

From: RunEditor@aol.com  
 Subject: Re: Thompson Marker  
 Date: Tue, October 24, 2006 6:46 pm  
 To: laurie@uplogon.com

Hi Laurie.

Bravo! I'm so glad that your dedication event went so well. I wish I had been available that day. I was in Pelkie presenting at a music conference that I have been committed to since May.

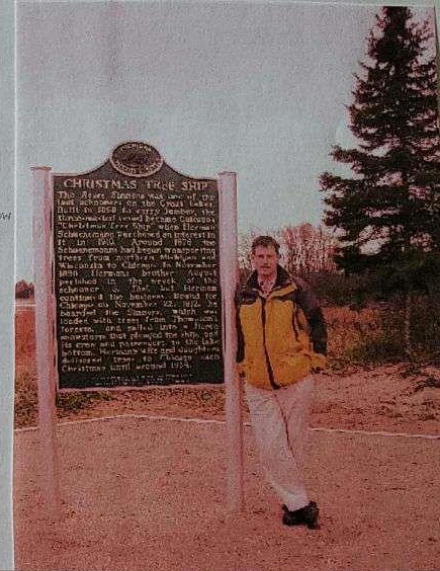
Thinking ahead, I'm planning on presenting "The Christmas Schooner" at Gwinn High School in December of 2007. I would very much like to bring the show to Manistique. You know, when I did the show in December of 2003 in Gwinn, I called Manistique High School a couple of times to see about bringing the show there that season, but I sensed a lack of enthusiasm from the school. Maybe I didn't talk to the right people. However, now that you've seen the show and are so passionate about preserving the history of the Rouse Simmons, I bet you could help make it happen. We could make it into a true community event celebrating the Christmas Tree Ship.

I'm sure we could offset the travel and production costs with ticket sales. The financial end will take care of itself. My concerns would be booking the high school auditorium for rehearsal and performance times, and then of course, publicity and getting people to see the show. I'm thinking we could present two shows on a Saturday in December of 2007, like at 2:00 and 7:00. I've taken a couple of other shows on the road, so I know that travel will not be a problem. Bringing "Schooner" to Manistique would be an incredible experience. I can see the cast in costume singing a preview of the show at the Thompson marker. Chills!

Let's definitely keep in touch over the coming weeks and months and work together to bring the Christmas Schooner home!

Thanks.

Dave Dagenais



From: <RunEditor@aol.com>  
 To: <laurie@uplogon.com>  
 Sent: Friday, October 27, 2006 6:31 PM  
 Subject: Re: Thompson Marker

Hi Laurie!

Good news here.

I have the complete support of my administration. As a matter of fact, after I sent the email out, my superintendent made a special trip down to my classroom to say what a wonderful idea it was to bring Schooner to Manistique. So, here we go!

I was looking at the calendar, and I think December 15, 2007 should be our target date. My choral students have regional honors choir on either the first or second Saturday of December, so we'd better go with the 15th to be sure.

As for tomorrow (Saturday).....I'm not sure what's going to happen.....I have your phone number, and you may hear from me. It all depends on how the presentation goes (it's a long training) and what the weather is doing. If I do make it over, I'll call when I get close to Thompson. If you don't hear from me, you'll know I didn't make it down, but I will another time. But, I'd like to get down to see the marker before winter sets in.....and we lose daylight savings time this weekend, so it would be difficult to get down during daylight hours on most days.

Thanks, Laurie.

Dave

# 'Christmas Schooner' musical sailing into Manistique next week

by Paul Olson

It was inspired by an important piece of local history, but it has never been performed in this area. Now the popular musical "The Christmas Schooner" will finally be sailing onto the stage in Manistique.

The show, featuring students from the Gwinn area, will be performed Saturday, Dec. 15, at 2 and 7 p.m., at the Frederickson Auditorium at Manistique High School.

"We're very excited about this," says Meg Wnuk of the Thompson Historical Advisory Committee, which is sponsoring the performances. "Bringing this show to Manistique has been a long-standing goal for us. Actually, when we started, this was one of our original goals."

The group, established in 2005 to preserve the history of Thompson Township, never lost sight of that goal, even while working on other projects, including securing a state historic marker and adding interpretive displays at the Lake Michigan access site, close to the place the original "Christmas Schooner," the ill-fated Rouse Simmons, began its final, fatal journey in November 1912.

The musical draws its inspiration from that famous real-life event, in which the vessel departed Thompson with a load of Christmas trees to be sold at the docks in Chicago, only to be lost with all hands in a Lake Michigan gale.

But while the historical facts are grim, the show is anything but. With a book by John Reeger and music and lyrics by Julie Shannon, it uses a fictional ship and crew to spin a story that has been described as powerful, heartwarming and inspiring, full of both humor and sorrow, as well as strong messages about the importance of family and tradition.



