



P.O. Box 177  
 Empire, Michigan 49630

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November 1996

## GREETINGS FRIENDS!!

### SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND OUTING 1996



Sunday, July 28, 1996 started out quite gray, and by the time the Mishe-Mokwa pulled out of Leland it was raining. BUT, that meant everyone had to cuddle in the dry part of the boat and, right away, little history stories started being told. One of the reasons why the South Manitou Memorial Society was started was to be "dedicated to the preservation of our history in order that we may pass the light of our symbol to future generations." And that's just what happened all day.

By the time we arrived on South Manitou Island it had stopped raining, which made for a nice picnic lunch. All thirty of us piled into two Manitou Island Transit vehicles (courtesy of Mike Grosvenor), with Wayne Braden and Patti Siegrist driving. We headed off for the "big" island tour.

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Stopping at the Schoolhouse first, we were awarded with stories about broken arms, posteriors being sliced while one-ski-sledding, horses being cauterized with a hot iron, Christmas pageants, and finger pointing as to where the wooden railroad is/was.

On to the cemetery where the newest visitors were told histories about Bertha Peth, Bea Burdick, Wayne Shirk, and Ethel Stormer's Aunt Paulina Furst.

We circled on to the farms to check out the grave sites and relate stories that we had heard on past tours. We shared stories about the Beck's with the younger members, telling them how the ice was cut and transported for storage in the ice house. We explored the chicken coop!

We made it back to the "village" to see the old houses all fixed up, tour the museum and take a lighthouse tour. We also heard stories about the THREE BROTHERS shipwreck which showed up off sandy point when the point washed away in the spring.

The trip back was delightful with friendships being renewed and created by young and old alike. And maybe, just maybe, next year we will have 60 South Manitou Memorial Society members participating in the outing and we will learn many more new histories!

by Judy Fogle

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## THE WRECK OF THE THREE BROTHERS

by Ethel Furst Stormer

For many years the early fall storms had brought ships into South Manitou's excellent harbor, and so it was that on September 27, 1911 the ship Three Brothers, loaded with lumber, sought shelter from a fierce wind and rain storm. However, they came in too close to the south point of the harbor and ran aground on the sand-bar in front of the Life Saving Station's Lookout tower.

Captain Allen Kent, Officer in charge of the Life Saving Station, was ill that summer, so my father, Martin Furst, rated as the No. 1 Surfman, was in charge of all drills, rescues, etc. We were living in a small house on the point, where I was born in July 1906. It probably was the first house to be built after the Life Saving Station was established in 1902.

When my Mother, Zella, heard the distress signals of the Three Brothers (four long blasts) she knew that the Life Saving crew would be launching their surfboat and responding to the call for help. She could tell that the ship was in close to the shore. She was very frightened and worried and began pacing back and forth across the kitchen, - crying. She wanted to go out in the storm and see what was happening out there. However, she had two very young children to care for, I was five years old and my brother, Norman, was three. I had never seen my Mother so upset before and it frightened me. When she could bare the suspense no longer, she put Norman and I in a big rocking-chair near the kitchen window and told us that we must stay in that chair until she returned. She said she would be back soon.

I remember that after a short time Norman began to cry, - then I joined him and we cried together. Our Mother had never left us alone like this before, however, when she returned, she found two screaming kids still sitting in the rocking-chair by the window where she had left us. When the storm had abated several days later, we all went out to the point to see the "Wreck of the Three Brothers". Thirteen crew-men had been rescued from the ship. The Captain gave my Father his chair, which we had in our home for many years.

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Over the course of the winter and early spring of 1996, a large portion of undercut beach known as sandy point "sloughed off" into Lake Michigan. It was this geologic phenomenon which led to the discovery of the

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ship in late April by National Lakeshore employees Dave Nagel and Dave Wilkins. They boated into shore to get a closer look at the point when they saw the ship just below the surface of the water, virtually intact.

