

Mary Shulander and Cathy Delain didn't need to say a word.

When asked why the annual "Showtime" event has thrived for five years, they simply extended their arms in unison, pointing at fellow organizer Tom Drill, who was sitting nearby.

"Everyone just loves Tom," DeLain said. "He has so much energy. He keeps this going."

"No one can say no to Tom," added Shulander. "There's not another Tom like him in the world. Without Tom, there would be no 'Showtime.' "

Indeed, the highly energetic Drill has been the driving force behind "Showtime" ever since starting it in 2004.

He'll be there again for this year's event, which will be held Aug. 14-15 just east of Manitowoc City Hall, 900 Quay St. Entertainers will perform on a barge docked alongside the Manitowoc River.

"We're hoping Showtime '08 – our fifth event – will draw the same loyal and supportive crowd we've had since the city council and Mayor Crawford gave us the OK the first time," said Drill, downplaying his role in the event, preferring to shine the spotlight on others.

"Showtime" means so much to Drill for a couple of reasons — it spotlights local talent, and the proceeds go toward good causes. Proceeds from this year's event will benefit the aquatic center at Citizen Park, Sputnikfest, Relay for Life, the Dewey Street Skate Park, United Way and the Teresa Halbach Memorial.

Last year, about \$5,000 was distributed.

Pre-show entertainment begins at 5:30 p.m. each day. On Aug. 14, the Manitowoc Marine Band will perform, and on Aug. 15 the Garth Neustadter Trio takes center stage.

The main show begins at 7 p.m. each day and lasts about two hours. The performers are scheduled to include:

- * Singer Jemma Herrmann
- * The Roncalli Singers
- * Dancers Mike and Sarah Kohnle
- * Kaleidoscope
- * Jean Wolfmeyer Dancers
- * Jim and Susie Miller
- * Roncalli duet
- * Pianist Kim Gauer
- * A skit by Masquers Inc.

"It's a really nice outdoor event," Delain said. "It's uniquely Manitowoc. It all goes back to the origin of the event — wanting to showcase local talent. We have performers here who do really good things and we want people to be able to see them."

All of the performers donate their time for the event.

"They're always eager to help out," Shulander said.

This year, entertainers will be performing on a new 16-foot-by-24-foot stage that provides added stability and safety. "Showtime" paid for the materials, and Mike Check Builders donated the time and labor to construct it.

Tentatively, spectators also will get to see the Sputnikfest contestants who'll be vying for the title of "Ms. Space Debris." The inaugural Sputnikfest is scheduled for Sept. 5-6.

Admission to "Showtime" is free. Food and beverages will be available beginning at 5:30 p.m. each day.

"The whole show is something for the entire family to see," Shulander said.

Donations will be accepted during the "Showtime" event, or they may be mailed to: "Showtime," P.O. Box 1872, Manitowoc, WI 54221.

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