The cast of Gwinn High School's production of "The Christmas Schooner," which will be performed at the Frederickson Auditorium at Manistique High School Saturday, Dec. 15, at 2 and 7 p.m. (Submitted photos)



Those attributes have made "The Christmas Schooner" a seasonal favorite in other parts of the Midwest. The show has been performed in venues ranging from Minneapolis to the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay. For more than 10 years it was a Christmas tradition at the Bailiwick Repertory Theatre in Chicago, which this year staged a special concert version of the show. It is also performed annually in Door County, Wis.

The first Upper Peninsula production took place in December 2003, when director Dave Dagenais staged it at Gwinn High School.

At that time, he told the Pioneer-Tribune that a Manistique production seemed like the perfect idea.

"This is a beautiful show that portrays early Manistique so well," he said.

Unfortunately, the musical, with many sets, costumes, and a large cast, was too difficult and expensive to take on tour.

## Musical

Continued A8

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## Musical

Continued from A1

It was several more years before the director's wish and the Thompson committee's goal would finally start coming together.

That happened in August 2006, when Dagenais was directing a production of "The Christmas Schooner" for the Lake Superior Theatre Company in Marquette.

Committee member Laurie Jasmin attended one of the performances. Afterwards, she struck up a conversation with Dagenais and gave him a copy of the group's Christmas Ship DVD.

"He was hooked after that," Jasmin says. "We both knew we wanted this to happen, but there was still a lot of work to do."

One of the toughest tasks facing the committee was fund-raising, as the members quickly learned just how expensive it is to host a large-scale musical.

Jasmin says they've received financial support from a number of individuals, groups and businesses, and a significant boost in the form of a \$500 grant from the Schoolcraft County Community Foundation.

Now, with preparations almost finished, the committee is eagerly awaiting the show's arrival next week.

According to Wnuk, that will start to happen on Friday, Dec. 14, when the sets, costumes and props are loaded into the auditorium and the crew begins setting up.

The cast will arrive Saturday morning for an on-stage rehearsal prior to the first performance that afternoon.

The original script of "The Christmas Schooner" calls for 11 adult actors and two children, but suggests adding extra singers and actors. Dagenais has done just that, expanding the cast to include approximately 30 performers from Gwinn High School, Gwinn Middle School and the Gilbert and K.I. Sawyer elementary schools.

Tickets for both Dec. 15 performances are available in advance at the Mustard Seed or at the door on the day of the show. Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$5 for students and senior citizens.

Committee members note that they will have their DVD on sale at the auditorium, while the Gwinn group will be selling "Christmas Schooner" T-shirts.

Several special guests are expected to attend the matinee performance, including author Rochelle Pennington, author of "The Historic Christmas Tree Ship," the definitive book on the Rouse Simmons. Also anticipated is a visit by Barbara Ehling, the great-granddaughter of Christmas Ship captain Herman Schuenemann.

Pioneer Tribune  
12/06/2007

# Tickets still available for Saturday's 'Christmas Schooner' performances

People looking to buy tickets for this weekend's performances of "The Christmas Schooner" can purchase them in advance or at the door.

The musical, performed by students from Gwinn area schools, will take the stage at Manistique High School's Frederickson Auditorium this Saturday, Dec. 15, with a matinee at 2 p.m. and an evening performance at 7 p.m.

The family-oriented show is inspired by the real-life story of the Rouse Simmons, the schooner that sailed from Thompson in 1912 with a load

of Christmas trees bound for Chicago, only to sink in Lake Michigan.

Tickets for Saturday's performances are \$8 for adults, \$5 for students and senior citizens. Advance tickets can be purchased at the Mustard Seed on South Cedar Street.

The local performances of "The Christmas Schooner" are being sponsored by the

Thompson Historical Advisory Committee, with support from the Schoolcraft County Community Foundation, plus a number of business and individual sponsors.

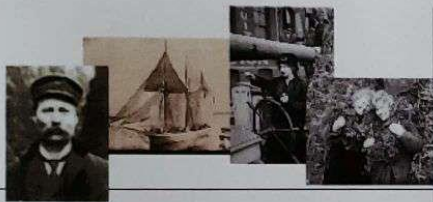
## 'The Christmas Schooner' on deck in Manistique

MANISTIQUE — The Thompson Historical Advisory Committee will present "The Christmas Schooner — a musical" on Saturday, Dec. 15, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Manistique High School auditorium.

The Gwinn High School Drama Club will bring this highly acclaimed musical to the area where the tragic story of the Christmas Tree Ship began.

Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for seniors, students and children. Advance tickets may be purchased at The Mustard Seed in downtown Manistique.