The Three Brothers rests in about 45 feet of water only 50 feet from Sandy Point. The bow lies only 6 feet below the water surface. The propeller and rudder are in tact, with the writing "Three Brothers of Buffalo" visible above the rudder. Tools still lay on the deck and railings remain attached. A block and tackle hang from the side railing, a fire hose dangles over the stem. The capstan is still affixed to the deck at the stem of the vessel. The bow is split open and the pilot house is missing, but otherwise the ship appears complete. State and federal officials documented the shipwreck before releasing the news to the public. Divers and historians from the Michigan State University Center for Maritime and Underwater Research Management, Northwest Michigan Maritime Museum and Scuba North Dive Shop organized a team to dive on the wreck to photograph and videotape it. They placed plaques on the hull, giving a brief history of the ship and asking divers not to disturb the wreck. A mooring buoy marks its location within the preserve.

The sand protected her for 85 years. Now, she is protected by state law. The ship lies within the boundaries of the Manitou State Underwater Preserve. It has been open for recreational diving all summer, and has become the "hottest" diving adventure in the state.

The Three Brothers, built in 1888 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin by the Milwaukee Shipyard Company. She was a wooden lumber hooker whose home port was Buffalo, New York. She hauled milled hemlock and hardwood for William H. White & Company of Boyne City, Michigan for a period of time before stranding on South Manitou. She waits for you to explore!

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### NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL PARK

Summer is over and South Manitou Island officially closed for the season on October 13th, and North Manitou Island on November 10th. Visitation numbers for both islands did increase again this year.

The Lighthouse Complex Historic Structure/Cultural Landscape Report will be completed in the spring of 1997. The same architectural firm, Quinn-Evans of Ann Arbor, Michigan has been given a contract to develop construction drawings based on the recommendations provided in the Historic Structure Report. These construction drawings will be completed by the spring of 1998.

The South Manitou Island Agricultural History Report *Coming Through with Rye*, has been completed and will be published this winter. The park is hopeful that copies will be available for distribution to schools, libraries, museums and historical societies by spring. The printing costs are such that only 200 copies will be printed at this time. The report will be available for reprinting, if the Memorial Society is still interested in it for family copies and as a fund raiser.

The photovoltaic array and maintenance structure project was completed this year on North Manitou Island. The array is a solar collector of which energy will be stored in the battery bank housed in the maintenance structure. This stored energy will provide most of the electric power needed for the park operations on North Manitou Island. A similar system is also being considered for the South Manitou Island Village.

The research work continues on the North Manitou Island Cultural Resource Report being prepared by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Graduate student, Eric MacDonald will be spending a week at the park over

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the Christmas holiday. If anyone has information, photographs, or family stories they would like to share with Eric, please contact Kim Mann, (616) 326-5134, at the park headquarters with your name and phone number.

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**July 27, 1996      Annual Meeting of the South Manitou Memorial Society  
Held at Empire Methodist Church  
Empire, Michigan**

1. President Paul Rocheleau called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m.
2. Paul opened the meeting by asking for a moment of silence to remember those members that have passed on before us. Especially missed and recognized was Glenn Furst.
3. All the officers introduced themselves and explained their relationship to the island. Members present then did the same.

4. Secretary Pat Siegrist stated that the minutes of last year's meeting were included in the 1995/1996, Vol. 6 No. 3 edition of the Newsletter, which was published and mailed in November 1995. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as published.

The motion was unanimously carried.

5. Treasurer Karen McIntire provided the Treasurer's report. A motion was made and seconded to accept the report. A complete statement of account can be obtained by contacting her at 2272 Josephine, Muskegon, MI 49444-4325. It will also be published in the March 1997 Newsletter.

The motion was unanimously carried.

6. A draft proposed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been presented to Ivan Miller, Superintendent of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The volunteer committee of Fred Burdick, Don Morris, Don Roy, Glenn Furst and Karen McIntire drafted the proposal in response to the proposed MOA presented by the NPS last year.

Don Morris paraphrased the SMMS counterproposal for the members in attendance and explained that he did extensive research into this matter. He found the language in our counterproposal to be in line with a proposal used by another nonprofit organization similar in size and scope to the SMMS. This MOA had been accepted by the Saguaro National Monument in Tucson, Arizona. It was felt that this counterproposal would be more acceptable to both SMMS members and the NPS.

