social concern.

### Milwaukee Public Theatre

626 E. Kilbourn Ave, Suite 802, Milwaukee, WI 53202  
414-347-1685 www.milwaukeepublictheatre.org

a professional non-profit touring company that increases awareness of current social issues, promotes cultural diversity, and provides healing arts resources.

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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 values. Additional support comes from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation Abert Fund, the Wisconsin Arts Board with funding from the State of Wisconsin, the National Endowment for the Arts, Milwaukee County CAMPAC and the United Performing Arts Fund. The performance in Milwaukee is co-sponsored by the Milwaukee Housing Authority.



A musical comedy about life in Wisconsin's Civilian Conservation Corps

# Camp We-Kan-Tak-It

## Making Wisconsin Home Statewide Tour

Saturday, May 29, 2:00 PM, UW-Arboretum, Madison

Saturday, June 19, 7:30 PM, Devil's Lake State Park  
Outdoor Theater, Baraboo

Saturday, July 17, 10:00 AM, Wisconsin Interstate State Park  
Ice Age Center Auditorium, St. Croix Falls

Saturday, July 17, 3:30 PM, St. Croix Festival Theatre, St. Croix Falls

Thursday, July 22, 12:15 PM Performance, 1:15 PM Panel  
Washington Park Senior Center, Milwaukee  
Bus tour of WPA/CCC Milwaukee sites

Saturday, August 28, 7:30 PM, Devil's Lake State Park  
Outdoor Theater, Baraboo

Saturday & Sunday, September 4 & 5, 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM  
Old World Wisconsin, Eagle

Discover the hidden legacy of the CCC and WPA in your family history!



“We Can Take It” was the national slogan for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), 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.

That historic era and “can-do” attitude are brought to life in the original musical comedy production, **Camp We-Kan-Tak-It**, by Voices Theater and Milwaukee Public Theatre.

Based on Wisconsin CCC camp newspapers, the show incorporates original pictures and 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 also discover a hidden legacy of family members who served in the CCC but never shared their stories.

### Humanists and historians for post-show discussions

Mary Schueller, historian and author, all shows  
 Robert Moore, historian and author, UW Arboretum  
 Frank Court, emeritus professor, Arboretum historian

### July 22nd Milwaukee Panel Discussion Leaders

John Gurda, Milwaukee historian  
 Dr. Lois M. Quinn, Senior Scientist, Employment and Training Institute, School of Continuing Education, UW-Milwaukee  
 Chris Litzau, Executive Director, Milwaukee Community Service Corps  
 Donald Sykes, Chief Executive Officer, Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board

Others not confirmed at press time.

### Thank You

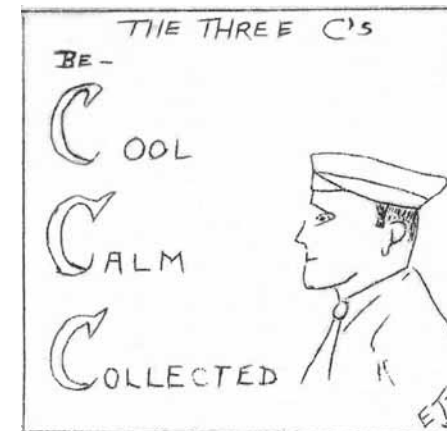
Wisconsin Historical Society, Center for Research Libraries; Ruth Gudinas; Frank Knasinski for photos; Maryo Gard Ewell; Bob Duncan, 94 years old, Camp Trump Lake, Co. 643, Soperton; Linda Mittlestadt; Dave Peterson; Larry Meiller and Jim Packard, Wisconsin Public Radio interview; Medford radio stations WKEB FM/WIGM AM, radio interview; Mark Berglund, Medford Star News interview/article; Shirley Dommer Walczak, Botanical Gardens Director, Boerner Botanical Gardens; Jeff Baudry, Marketing Director, Milwaukee County Parks; Guy Smith, Chief of Operations, Milwaukee County Parks; Laurie Muench Albano, author of Milwaukee County Parks; Jim Goulee, President of Park People; Dr. Jill Florence Lackey, Cultural Anthropologist; Anthony Perez, Secretary-Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee.