*Escanaba Daily Press*



The Thompson Historical Advisory Committee  
Presents:  
**THE CHRISTMAS TREE SCHOONER**

A MUSICAL By John Reeger  
Music and Lyrics by Julie Shannon  
Performed by The Gwinn High School Drama Club  
December 15, 2007 at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm  
Marvin A. Fredrickson Auditorium, Manistique, Michigan

Donation suggestions.

Captain.....	\$100
First Mate.....	75
Navigator.....	50
Deck Hand.....	25

Receipt:

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_



Thompson Township Historical Advisory Committee proudly presents

**The Christmas Schooner**  
A Musical  
By John Reeger Music & Lyrics by Julie Shannon  
Saturday, December 15, 2007  
2:00 PM  
Marvin A. Fredrickson Auditorium  
Senior, Student, Child Ticket \$5

Thompson Township Historical Advisory Committee proudly presents

**The Christmas Schooner**  
A Musical  
By John Reeger Music & Lyrics by Julie Shannon  
Saturday, December 15, 2007  
7:00 PM  
Marvin A. Fredrickson Auditorium  
Adult Ticket \$8

Thompson Township Historical Advisory Committee proudly presents

**The Christmas Schooner**  
A Musical  
By John Reeger Music & Lyrics by Julie Shannon  
Saturday, December 15, 2007  
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Thompson Township Historical Advisory Committee proudly presents

**The Christmas Schooner**  
A Musical  
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Saturday, December 15, 2007  
7:00 PM  
Marvin A. Fredrickson Auditorium  
Adult Ticket \$8

Thompson Historical Advisory Committee  
The Christmas Schooner

**Donations**

Date	From	Amount	Balance
11/13/2007	Turek's Used Auto Parts	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
11/13/2007	D&D Docks & Boat Lifts LLC	\$ 50.00	\$ 150.00
11/9/2007	Manistique Women's Club	\$ 50.00	\$ 200.00
11/13/2007	Lund's Service	\$ 100.00	\$ 300.00
11/13/2007	Sunset View Condominium	\$ 50.00	\$ 350.00
11/14/2007	Arnold & Associates	\$ 50.00	\$ 400.00
11/14/2007	Meg & Jody Wnuk	\$ 50.00	\$ 450.00
11/19/2007	Superior State Agency	\$ 25.00	\$ 475.00
11/19/2007	Malloy Insurance & Real Estate	\$ 25.00	\$ 500.00
11/25/2007	Dan & Charlene Crosby	\$ 50.00	\$ 550.00
11/27/2007	Schcft Co. Comm. Foundation	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,050.00
12/4/2007	mBank	\$ 50.00	\$ 1,100.00
12/4/2007	State Savings Bank	\$ 50.00	\$ 1,150.00



The Thompson Township Historical Advisory Committee recently received \$500 to help fund the Gwinn High School's production of "The Christmas Schooner," which will be performed at the Frederickson Auditorium at Manistique High School Saturday, Dec. 15, at 2 and 7 p.m. The committee seeks to preserve the history of Thompson Township. They recently installed a state historic marker and interpretive displays at the Lake Michigan access site, highlighting the story of the Rouse Simmons, the famous "Christmas tree Ship," and other aspects of Thompson history.

**The Thompson Historical  
Advisory Committee**

**Proudly presents**

# **The Christmas Schooner**

**A Musical  
By John Reeger  
Music and Lyrics by Julie Shannon**

**Performed by  
The Gwinn High School Drama Club**

**December 15, 2007  
2:00 pm and 7:00 pm**

**Marvin A. Fredrickson Auditorium  
Manistique, Michigan**

**Adults: \$8  
Seniors, Students and Children \$5**

**Tickets available at The Mustard Seed  
or at the door**



**The Thompson Historical  
Advisory Committee**

**presents**

**THE  
CHRISTMAS  
SCHOONER**

**A MUSICAL**

**By John Reeger**

**Music and Lyrics by Julie Shannon**

**Performed by  
The Gwinn High School Drama Club**

**December 15, 2007**

**2:00 pm and 7:00 pm**

**Marvin A. Fredrickson Auditorium  
Manistique, Michigan**



## Notes

While the play is based loosely on historical fact, it does have significant importance to Schoolcraft county. The Rouse Simmon, now known as the Christmas Tree Ship, was Captained by Herman Schuenemann and was a welcomed presence in local harbors. Each year trees and boughs were shipped from our area to Chicago to brighten the holiday season. On November 22, 1912, in the face of a fierce gale, the Rouse Simmons left Thompson Harbor loaded with Christmas trees and was lost with all hands off of Two Rivers, Wisconsin. The wreck was discovered in 1971 by diver Kent Bellrichard.