Although Duane Pierson, Assistant Superintendent was to address the MOA and our counterproposal at this Meeting, he was unable to do so due to family illness.

7. After much discussion, five members volunteered to be the nominating committee for the election of officers in July 1997. They are: Don Morris, Bill Goeman, Judy Fogle, Don Tobin and Lorraine Kolasinski.

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There was concern that the current officers are in direct conflict with the by-laws of the SMMS in that the Vice-President and Secretary are sisters. This was an oversight during the selection process in 1995. However, it was brought up that the by-laws state that no two members of the same family can be officers at the same time. Discussion took place on the definition of "same family" and it was decided that the language is vague at best. Therefore, a motion was made by Cindy Heisler and seconded by Dwight Morris to propose an amendment to the by-laws to state the following:  
"No two members of the same family can simultaneously serve on the board. For purposes of the by-laws, 'same family' is defined as immediate family members consisting of father, mother, brother, sister, child and spouse."

The motion was unanimously carried.

After this motion was carried it was discussed and agreed that not all members were clear on the proposed amendment. Therefore, another motion was made by Judy Fogle and seconded by Bob Ruchhoft to amend the by-laws to state the following:

"No more than two members of the same family can simultaneously serve on the board. For purposes of the by-laws, 'same family' is defined as immediate family members consisting of father, mother, brother, sister, child and spouse."

The motion was voted by hand count; 14 in favor of this proposed amendment and 4 opposed.

The motion was carried by majority.

A motion was made by Don Morris and seconded by Kathy Bietau to exempt the present officers only from the "same family" restriction, for this term only.

The motion was unanimously carried.

8. Margaret suggested that since SMMS is growing, perhaps an election every two years for two officers at a time would be better for the SMMS. It was suggested that the officer elections be for four year terms and staggered so that there would be a smoother transition in the officers. This would allow for continuity in the ongoing work of the SMMS. The change would be first for the President and Treasurer, then after two years for the Vice-President and Secretary. It was stated to stagger the officers in this matter so that neither two record keepers nor two executive officers would change at the same time. It was also suggested that a "board" be established made up of seven members of the SMMS. Members of this board would consist of the four officers and three directors which can include the immediate past president and two additional members. A motion was made by Cindy Heisler and seconded by Marie Smith to propose an amendment to the by-laws to allow for these changes.

The motion was unanimously carried.

9. Margaret provided a discussion of the proposed land swap between the Homestead Resort in Glen Arbor and the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Discussion ensued.

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10. Laura Quackenbush provided a discussion of the Betty Kramer collection and urged members to volunteer with photo identification.

11. Kim Mann reported Ranger Chris Johnson is working in Atlanta, Georgia, as part of the Olympic security detail. We all wish Chris well.

She also reported that the cemetery fences were restored on North Manitou Island and thanked the SMMS for providing the seed money to allow for the restoration. The Sierra Club and the Friends of Sleeping Bear provided the labor for this project.

Kim stated that the first draft of the report entitled, "Coming through with Rye", which was prepared by Brenda Williams of the University of Wisconsin, is available for perusal. Kim suggested that perhaps the SIS would be interested in publishing this document with credit being given to the SMMS. Margaret stated that many private bookstores would probably be interested in selling this book and if the SMMS published it, it would be a great fund-raiser. The SMMS will look into estimates for publishing a limited number of copies to test interest in the book.

Kim also reported that the South Manitou Lighthouse report is approximately 75% complete. Restoration drawings will probably begin in January 1997.

12. Ethel Stormer brought an oil painting of her Aunt Paulina Furst, who died at age 26 in the year 1904. Paulina was buried in the old cemetery and moved to the Island cemetery around 1909 or 1910.

13. Bob Ruchhoft suggested presenting a slide show next year, which would take place after the annual meeting.

14. Laura Quackenbush requested that those that do not attend the Island Outing on Sunday, stop in at the Leelanau Historical Museum and review the information she has on hand regarding the islands.

15. With no further business, at 12:35 p.m., a motion was made by Don Morris and seconded by Julie Morris to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was unanimously carried.

