

# PRESS RELEASE

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Media Requests

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## ***Big Top Chautauqua's Tent Show Radio featuring Michael Perry returning to Richland Center on April 18<sup>th</sup>!***

Richland Center, Wisconsin --- 'Culture Under Canvas' comes to Richland Center on Saturday April 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm at the Richland Center High School Auditorium with Tent Show Radio and Michael Perry! The show presented as the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Big Top Chautauqua community building fundraising partnership by event founders WRCO-AM-FM Radio and Neighborhood Housing Services of Southwest Wisconsin features *New York Times* bestselling author, humorist, songwriter, radio show host and amateur pig farmer, Michael Perry, along with the Big Top Chautauqua's Blue Canvas Orchestra and special musical guests to be announced. Tent Show Radio performances are packed with variety and a large 12 plus piece ensemble of performers and musicians and is popularly known as "The Carnegie Hall of Tent Shows"! **Tickets now available \$13 in Advance, \$15 at the door if available, the show sold out last year! – Online: [www.bigtop.org](http://www.bigtop.org) or Toll Free: 888-244-8368 or at Ed's Family Foods and Burnstad's Market in Richland Center and the Viroqua Food Coop.** *"Neighbors Helping Neighbors!" a free family friendly pre event with the public welcome will be held from 5:30-7:30 before the concert in Richland Center will feature food and a tribute gathering of displays by community service providers, more to be announced! Michael Perry will have a book signing after the show!*

Major and Champion Sponsors to date include: Schreiber Foods, The Richland Observer, Richland Rejuvenates, WRCO – AM- FM Radio and NHS of Southwest Wisconsin. 34 total sponsors have committed to the event to date. **The Big Top Chautauqua Sponsorship Campaign is continuing until February 1, according to Executive Director Terry Testolin who said, "We have some Major Sponsorships pending and are encouraging all Big Top supporters to become a Sponsor now. All contributions big and small help build the sustainability of this unique regional collaborative community fundraiser now celebrating 7 years of success and over \$60,000 reinvested in the community. Contributions are tax deductible helping 4 great community groups in one fell swoop! Call Terry at 647-4949 for more information"** Net proceeds of the Richland Center show supports Greater Richland Area Cancer Elimination (GRACE), the Richland County Veterans Honor Roll, the Richland School District Foundation and Neighborhood Housing Services of Southwest Wisconsin.

Since 1994 Tent Show Radio has been heard every week on 50-plus listener-supported radio stations across the United States and the world on the Internet. Each week's episode features a live performance recorded from Big Top Chautauqua's summer concert season along with a short monologue by Michael Perry from the "backstage dressing room with one-lonely-light bulb".

**Michael Perry, back by popular demand, who helped sell out the 757 seat packed Richland Center High School Auditorium last year has said,** “Taking Tent Show Radio on the road has been a blast...it’s a chance for folks who have maybe never made it to the tent to enjoy a taste of what’s been going on up at Big top Chautauqua for decades now. The live music, the stories, and the laughs combine for a straightforward, boots-on-the-ground good time. And as I like to say, it’s always fun for us to meet listeners and say thank you right to their face. Plus I get to see if any of my new jokes work!”

Perry’s bestselling memoirs include *Population 485, Visiting Tom, Truck and Coop*. His latest book, *From the Top*, is a collection of his Tent Show Radio monologues, and he recently composed the liner notes for the Blind boys of Alabama album “I’ll Find a Way.” His live humor albums include *Never stand Behind a Sneezing Cow and the Clodhopper Monologues*. Perry lives with his wife and two daughters in rural Wisconsin, where he serves on the local volunteer fire and rescue service.

The Blue Canvas Orchestra (BCO) is made up of a diverse group of musicians and singers and is known for their musical virtuosity and eclectic repertoire. The BCO is the “house band” at Lake Superior Big Top Chautauqua and has performed at the big blue tent throughout the past 27 summer concert seasons. Their music ranges from burning bluegrass to swing along with classical and Celtic influences.

Tent show Radio is produced by Lake Superior Big Top Chautauqua, a nonprofit performing arts organization located in Bayfield, Wisconsin that operates a 900 seat blue and pearl grey striped canvas tent theater presenting a 50-plus night summer season of variety shows, regional and national touring acts and original historical musicals.

Listeners can tune in every Saturday on Wisconsin Public Radio at 7PM CST to hear the program. The show is also available via free streaming and is now available as a podcast on iTunes. For more information call 1-888-Big-TENT or visit [www.tentshowradio.com](http://www.tentshowradio.com)

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✓ ***The first Chautauqua*** was a summer training program for Sunday school teachers in Chautauqua, New York in 1874. It eventually became a nationwide education movement that encompassed literature, music, economics, science, religion and public affairs. The movement took root in the small towns bringing culture to people who otherwise would have gone without it. Chautauquas died out in the 1920’s, but in their heyday, Teddy Roosevelt described them as “the most American thing about America.” Today, the magic of Lake Superior Big Top Chautauqua nestles comfortably next to its more modern cousins –radio, television and the internet –to tell stories of those who walked the land, stared at the stars and dreamed of what the next day would bring. The summer of 2015 will mark Big Top’s 30<sup>th</sup> season of producing and presenting *culture under the canvas*. Learn more about Big Top Chautauqua online at [www.bigtop.org](http://www.bigtop.org) [From Big Top Chautauqua fundraising letter, Nov. 11, 2014]

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