The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

Videos of the Gwinn High School production of "The Christmas Schooner" will be available from Thunder and Lighting in Marquette. You may order videos before or after the show or at Intermission in the lobby



### Please Note

Strobe Lights and Fog Machines will be used during this production



### CHRISTMAS SCHOONER

is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI)

All authorized performance material are also supplied by MTI  
421 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019  
Phone: 212-541-4684 Fax: 212-397-4684  
[www.MTIShows.com](http://www.MTIShows.com)

The Thompson Historical Advisory committee was formed in January 2005 to bring the unique history of Thompson to the people.

The first goal of the committee was to place a Michigan historical marker commemorating the Christmas Tree Ship and the village of Thompson. This was accomplished on October 24, 2006 with a special dedication ceremony attended by the grandson and great-granddaughter of Captain Schuenemen.

Phase two was to enhance the marker site with interpretational panels giving a glimpse into the rich history of the area. The panels were installed on October 6, 2007.

The committee is always looking for more historical information ( pictures, mementos, family history and stories) to help preserve our history for future generations. If you have any material that you would like to share or have any questions, please contact one of the committee members.

### Thompson Historical Advisory Committee

Laurie Jasmin  
Char Crosby  
Pam Zorn  
Meg Wnuk  
Wayne Stanley  
Deanna Fish  
Carla Chevront  
Robyn McLeod





## **SPECIAL THANKS**

**While bringing "The Christmas Schooner" to Manistique was a labor of love, it would not have been possible without the support of many people.**

**Schoolcraft County Community Foundation**

**The Mustard Seed**

**Dan and Donna LaFolle**

**D & D Docks and Boat Lifts**

**Manistique Women's Club**

**Turek's Used Auto Parts**

**Lund's Service**

**Sunset View Condominiums**

**Arnold & Associates**

**Superior State Agency**

**Malloy Insurance and Real Estate**

**mBank**

**State Savings Bank**

**Dan and Charlene Crosby**

**Basket Obsessions**

**The Pioneer Tribune**

**Toby's Specialties**

**The Advisor**

**Paul Olson**

**WTIQ**

**Radio Results Network**

**Schoolcraft County Historical Society**

**The Thompson Township Board**

**Everyone who donated food**

**Congratulations  
and our undying appreciation to  
The Gwinn High School Drama Club  
and the Crew  
for making a dream come true.**







# The Christmas Schooner

## ACT I

**Scene One: The living room of the Stossel home.  
Manistique, Michigan, Christmas Eve 1881**

**We All Have Songs .....Company**  
**That's America .....Alma, Gustav, Karl at 9**  
**The Mummers are Here .....Steve, Oskar, Rudy, Hans, Peter**  
**The Blessings of the Branch .....Company**  
**The Letter .....Peter, Martha, and the Storytellers**  
**The Letter ( Reprise) .....The Storytellers, Peter, Martha, Alma, & Karl at 9**

**Scene Two: On the dock at Manistique, October 1882**

**Another Season on the Water .....The Storytellers**

**Scene Three: Swallow Hill, near Manistique, November 23, 1882**

**When I Look at You .....Peter**

**Scene Four: The living room, November 24, 1882  
and on board the Molly Doone, the following morning**

**What is it About the Water .....Company**

**Scene Five: On the Clark Street Dock, Chicago December 1, 1882  
and the Stossel's home that evening**

**The Christmas Schooner.....Peter, Gustav, Steve, Oskar, Rudy,  
and the People of Chicago**

### TWELVE MINUTE INTERMISSION

## ACT II

**Entr'acte: Song of the Hungry Peasants .....Company**

**Scene One: Chicago, December 2, 1882**

**Winterfest Polka .....Company**

**Scene Two: The Stossel's home, December 11, 2007**

**Loving Sons.....Alma and Karl at 9**  
**The Strudel Waltz .....Peter and Alma**

**Scene Three: The Stossel's home, November 1883 and 1887  
and on the dock, immediately following**

**Another Season on the Water ( reprise) .....The Storytellers**  
**Hardwater Sailors .....Karl at 15, Steve, Oskar, Rudy, Hans,  
and the People of Manistique**

**Scene Four: On board the Molly Doone, November 29,1887**

**The Storm.....Instrumental**

Scene Five: The rescue hospital, Bailey's Harbor, Wisconsin,  
December 17, 1887

Questions .....Alma  
When I Look At You (Reprise) .....Gustav and Alma

Scene Six: On board a schooner and on the Clark Street Dock, Chicago  
December 17, 1887

What is it About the Water .....Karl at 15, the Crew and The Storytellers  
The Blessing of the Branch (Reprise) .....Alma and Mary Claire  
Finale .....Company  
Bows: We All Have Songs .....Company

