

Improv group 'disturbs' Shimmers' audiences

BY MELANIE BOLTHOUSE
Summer Guide editor

TRAVERSE CITY — Ever spend an evening stuffing marshmallows in your cheeks or pretending to interrogate someone?

The cast members of In Jest Seconds Productions do it every Monday and they are willing to let you watch.

The local improv company will be debuting "David

and Turner's Disturbing the Piece Improv 3" on June 7 at Shimmer's Nightclub in the Traverse City Holiday Inn.

Led by co-creators David Avis and Turner Sato, the troupe has been performing at Shimmer's for three years during the summer. The show is two hours of improvised games, much like those seen on the television show "Whose Line Is It Anyway?"

"We'll take what they do and pretty much amp it up," Avis said.

In Jest's games include "Alphabet," in which lines must start with a consecutive letter of the alphabet, and "Marshmallow," a scene where cast members try to make each other laugh.

"Every time someone laughs during a scene they are given a large marshmallow to hold in their cheeks without chewing or swallowing," Avis said. "Obvious hilarity is sure to ensue."

Many games involve guessing, with one or more actors acting out a scene in which everyone in the audience and remaining cast members may know a piece of information the other actors do not.

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Co-creators David Avis, top left, and Turner Sato, top right, will lead the cast in "Disturbing the Piece Improv 3."

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Shows take center stage

Mackinaw Center Stage Theatre offers new choices

BY FORREST KARBOWSKI
Record-Eagle Staff Writer

MACKINAW CITY—Residents and visitors to Mackinaw City have new choices in entertainment.

For the first time in its history, the Mackinaw Center Stage Theatre is offering three shows in one season. "The Best of Broadway," "Forever Plaid" and "Guys On Ice" will round out this year's musical selections.

"Forever Plaid" is just a natural to open with," Executive Producer Curt Wollen said. "It appeals to families, seniors and date night."

Plaid tells the story of a four-man vocal group from the 1950s who tragically die before their first performance.

However, this does not keep them down for long, and soon the group returns from heaven to perform again.

"Guys on Ice," originally written and performed in Wisconsin, portrays a day in the life of two ice fishermen.

"Guys on Ice" is a great choice as the season winds down to winter, especially with ice fishing so popular in the area," Wollen said.

Previously, the theatre has only offered one show every two years.

However, when it came under the direction of Compass Facility Management, Inc. in January, the theater took on

a more "aggressive strategy," said General Manager Ami Woods.

"We want to impress upon the locals that the theatre is really bringing in quality entertainment," Woods said.

"We have a goal—that every person who comes through the door enjoys it."

The schedule is not the only thing that has changed. The seating configuration has been revamped to allow easier access for disabled persons, and tickets can now be purchased both through the box office and Ticketmaster.

"The Best of Broadway" finished its run May 9. "Forever Plaid" plays through Aug. 1, and "Guys on Ice" will run Aug. 4-Oct. 24. For more information, visit www.mackinawcenterstagetheatre.com.

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