

**For July 8, 2009**

**By Doc Heide**

Recently I was chatting with Dave Hudson, who wrote the book and lyrics for two of this summer's AFT musicals, "Cheeseheads" and "Muskie Love". I asked Dave how "Main-Travelled Roads" was doing.

This was our fall show two seasons ago, with music by Paul Libman. It won the Richard Rodgers Award for Best New American Musical, and Dave and Paul actually got to chat with Stephen Sondheim when they received the award in New York.

To my surprise, Dave said there'd been only one production of the show since then: in Hudson, Ohio (not named for any of his progenitors). He's also had no luck getting it published.

### **Packer Fan Productions**

I told Dave this was similar to what's going on with shows Lee Becker and I have written with Jimmy Kaplan, which have had 7 community productions. A major regional theatre wants to do "Packer Fans from Outer Space", but the cast size is so big they'd need a sponsor to put up \$100,000. So there have been no professional productions outside AFT.

I figured this was because Lee and I never promote our shows. But Dave sends out about four scripts a month to artistic directors around the US, and still hasn't gotten much interest.

I said Lee and I sometimes think we should get an agent. Dave responded that there's not a single agent representing any musical theatre writer in the Midwest. The ones in New York and LA won't take us on because there isn't enough profit. And theatres are loath to mount a show that isn't famous already.

At this point in our conversation it occurred to me that getting our shows known outside Door County was kinda like the folks in “Cheeseheads” trying to win the lottery. It’s not impossible, but it’s certainly not why you do it.

Why would we even care? Well, perfecting a musical can take hundreds of hours. We each get a teeny percentage of royalty, which allows us time away from our day jobs to write.

### **Why We Write**

But the point is, we do this for other reasons. Imagine the joy of birthing an idea, nurturing it over several years, working with brilliant colleagues to put it on its feet, and performing in it. It’s as if you and your friends built a rocket ship out of baling wire and tin cans, then flew it to the moon.

But the biggest reason we write is for you. The grudging praise of big-city critics pales in comparison to the peal of your laughter. Knowing your family can see low-cost musical theatre together is our constant inspiration.

And as long as you keep coming, we’ll keep bringing moonbeams to the stage.

By the way, please come to our July 12 benefit concert featuring Memphis string wizards Eric Lewis and Tommy Burroughs!

See you under the stars.

AFT performs at the Peninsula State Park Theatre Monday-Saturday through August 29. The world premiere ***Cheeseheads, the Musical*** plays Monday at 8 pm, Wednesday at 6 pm, Thursday at 8 pm and Saturday at 8:30pm. ***Sunsets & S’mores***, a centennial celebration of Peninsula State Park, plays 8 pm on Tuesday and 6 pm on Saturday. ***Muskie Love*** returns on Wednesday at 8:30pm and Friday at 8 pm. Advanced and reserved tickets are available at [www.folkloretheatre.com](http://www.folkloretheatre.com), at 854-6117, at the AFT office in the Green Gables

Shops in North Ephraim, or at the box office at the theatre one hour prior to performance. A park sticker is not required in the theatre lot for the show.

Doc Heide is co-founder, playwright, and performer with American Folklore Theatre.