### CAST

Gustav Stossel.....Andrew Mills  
Alma Stossel.....Clara De Young  
Peter Stossel.....Austin Peters  
Martha.....Kylie Kangas  
Karl Stossel, age 9.....Luke Redlon  
Karl Stossel, age 15.....Marshall Hewitt  
Rudy.....Brendan Espinosa  
Oskar.....Danny Van Alstyne  
Steve.....Eli Debelak  
Hans/ Man #1.....Ethan Moss  
Man #2.....Ethan Eckloff  
Man #3.....Stephen Debelak  
Man #4/Officer Wells.....Ben Armitage  
Enid.....Anika Jamison  
Kate.....Sonja Shelton  
Olive.....Stina Thompson  
Rose.....Jessica Wheatley  
Woman #1.....Libby Boorsma  
Woman #2.....Erica Sanford  
Woman #3.....Stephanie Simpler  
Marie Claire Daugherty.....Julia Rhodes  
Young Girl.....Laura Thompson

### ENSEMBLE

(The Storytellers, The People of Manistique, The People of Chicago)

Julia Rhodes, Stina Thompson, Anika Jamison, Kylie Kangas,  
Libby Boorsma, Liz Debelak, Jessica Wheatley, Sonja Shelton,  
Erica Sanford, Stephanie Simpler, Kylei Stowe, Lauren Kowalski,  
Hunter Viitala, Paula Vincent, Brianna Fisher, Alana Smith,  
Marshall Hewitt, Eli Debelak, Danny Van Alstyne, Bendan Espinosa,  
Ethan Eckloff, Ethan Moss, Stephen Debelak, Ben Armitage,  
Lawrence Copley, Walter Copley

### PRODUCTION STAFF

Production Director and Conductor.....David Dagenais  
Musical Director and Pianist.....Kathy Strazzinski  
Choreography Design.....Deborah Choszczyk  
Choreographer.....Mercedes Rosado  
Scenic Design .....Vic Holliday  
Master Carpenter and Construction Supervisor ....Jim DeYoung  
Costume Design/Coordinator.....Teresa Eckloff  
Properties.....Mary Jo Paris, Missi Copley  
Scenic Artists.....Sue Hewson, GHS Art Club,  
Mimi Magdaleno, Linnea Carlson,  
Samantha Setter, Mitchell Upson  
Stephanie Wilhelm  
Lighting Design .....Ron Stazzinski and Cameron Smith  
Sound Design .....Andrew Laken  
Stage Manager .....Leah Owens  
Assistant Stage Manager .....Caleb Eckloff  
Stage Crew.....Leah Owens, Caleb Eckloff,  
Joey Schaefer, Pam Vincent, Sarah Robie,  
Jacob Caron, Alicia Rugg, William Valentia  
Lighting Crew.....Cameron Smith, Dustin St. Arnaud  
Ron Strazzinski, Gunnar Wixtrom,  
Tiffany Clafin, Madelyn Espinosa  
Set Construction.....Jim DeYoung, Clara DeYoung,  
Jerry Sullivan, Doug Sanford, Rick Eckloff,  
Caleb Eckloff, Leah Owens, Austin Peters,  
Phillip DePetro, Tierra Copley, Lawrence  
Copley, Walter Copley, Andrew Mills  
Costume Crew.....Teresa Eckloff, Missi Copley,  
Tierra Copley, Michelle Redlon  
Hair.....Theresa Vincent  
Sound Crew.....Andrew Laken, Brendan Espinosa  
Paint Crew.....Fifth and Sixth Period Art Classes  
Props...Kate's Collectibles, Jill Paris, Kathryn Paris, Barry Paris  
Trees and Branches.....Wayne Stanley  
German Language Coach.....Michelle Redlon  
Powerpoint.....Tom Ross  
Videotaping .....Dave Porter, Thunder and Lighting  
Show Shirts.....Karen DeYoung  
Food Coordination.....Thompson Historical Advisory Committee  
Programs and Publicity .....Meg Wnuk  
Accommodations .....Dan & Donna LaFolle  
Logistics.....Laurie Jasmin, Pam Zorn  
Advance Ticket Sales .....The Mustard Seed  
Docents .....Manistique Women's Club

The Orchestra  
Kathy Strazzinski, Piano  
Darren Smith, Guitar





# Happy Holidays

Denny Hall

Savone Copley

Hylee Kangas  
"Martha"

Brandon Espinoza

Jacob Coon

330000

Leah Ouchis  
William Valente

Marshall Hewitt

Laura Thompson

Britney Jamison

Ben Clemente

Alicia Rugg

Stephen Debelos IV  
Laura Kowalski

Ch. Sholly  
Aimee

Walter Copley

Resha Pava Vincent  
Whalley  
Julia Chang

Joe Slayton

Erica Sargent

Mara Smith

Hunter Vitale  
Derek W.

