

BY: M. BUORAURO

Ned Ryerson and the Groundhogs are a staple on the Jersey Shore playing songs that everyone loves to sing along to. Whether it's a solo acoustic or full-band show, a good time is guaranteed.

Who are these Groundhogs?

Mike Konopka is Ned Ryerson of the Groundhogs, the self-proclaimed "tallest musician on the Jersey Shore." Standing at 6-feet-10, he is not the actor from the movie, Groundhog Day. Mike is the front man for the band as lead vocalist and guitar player. His musical influences are Sublime, Pepper, Rebellion, and Slightly Stoopid. Brian Lloyd is on keyboard and vocals. Brian's influences are Jay-Z, Biggie Smalls, and The Who. Pete DiCanto is lead guitar and vocals. Pete's list includes Led Zepplin, Guns N Roses, and Metallica. Next is Ryan Tierney on bass. Ryan's musical influences include Pantera, Bad Religion, and Rage Against the Machine. Finally, is drummer Tony Genovese. His list includes

leaving Ned, Brian and Ryan as the original members. "Pete and Tony joined the band about a year ago and we've been rolling ever since" says Mike. Although they all have "day" jobs, the members are serious musicians and practice very hard on their musical content. "We all really enjoy getting together to play music and it definitely shows".

"We just don't take ourselves too serious," Mike explains.

"We are a fun band and like to play a variety of music everyone knows," Mike continues. "That being said, we do add our own twist on some favorites. Some songs we like to "hog it up," where we'll change the tempo, or overall flow of a song. Not all of them however. We pick and choose to see what works for us and our fans."

The band's music has a little something for everyone. "We don't make set lists when we perform. We read the audience, what they respond well to, and we keep it going in that genre or something similar," Mike explains.

A few of the regular songs played at just about every show include: Chicken Fried, Uptown Funk, Shipping up to Boston, Glory Days, You May Be Right, Say It Ain't So, I Wanna Be Sedated, Santeria, and Mrs. Robinson.

"We have the "let's have fun" songs and the "I can't believe they're playing that song" songs," Mike says, "which include: Ghostbusters, La Bamba, Gangsta's Paradise, Fat Bottomed Girls, Just a Friend, and my personal favorites: The Tiger Song from The Hangover and Inside of You from the movie Forgetting Sarah Marshall."

The band has a lot of fun performing and the goal is for the fun to be carried over to the audience and set the atmosphere for the night. "We laugh, crack bad jokes on the mic, and hold music or band trivia/contests throughout our show," says Mike. "We have fun, and that's the style we want to be known for."

A few of the band's favorite songs to perform are



"What I Got" and "Sweet Home Alabama." They put them into medley form by taking pieces of other songs and piecing them all together. "You Can Call Me Al is a newer one we added," Mike adds.

When asked about what the band hopes the audience takes with them after the show, Mike explains, "Without question, it has to be that the audience had a fun time. We hope that anyone that comes to see a show walks away and says "Those guys are fun! We hear it a lot and we love hearing it every time."

Ned Ryerson and the Groundhogs perform throughout the Central NJ area and along the Jersey Shore. The band regularly plays at Bum Roger's in Seaside Park, Latitudes in Forked River, Taste in Red Bank, On the Deck in Atlantic Highlands, Applebee's in Tinton Falls and Tuscan Bistro and Bar in Toms River.

"I invite everyone to come out one night and check out a show. We have fun, and we promise that you will too!" Mike concludes.

For more information and schedule: Visit the official website www.nedryersonlive.com. Facebook: [facebook.com/nedandthegroundhogs](https://www.facebook.com/nedandthegroundhogs) Twitter & Instagram: @nedryersonlive Use the hashtag #GetHoggedUp on Instagram and Twitter.



James Brown, Bob Marley, and Miles Davis.

Mike Konopka (aka Ned Ryerson) has been playing solo acoustic along the Shore since early 2000. In 2012, the Groundhogs were formed under the name Two Story Outhouse. "The band members themselves made a decision to change the name to Ned and the Groundhogs", Mike explains.

Over the years, three groundhogs left the band,