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## Update on MOA with the National Park

The Committee organized to draft a Memorandum of Agreement between the Society and the National Park is currently working with Superintendent Ivan Miller, of Sleeping Bear Dunes N.L. The Committee members are Fred Burdick, Don Morris, Don Roy and Karen McIntire. They will be working on a draft MOA which will be published in the next Newsletter in March. Members will then have an opportunity to peruse the draft MOA before the Annual Meeting. Anyone wishing to participate in the negotiations may contact Paul Rocheleau at 517-773-3595.

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### "I Remember ..." Part II:

## BENTH S. JOHNSON

### "A COLORFUL PERSONALITY"

by Glenn Furst

Now Ben had been a man of the sea for many years and somewhere along the line he had developed a taste for alcoholic drinks, however, I never remember him having any of his own. If someone would bring a bottle of whiskey over to Ben's house, he would get out three shot glasses, one for the person who brought over the bottle and two other glasses, one for himself now, and the other one was carefully filled and placed on the cupboard shelf for tomorrow. He had good friends who did make and have it around all the time and they needed to have a fish to eat now and then. Their need for fish in their diet, seemed to me, related to how frequently Ol' Ben acquired a real bad thirst. It was not unusual for Ben to say to me during the afternoon, "Glenn, go get your car and we will take Bill up a fish to eat. Tomorrow I'll give you five gallons of gasoline." Of course I knew he meant Bill Haas, a bachelor farmer, who always had a barrel or two of hard cider in his pit. In cases of real bad thirst, he could find a bottle of "white lightning" around the house too.

It took some time for me to realize the five gallons of gasoline would never happen. However, in all fairness I must admit he did, on a couple of occasions, fill up a little red gallon can and with considerable ceremony, we would raise up the front seat of my car and pour it in the tank. It didn't matter that much to me, you see, I was enjoying the experience of feeling I was needed, and I knew I would be included in a small way in the activities. Besides, it was fun and I'd hear some fantastic stories.

Ben was never comfortable in a car, I'm sure, as he would sit perfectly straight up, with both legs shoved out in front of him and his feet were firmly planted against the floorboards. He always stuck his corncob pipe in his mouth and held it there with his left hand while his right hand was on the car door. We would barely get under way when he, in his loud voice, would say "Now take it easy or I'll hada' throw out the ankora!" (anchor)

Bill Haas was another island character and, in my opinion, there will never be another person quite like him. He loved fun - I never saw the man angry for any length of time and if he did get upset about something, he could always find something humorous about it. You just couldn't be angry with him - he would josh you out of it somehow. I don't think I ever heard him say a sentence that didn't have some profanity in it, or he didn't use the Lord's name in vain in some manner. He would be having fun all the time. Even the most reverent of people would excuse him by saying "He just can't help it, that's Ol' Bill."

Now for me, a young fellow who had lived rather a sheltered life at North Manitou lighthouse for nine years - a trip up to Ol' Bill's with Ol' Ben was an education by itself. My learning process was accelerated to a pace that could make a young fellow dizzy, and it did a few times, too.

I do not know how Ben got into the fishing business or where he met his first wife, or how he came to settle on the island. I do know he owned property across the road from the schoolhouse on the south end of that field. The Armstrongs had a home on the north end of that field. There was evidence of buildings on each end

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of the field when I went to school on the island. Ben's property extended through the woods southward and included the large opening commonly known as the Jim Burdick farm where Fred Burdick built the two cottages by Lake Florence. There was quite a nice home and barn in the center of that field when we returned to South Manitou in 1928. Ben had some buildings down by the bay dock too. I do know he owned all of the point except the Life Saving and Lighthouse property. He sold it piece by piece to people to build houses. He, too, had two houses built for Life Saving people to rent. At that time he was raising a family on the farm and fishing pond nets for a living. Ben had a reason to claim in his loud voice "This is the land of milk and honey!"

Ben always dressed the same. His clothes were those of a ship's officer, dark navy blue, complete with vest and necktie. He always wore a ship officer's cap without the emblems. The inside vest pocket was secured with a horse blanket safety pin. Below that pin was a large bulge. He carried a wallet, mostly for appearance. One of his favorite expressions was 'I can go anywhere, in the coldest kind of weather, with just my vest and knock (sic) tie on!"