### Primary Sources for Show Content: 39 Camp Newspapers

Camp Mt. Horeb, Co.1694, Mt. Horeb  
 Camp Nine Mile, Co. 641, Eagle River  
 Camp Blue Lake, Co. 654, Minocqua  
 Camp Honey Creek, Co. 656, Milwaukee  
 Camp Ontario, Co. 3664, Ontario  
 Camp Madison, Co. 2670, Madison  
 Camp Blue Mound, Co. 2615, Milwaukee  
 Camp Haywood, for transients, Haywood  
 Camp Devil’s Lake, Co. 2669, Baraboo  
 Camp Whitnall Park, Co. 636, Hales Corners  
 Camp Whitnall Park, Co. V-2625, Hales Corners  
 Camp Arbutus, Co. 655, Arbutus  
 Camp Sailor Lake, Co. 651, Ashland  
 Camp Mineral Lake, Co. 638, Marengo  
 Camp Taylor Lake, Co. 3653, Ashland  
 Camp Clam Lake, Co. 653, Clam Lake  
 Camp Horse Shoe, Co. 3653, Ashland  
 Camp Brinks, Co. 3653, Washburn  
 Camp Pigeon, Co. 640, Drummond  
 Camp Delta, Co. 2622, Drummond  
 Camp Mondeaux River, Co. 1603, Westboro  
 Camp Trump Lake, Co. 643, Soperton  
 Camp La Valle, Co. 2668, La Valle  
 Sparta CCC District, Sparta  
 Camp Upson, Co. 1607, Upson  
 Camp Mercer, Co. 660, Manitowish  
 Camp New Wood, Co. 2616, Merrill  
 Eyes and Ears of the 15th Forestry District: 2 pages from Companies 636 Hales Corners, 656 Honey Creek, 1644 Sheridan Park, 2615 West Allis

Headquarters Company CCC, Sparta  
 Camp Riley Creek, 12th Forestry District, Fifield  
 Camp Estabrook, Co. 1699, Milwaukee  
 Camp Perkinstown, Co. 1692, Perkinstown  
 Chequamegon National Forest  
 “The Chequamegon”, Park Falls  
 Camp Connors Lake, Co. 1610, Phillips  
 Camp Rusk, Co. 3652, Glen Flora  
 Sparta CCC District paper & 6th Corp Area Annual (190 pages)  
 Camp Elcho, Co. 657, Elcho  
 Headquarters Company CCC, Sparta  
 Camp Rib Mountain, Co. 3649, Wausau



Picture from the Dugout, Company 2625-V, Hales Corners, WI, Camp Whitnall Park newspaper drawing, Vol.2, No. 4, Pg. 4, April, 1939. Artist: ETZ Heinz. Courtesy of Wisconsin Historical Society.

## BIOS

**Rogers Keene.** I run Voices Theater out of Medford, Wisconsin. I enjoy collaborating with individuals and social agencies to write and produce grassroots theater concerning social concerns. This has included a play on hospice; another on Darfur. I worked closely with Barbara Leigh, Mary Schueller and David Peterson on our musical. From 39 camps in Wisconsin, I gathered newspapers, which chronicled the men's camp life and their work projects with our natural resources. It was goose-bumpy time. My colleagues and I based all the scenes and songs on primary source writings in these newspapers. For example, when the character, Smitty, said that Manny spotted a fire from the fire tower, I had read that in a camp paper. What I found in my research of the camp papers was the similarity of experiences among camps. This allowed us to create for our musical a composite camp, **Camp We-Kan-Tak-It**, which faithfully gives you a look at what these young men went through.

**Mary Schueller.** Before my mother passed away in March 2000, she handed me a small box containing my father's CCC patches and said, "Do something special with these." At the time, I did not know enough information to tell the story that went with the patches and a handful of family pictures of my dad in snowshoes at Copper Falls State Park. That's when I realized I wanted my kids to know what their lives would have been like had they been born in 1912. I wanted them to know what men like my dad did for this country so their Depression years of sacrifice would never be forgotten. After ten years of research, my dad's story is told in *The Soldiers of Poverty* that I self-published ([www.rusticbooks.net](http://www.rusticbooks.net)) in 2005.

In a collaborative effort with the Mellen Area Historical Society, I wrote the document and gave a presentation before the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Board in September 2005, to petition that Copper Falls State Park be listed on the State and National Registers. Now recognized for its contribution to conservation and tourism of Northern Wisconsin, Copper Falls is the first park site in Wisconsin's State Park system to be listed for its Rustic Architecture from the CCC and WPA-era. This documentation is found in my book, ***Rustic Reflections of Copper Falls State Park.***

Much of my "retirement" in Richfield, WI, is spent as a public speaker on the CCC in Wisconsin and writer of biographical historic plays. As a contributing writer of ***Camp We-Kan-Tak-It***, it is with great joy to honor with song and laughter all the men like my dad who left their imprint of CCC service upon our heritage and our landscape.



U.S. Forest Service Training Booklet, Woodsmanship for the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1937. Public Domain.