Lilly Borsma  
Panella Vincent

Samira Shelton

Kathy Strajinski

Stina Thompson  
Kyle Stone

Dave Ogden

Levi

Ethan Eckloff

Luke Radwin



Hi Aunt Mary  
Ella



CS Scanned with CamScanner



CS Scanned with CamScanner



### *The Thompson Historical Advisory Committee*

would like to extend our sincere thanks to the following businesses, organizations and individuals for helping us bring The Christmas Schooner musical to Manistique. Without their support, this dream would not have come true. First & foremost we would like to acknowledge Mr. Dave Dagenais & the Gwinn High School Drama Club, Cast, Crew & Parents, Manistique Area Schools, Mr. John Chandler, Mr. Butch Yurk and a special thanks to Judy & Lorna, Paul Olson and Dan & Donna LaFolite who went above & beyond the call of duty, our hats are off to you all!

Schoolcraft County Community Foundation	Pioneer Tribune
The Mustard Seed	The Advisor
Manistique Women's Club	WTIQ
Turek's Used Car Parts	Radio Results Network
Lund's Service	Karen Klaus
Sunset View Condominiums	Beth Malloch
D&D Docks & Boat Lifts	Wayne & Shirley Stanley
Arnold & Associates	Dale Jasmin
Superior State Agency	Theresa Lund
Malloy Insurance & Real Estate	Dorothy Rochefort
mBank	Lisa Boudreau
State Savings Bank	Rosie Krall
Dan & Charlene Crosby	Gloria Haindl
Basket Obsessions	Toby's Specialties

To everyone who attended this outstanding performance, we hope you enjoyed it every bit as much as we did. This story is our story and it was an amazing experience for us all!

*Meg, Pam, Char, Carla, Deanna, Robyn, Wayne & Laurie*

Advisor

DECEMBER 24, 2007

### **Thank You!!**

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\*Karen Klaus \*Beth Malloch  
\*Wayne & Shirley Stanley \*Dale Jasmin  
\*Theresa Lund \*Dorothy Rochefort  
\*Lisa Boudreau \*Rosie Krall  
\*Gloria Haindl \*Toby's Specialties

*To everyone who attended this outstanding performance, we hope you enjoyed it every bit as much as we did. This story is our story and it was an amazing experience for us all!*

*Meg, Pam, Char, Carla, Deanna, Robyn, Wayne & Laurie*

### **L**etters to the Editor [newsroom@pioneertribune.com](mailto:newsroom@pioneertribune.com)

Dear Editor,

I attended the matinee performance of "The Christmas Schooner" on Dec. 15 and was totally entertained by this delightful musical. The standing ovation given to the talented young performers from Gwinn High School's Drama Club was well deserved. The Frederickson Auditorium was not filled to capacity, which surprised me, since Manistique is featured so prominently, being essential to the plot. Hopefully there was a full house for the evening performance.

The Thompson Historical Advisory Committee and the many others who provided essential support, including technical assistance from Paul Olson, are to be commended for bringing this impressive production to Manistique during the holiday season.

Kudos to all involved!

Nancy DeWees  
Manistique

Dear Editor,

Thank you to the Thompson Historical Advisory Committee for bringing "The Christmas Schooner," a musical, performed by the Gwinn High School Drama Club, to Manistique. These performers far exceeded my expectations. It was truly a Broadway quality production. A once in a lifetime experience.

Hats off to the director, David Dagenais, orchestra Kathy Strazzinski and Darren Smith, and the entire production crew. I also thank all the local sponsors who helped make this five-star show possible, including Wayne Stanley for supplying all the Christmas trees and special branches.

My only disappointment was that the auditorium was not filled to overflowing capacity.

Sincerely,

Kevin Thorell  
Manistique

Escanaba Daily Press  
December 22, 2007

Page 2 of 2

\* From Bill and Beth Malloch, Manistique:

"A round of applause to the Thompson Historical Advisory Committee for all their time and efforts to bring two performances of the musical, 'The Christmas Schooner,' to Manistique High School Frederickson Auditorium on Dec. 15.

"The Gwinn High School Drama Club, under direction of Mr. David Dagenais, did a superb job from their costumes, to props and singing. The musical has significant importance to Schoolcraft County, a major supplier of Christmas trees to the Chicago area beginning over 100 years ago.

"Thank you Lauri Jasmin, Meg Wnuk, Pam Zorn, Char Crosby, Wayne Stanley

Robyn McLeod, Deanna Fish and Carla Cheuvront!"

**From:** "Paul F. Olson" <paul@paulfolson.com>  
**To:** <lauriejasmn@centurytel.net>; <jwnuk@centurytel.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 16, 2007 8:32 AM  
**Subject:** Thanks

Hi Guys,

Just wanted to say thanks again for letting me be involved with the show this weekend. It was a real blast.