After Ben raised his family and his first wife died, he moved into one of the houses on the Point. The house that became known as Ol' Ben's house to everyone else on the island.

When I first began to work for Ben I was really not ready for all the things I had to learn in order to be of any value to him. You see, our family had just moved from North Manitou Island where I had spent most of my time taking care of a group of little kids.

I could row a skiff after a fashion, but the fine points I had not been told about, like feathering your oars when going into the wind and taking a bearing over the stern of the boat in order to hold a straight course. I had never sculled a boat in my life. I was determined to learn and I did; however, I never could do it like Ol' Ben. He would face forward and scull with one hand and hold his corn cob pipe in his mouth with the other hand. What an accomplished sailor he was. I've thought about it and I've wondered why did he have so much patience with me? Did he do it because I was the son of Martin Furst, a former shipmate of his, or because there were no other young men around who would work for two dollars a day?

It was my second summer with Ben and we were fishing two settings of gill nets and a pond net located out in front of the lighthouse. We were getting ready to lift the pond net one morning when a couple of Coast Guard men came by and asked Ben to bring in a few undersized whitefish to smoke. Generally this did not create a problem, but it seems Ben had just heard about the game warden arresting a couple of fishermen over in Leland for shipping undersized whitefish. I could see Ben was nervous while we were putting on our yellow oil skins and preparing to row and scull the pond boat out to the net. It seemed to me I couldn't do anything to suit him that morning. I later realized that he was afraid the warden would be coming over on the mail boat which was arriving at the island about the same time as we would be coming in from the pond net with those undersized fish for smoking.

When we arrived at the net, Ben kept looking out toward Glen Haven and, sure enough, the mail boat was headed for the island. Ben sculled the boat around to the proper pilings while I stood in the bow and untied all the down haulers. We then began to lift the net. We had a good catch that day with perhaps a couple hundred pounds of legal fish and we kept about twenty or thirty pounds of the smaller ones for smoking. It was these smaller ones that had him worried and he was cross as an old bear. In the process of resetting the net, Ben

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thought I tied one of the down haulers improperly and he dropped his sculling oar and came forward, walking in those flopping live fish, raising his boots high to clear the middle seats and he was cussing all the time (this was unusual for Ben who seldom cussed). He said, "You dump fool, you've been working for two years and you don't know how to tie them downhaulers yet!" He pushed me aside to do it himself when he exclaimed, "By Jugus, you did tie it right!" I'd had it, I replied in my loudest voice, "You old S.O.B. - I quit - take me ashore right now!" He was in shock. His eyes and mouth popped open and he said, "*Oh Jugus man you can't quit on the high seas - that's mutiny!*"

I insisted he put me on the beach right there in front of the lighthouse. We were living there that summer. When I came in the house with my hip boots and yellow oil skins on smelling of fish, mother knew something had happened but she knew by looking at me that I wasn't in a mood to tell her so she kept quiet. I went upstairs in the living room and turned on our Atwater Kent radio and watched Ben scull his boat and fish around the lookout point into the bay. The mail boat was arriving at the island right then too. I noticed how the wake of it rocked Ol' Ben in the pond boat as it went by. I didn't care if the wake tipped Ben and his pond boat over, and secretly I hoped the game warden was on that boat too.

All the next day I sat by that upstairs window and listened to the radio. My family, knowing something was wrong, kept picking at me to find out what was bothering me. I told them I had quit my job and I could see the concern in my mother's eyes as she knew how badly I needed that two dollars a day to buy new clothes. I had some teeth that needed fixing too.

I sat there by the window and wondered about the mutiny thing. Was I really in a lot of trouble? I recalled some of the stories Ben had told of mutiny on the high seas. Punishment was invariably death. Was that pond net out in the lake far enough to be considered high seas?

It was a relief to me when I saw Ol' Ben swaggering up that boardwalk headed for the lighthouse. I heard him knock on the kitchen door and his greeting in a loud voice "Good Morgan, Mrs. Hootzler, a fine Morgan in the Morgan!" They visited a few minutes and it wasn't very long before I heard him say "Where's Glenn?" I heard mother answer, "Oh he's around somewhere." And then he said the thing I wanted to hear. "Tell him I'd like him to come and help me lift nets in the Morgan." I heard mother reply, "Yes, I'll tell him." He left a few minutes later. I came down the stairs with a smile on my face. Mother winked at me. All was right in my world.

