

OVER OUR HEAD PLAYERS AWARDS PLAYWRITING PRIZES

RACINE, WISCONSIN, MARCH 9, 2025: Over Our Head Players concluded the "2025 Snowdance® 10 Minute Comedy Festival" on Sunday by presenting the audience favorite Best in Snow prizes. Over the five week sold-out Snowdance run, each attendee played judge via their votes. The Best in Snow winning entry was *The Swamp Thing From Hell* by Wil Denson of Eau Claire, Wisconsin; second place went to *Dreamboat* by Daniel Emlyn-Jones of Oxford, United Kingdom; and third place went to *The Butt Dial* by Jeff Vlasak of Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin

After the final Snowdance performance Sunday, the audience voted for their favorites, just as audiences at each of the previous 25 performances had done. The final show's tally was added to the votes from throughout the run. Then, the Snowdance ensemble came together for the Closing Ceremonies.

This year's Snowdance performances were set at the historic Wind Point Lighthouse. After a crew of swashbuckling pirates flamboyantly danced to the music of John Denver, Snowdance announcers "Rex Jig" and "Eli Poon" welcomed each audience to the 21st year of competition. At the Closing Ceremonies, Rex and Eli were shockingly joined by the glorious "Chet Thespian" to

lead the 2025 Snowdance closing ceremonies. As Chet, Rex, and Eli described the action, Ellie Grace (Brandy Smith) from *Dreamboat* finally found her true love with Swamp Thing (A.J. Laird). Then the lights dimmed for the annual pageantry of the Dance of the Salmon. This year cast member Brad Kostreva began the dance dressed in his finest t-shirt before passing the salmon to the historic Wind Point Lighthouse (Jonathan Neustifter) who waltzed with the semi-fresh fish. Then, the ceremonial Snowdance snow cone was sealed away for next year's competition, and the company gathered around balloting supervisor Anna Clementi, who had the winning results sealed in a mayonnaise jar. A.J. Laird, who played Dick in *The Butt Dial*, accepted third place. Brandy Smith, who played Ellie Grace in *Dreamboat*, took second place on the podium. Finally, Ron Schulz, who played Charles Fairbanks, accepted first place for *The Talk*.

The \$500 first place Best in Snow award went to Wil Denson from Eau Claire, Wisconsin for *The Swamp Thing From Hell* which featured a small group of radio broadcasters gathered at a rural station to perform an over-the-top melodrama about a rampaging swamp monster. Second place was awarded to Daniel Emlyn-Jones of Oxford, United Kingdom for *Dreamboat* about two sisters from the Deep South who dream about the boys they'd like to take to the

high school prom. Third place went to Jeff Vlasak of Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin, for *The Butt Dial* about a man who accidentally butt dials his wife leading her to misconstrue his conversation planning a 10th anniversary surprise. Second place received \$200, and the third place award was \$100.

Managing Artistic Director Rich Smith looks back on this year's Snowdance and reflects on how far the competition has come over the past 21 years. "When we first started Snowdance, we were thrilled to receive around 100 scripts," Smith recalled. "This year, we were overwhelmed with a record-breaking 700+ entries from around the world! That huge response generated incredible quality scripts for production."

Snowdance has not only grown in submissions but also in popularity with audiences. "This year marked the fastest Snowdance has ever sold out, and we had the largest waiting list for tickets in our history," Smith noted. "It's amazing to see how much excitement this festival generates."

"As Snowdance has evolved, so too has our theatre," Smith continued. "This year, we've made major improvements to enhance the Snowdance experience for our wonderful patrons, including all-new seats, risers, a lighting grid, and a sound system."

Of course, the heart of Snowdance remains the actors and the scripts. "We are so proud to make Racine the home of the 10-minute comedy competition," Smith said. "We are very lucky to attract talented actors to Snowdance; Snowdance actors embrace the challenge of playing multiple characters, creating a tight ensemble in every sense." With Snowdance continuing to break records and evolve, one thing is certain—its foundation of great scripts, talented performers, and an engaged audience keeps it at the heart of the Racine theatre scene.

Snowdance was produced by an ensemble. The cast includes John Adams, Elizabeth Bitner, Kadie Kohls, Brad Kostreva, Mary Kveton, A. J. Laird, Jonathan Neustifter, Liz Poetsch, Michael Retzlaff, Ron Schulz, Brandy Smith, Rich Smith, Teri Stanley, and Melissa Zeien.

Diane Carlson, Nicholas Hoyt, and Rich Smith directed with Rich Smith also serving as artistic and production manager. Emily Ball served as stage managers with Elizabeth Bitner, Kadie Kohls, Teri Stanley, and Jonathan Neustifter as assistant stage managers. The staff includes Lori Adams, Janine Anderson, Skip Carlson, Anna Clementi, Amy Hernandez Maack, Parker Jones, Scott Lema, Anne Mollerskov, Mallory Olesen Willing, Wendy Schulz, Preston Smith, and Emily Sweetman.

The Snowdance Comedy Festival was sponsored by Minuteman Press.

Over Our Head Players operates the Sixth Street Theatre, Downtown Racine. A non-profit organization of volunteer theatrical talent from throughout Southeastern Wisconsin in their 33rd season, OOHPs focuses on contemporary comedies and original productions. OOHP will also present *Ride The Cyclone*, an OOHP special live Musical production, with music, lyrics, and book by Brooke Maxwell and Jacob Richmond in April then conclude their season with *The 39 Steps*, An Award Winning Comedy adapted by Patrick Barlow from the novel by John Buchan and film by Alfred Hitchcock, in May and June. For information, visit overourheadplayers.org or call the box office at (262) 632-6802.