# Camp We-Kan-Tak-It

A musical comedy about life in  
Wisconsin's Civilian Conservation Corps

## PROLOGUE

Aniishiik: "We are grateful" spoken by Dorothy Davids, Mohican.  
Our Mother Earth spoken by Misty Cook, Mohican, Oneida.

## SCENES & SONGS

1. No One is Hiring—  
"Poor Man's Heaven" written by Carson Robison  
"Three Cheers for FDR"
2. Classes—"Time to Go to School"
3. Food—"Power House Candy Bar"
4. Rookie Pranks—"Hunt the Snipe"
5. Magical Medicine—"CCC Wizard Oil"
6. Win a Ford
7. Sweat and Toil—"New Deal"
8. Safety & Clarence—"Rattles Like Tin"
9. Girlfriends & Clarence—"Bad Luck"
10. Auction—adapted from Triple A Plowed Under
11. Human Pests—"Debate a Skunk"
12. Fire Fighting—"Fire—A Tale to Tell"
13. Fire Tower
14. 1983 Commemorative Stamp
15. Last Will
16. "Time's Near Up"
17. "Shanty in Old Shanty Town" (Bob Duncan goes back 75 years to remember singing this song.)
18. Finale—"We-Kan-Tak-It"

Geezer . . . . . Patrick Porten  
Smitty . . . . . Samuel Porten

Please stay for a post-show discussion with historians and humanists

## Who Did What

Script Collaboration . . . . .	Rogers Keene, Mary Schueller, Barbara Leigh, David Peterson, James Pekol and Patrick Porten
Co-Directors . . . . .	Rogers Keene and Patrick Porten
Music Compositions . . . . .	David Peterson ("Poor Man's Heaven" Carson Robison)
Song Lyrics . . . . .	David Peterson, Mary Schueller and Rogers Keene
Orchestration and Sound Recording . . . . .	James Pekol
Visual Research . . . . .	Rogers Keene and Mary Schueller
Visual Design . . . . .	Rogers Keene and Patrick Porten
Actors . . . . .	Patrick Porten and Samuel Porten
Research of camp newspapers . . . . .	Rogers Keene and Mary Schueller
CCC Historian . . . . .	Mary Schueller
Resource Guide . . . . .	Mary Schueller
Graphic Design . . . . .	Linda Beckstrom

## Making Wisconsin Home Statewide Tour

### Thank you to these sponsors

Jennifer Skolaski  
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Steven Schmelzer  
Devil's Lake State Park

Julie Fox  
Interstate State Park

Dannette Olsen  
St. Croix Festival Theater

Mary Ann Hug  
Washington Park Senior Center

Dawn St. George  
Old World Wisconsin



Geezer



Smitty

## BIOS

**Patrick Porten** (Geezer) is a DJ/Copywriter/Sports Announcer with WKEB/WIGM Radio in Medford, Wisconsin. He earned a BA in Comprehensive Theatre from the UW-Eau Claire in 1985. In addition to acting, Patrick has also worked backstage at the Guthrie Theatre, Chanhassen Dinner Theater, Theater in the Round and performed with CLIMB, all in the Twin Cities area. He is a co-founder and current President of the Medford Area Community Theatre. Patrick lives with his wife Lisa and five boys, Sam, Ben, Sean, Ian and Colin, just outside Medford.

**Samuel Porten** (Smitty) is a junior at UW-Stevens Point, majoring in vocal music. Sam has appeared on stage as Joseph in "Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" and as a sailor in "Anything Goes" with the Medford Area Community Theatre. Plus many appearances on stage at the Medford Area Senior High School including Snoopy in "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown", "Escanaba in da Moonlight", "The Fantasticks" and "The Boys Next Door". A highlight of Sam's young music career was a performance in April of 2007 with the Medford Senior High School Concert Choir at Carnegie Hall in New York.

**David Peterson**, the composer for the show's music and lyricist for many of the songs, has been involved since the 1960s with research, writing and music preparation for musical stage productions based on Wisconsin History, Folklore, and traditional music. He was the Director of Production for the Wisconsin Idea Theater from 1962-72, and he was the Founder/Director of the Heritage Ensemble from 1970-1990. He has entertained audiences with some 40 productions, which had over 4,000 performances state-wide. His Wisconsin Indian Story Theater production, "Dibajimo", which was performed in 1993 and '94 for an estimated 35,000 school children, was supported in part by the Wisconsin Humanities Council. A side note: Rogers Keene was Gene Shepard in David's musical "Hodag", and he is happy that he could work with Rogers again on this project.