*I had committed mutiny on the high seas - and I had gotten away with it.*

A year or so later a contractor from Wisconsin began making improvements at the Coast Guard station. He was enlarging and raising the boat house. The station itself was having a basement put under it and bathrooms were being installed. Wages were fifty cents an hour. All the island young men old enough, including myself went to work for that contractor.

Ol' Ben had to limit his activities, not only because of his age, but the boys available to help him were so young and inexperienced.

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It's been sixty-four years (in 1992) since I began to work for Ol' Ben and in my mind I can see an old man, a man who had already lived a lifetime, teaching a young boy, a boy of slight stature, valuable lessons of how to secure a living from the sea. Lessons that boy will never forget.

The End

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**BERNT S. JOHNSON**

**By Sandra Black**

Monday, March 20, 1939, at two o'clock p.m., the silent messenger of death claimed Bernt S. Johnson, one of Frankfort's and Benzie County's loved and most respected citizens.

Mr. Johnson was born September 3, 1858 at Farsund, Norway. When a lad of fourteen years the call of the sea became too strong to resist and he ran away from home and secured work on an ocean going schooner. For many years thereafter, he sailed the seven seas. He was familiar with every port in the old world. His life was an unusually colorful one and his experiences which he loved to relate were many and thrilling. Twice he was shipwrecked on the ocean. Once off the coast of Newfoundland when the schooner loaded with corn, foundered and he with the other members of the crew were adrift for nine days. Their only food during this time was some corn which they salvaged.

About 1880, Mr. Johnson came to America and settled in Chicago to continue his sailing activities on lake Michigan. In 1885, he married Mrs. Gesine Thompson, a childhood friend from Norway and they moved to Whitehall, Michigan, and from there to South Manitou Island where his wife died a few years later and left him to rear seven small children. To this gigantic task, he gave his unflinching devotion. Six of those children are living today (1939) to mourn his passing.

Mr. Johnson continued to maintain his home on South Manitou Island for more than fifty years, but the call of the waves always sang in his heart. He loved the sea and almost his last utterance was "I am Shipwrecked on the Great Sea."

For about thirty years, he sailed the Great Lakes and in his later years when most men are getting ready to retire he fitted out a boat and carried on a splendid fishing business. In his busy life he never could find a time to quit. No man on Lake Michigan was more widely known and respected than Mr. Johnson. He was a man of sterling integrity and high purpose. A practical Christian -- one of God's good men.

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## South Manitou Memorial Society

### Sweatshirt & T-Shirt Order Form



Dedicated to the  
preservation  
of our history  
in order that we may  
pass the light  
of our symbol  
to future generations

**South Manitou Memorial Society** t-shirts and sweatshirts are available in oatmeal (cream-colored) with the society logo printed on the left chest with the above mission statement on the back in large print.

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Size	No	Price ea.	Total
XXL	_____	\$16.22	_____
XL	_____	14.00	_____
L	_____	14.00	_____
M	_____	14.00	_____
S	_____	14.00	_____
Youth L	_____	12.00	_____
Youth M	_____	12.00	_____
Youth S	_____	12.00	_____

**Sweatshirts**

Size	No	Price ea.	Total
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XL	_____	25.00	_____
L	_____	25.00	_____
M	_____	25.00	_____
S	_____	25.00	_____
Youth L	_____	20.00	_____
Youth M	_____	20.00	_____
Youth S	_____	20.00	_____

\*Shipping (\$4.00 per order) \_\_\_\_\_  
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Remember, teenagers like their shirts very big, and the sweatshirts are quite thick and warm. These shirts will be first-order-first-get and will be delivered before Christmas.

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<b>DONATION:</b>	_____	<b>\$50.00</b>	_____	<b>\$10.00</b>	
	<b>\$100.00</b>	_____	<b>\$25.00</b>	_____	<b>\$OTHER</b>

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