I know you'll get lots of good feedback for the performances, but I'm sure most people won't really understand or appreciate the vision it took to bring the show here, the risks involved or the amount of hard work it required. You, and the rest of the committee, deserve many, many more accolades that you'll ever receive.

This was a great thing for the community all the way around, and as a special bonus, made some valuable contacts that might pay dividends some day for the drama program here -- the kind of long range ripple effect we really, really need.

Thanks again!

Paul

--  
Paul F. Olson  
<http://paulfolson.com>



----- Original Message -----

**Subject:**Schooner Group Photo

**Date:**Mon, 17 Dec 2007 13:26:46 -0800 (PST)

**From:**Karen DeYoung <kreationbykaren@yahoo.com>

**To:**newsroom@pioneertribune.com

Paul,

I have attached the group photo as you requested. I have many more of the weekend but because I am on a dial up I will just make a disk and send it. You should have it by Friday at the latest.

Thank You for all you help this weekend and for being so kind to us and our children it was awesome.  
Karen DeYoung

PS. To the gentleman who donated a tree and bought our breakfast on Sat. will you let him know that we will be using his tree at our house this year. My husband was the master carpenter and Clara was Alma, we realized late Saturday will all the busseel of the show that we hadn't gotten a tree. Your crew let us take one and we chose the one she used as a family tree in the show. Our Christmas will be special as we not only have a tree from Manistique but we have the Stossel Tree.

God Bless and Merry Christmas!  
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Lori and Historical Committee-

Thank You again for being so kind to us.....we truly felt like royalty this weekend. Wow!!! what an incredible experience for our children and for us as parents.....most of decided it is a rough life to be a "roady". But we will never forget this past weekend. I got carried away with the photos and well you can probably tell that I like taking pictures. Hope you can use some of them.

Merry Christmas and God Bless You!

*Karen*

Karen DeYoung

Hi Laurie.

I'll fax the receipts to you tonight when I'm done on the computer.

The kids were tired today (well, so was I, and I bet you were, too), but only had good things to say about the trip to Manistique. Many were proudly wearing their buttons.....the buttons are great.

I received a phone call today from a good friend of mine, Father Peter Minelli. You may know him, he was a priest in Manistique until his retirement, and he lives in Gwinn now. Anyway, he called to say that several people had called him from Manistique to tell him how much they enjoyed the show. I'm sure we're going to continue to get wonderful comments.

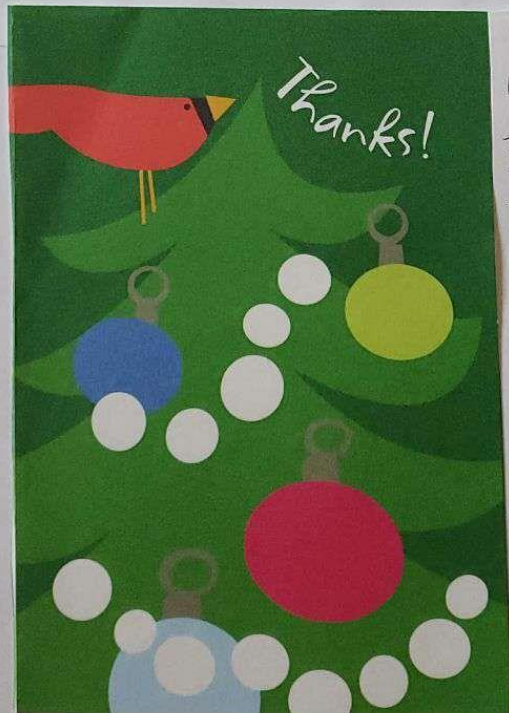
You're right, a simple thanks doesn't seem like enough. We're so appreciative of all of the organizing you and the committee. The meals were great and the whole experience was amazing.

I know that we will continue to work together on the projects. Please keep me on your email list for upcoming events. If you ever arrange for trees to be shipped on the Mackinaw out of Escanaba, let us know, we could come down and sing. The kids would love that.

We'll start planning now (well, ok, maybe in a couple of years) for a 2012 return of the Christmas Schooner to Manistique, in honor of the 100th Anniversary of the sinking of the Rouse Simmons. But.....I don't know if I can wait that long to direct the show again.....it's a favorite of mine.

Take care and keep in touch.

Dave



Dear Laurie,  
Words alone cannot express how I felt watching the Christmas Schooner in the area where it all happened. It was truly an inspiring day & I thank you for all you do to keep the spirit of Captain Dumann alive - I also want to thank you for the lovely basket. I hope your Christmas was joyful & I wish you & your family a very Blessed & Healthy 2008! Love,  
Barb

*Thompson Historical Advisory Committee*

12515 North Stanley Road  
Manistique, MI 49854  
Phone (906) 341-6338

December 21, 2007

Mr. Dave Dagenais  
Gwinn High School  
P.O. Box 991  
Gwinn, Michigan 49841

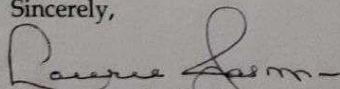
Dear Dave,

On behalf of the Thompson Historical Advisory Committee and the Thompson Township Board, we wish to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who had a hand in bringing The Christmas Schooner musical to Manistique. This was an amazing experience for us all and one that will be talked about for some time to come. Whether I am at work or in the grocery store, people are buzzing about the play and those who missed it are truly sorry they did. The compliments we have received have been overwhelming and gratifying. There have been many requests for an encore performance sometime in the future.

There are very few times when collaboration such as this takes place between two communities. Many times when students are involved, it is at a sporting event and there is little opportunity to get to know the students or interact with them. This event truly blew that right out of the water. We were so impressed with each and every one of the Gwinn students. They were courteous, respectful and a ball of fun. We tip our hats to them all and hope that they enjoyed this experience as much as we did. Last but most certainly not least, we want to recognize those parents who took time out of their busy holiday schedules to travel to Manistique and spend two days working to bring everything together.

Two and one half years ago our committee set a goal of bringing the musical "home". You helped make that dream come true.

Sincerely,



Laurie Jasmin, Chair  
Thompson Historical Advisory Committee  
Thompson Twp Clerk  
[lauriejasmmin@centurytel.net](mailto:lauriejasmmin@centurytel.net)

## **SUNSET VIEW CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION**

**15N Danielson Road Manistique, Michigan 49854**

**Phone: 906-341-6756**

**E-MAIL: [sunsetview@chartermi.net](mailto:sunsetview@chartermi.net)**

**WEB PAGE: [www.sunsetviewcondos.com](http://www.sunsetviewcondos.com)**

Gwinn High School  
50 W State Hwy M35  
Gwinn, Michigan 49841

Dear Staff, Students and Parents,

I would like you to know how well your drama club represented your school and your community this past weekend here in Manistique. I can not imagine a nicer Christmas gift that one community could give another. The story about The Christmas Schooner was brought to life in a manner many of us will never forget. We sat spell bound while the players took us back in time to revisit this heart warming adventure. We are so grateful for the efforts of so many for bringing such a gift to us. I am happy to tell you the show was a true success. Happily this success is measured in joy and in conversation about our own future efforts in offering our students opportunity in drama and the arts. We can feel new hope that programs like yours will find a home in Manistique. Your efforts will be the ground we build on to encourage new thinking in our own community. Your presentation was wonderful and your pride in what you were doing was obvious. As I was watching the performance I noticed the lady sitting next to me shedding tears of joy. She like the rest of us in the audience had been moved to tears by the story and its presentation. This lady however had a special reason for her tears. She was the great grand daughter of Captain Herman Schuenemann the Captain of The Rouse Simmons which was the Christmas Tree Schooner that left our town and was lost with a full load of Christmas trees bound for Chicago November 22, 1912. In closing be proud of what you have accomplished for you have touched the hearts of many and brought joy to all. Thank you again and MERRY CHRISTMAS to you all.

Thompson Township Trustee  
Daniel LaFoille



## Sunset View

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**From:** "dave dagenai" <ddagenai@gwinn.k12.mi.us>  
**To:** <sunsetview@chartermi.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 19, 2007 3:45 PM  
**Subject:** Christmas Schooner in Manistique

Hello Dan.

We received your letter today in the mail, and your phone message yesterday. Thank you so much for taking the time to express your appreciation.

We were honored to be the first group to present The Christmas Schooner to the people of Manistique and Thompson. Our students learned many lessons while presenting Schooner in Manistique, including the challenges of touring with a full-length musical. But I think my favorite part about the whole weekend is how our two communities worked together to make this happen. None of this would have been possible without lots of work on both ends. You, Laurie, Pam, Meg, and the rest of the committee put so much work into the event. This was a wonderful project.

It would be a great thing if the Manistique Schools could further develop their arts programs. You have a lovely auditorium that would be suitable for so many kinds of performances.

If there is any way I can be of help in promoting the arts in Manistique, please contact me. When I was hired in Gwinn in the fall of 1998, I reactivated the drama program with literally about 12 kids, \$1,000, and a couple of pieces of plywood. I had NO IDEA that it would ever turn into one of the finest programs in the Upper Peninsula. It's been great for our students, our school, and our community, and as a teacher, for me too.

I've given a workshop at the UP Educators Conference on how to start a drama program. I'd be happy to present again in Manistique if you wish.

Thanks again for all you did for the show last weekend. The accomodations, breakfast, trees, you name it. It was all wonderful!

Merry Christmas and please contact me if I can be of assistance.

Dave Dagenais  
Gwinn High School Drama Club  
Director

1/2/2008

