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Press Release

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: October 9, 2013**

## **Performance about Sinking of the Princess Sophia to be held at the Alaska State Museum**

JUNEAU – The Alaska State Museum will host a reader’s theatre performance of “The Real Story of the Sinking of the Princess Sophia,” on Saturday, October 19th at 2:00 p.m.

The author of the play, Mary Lou Spartz, says that it’s important to note that her play is a work of fiction firmly built upon “fact, myth and gossip.” It is, however, based upon the true story of the sinking of the Princess Sophia, one of the several steamships built and operated by the Canadian Pacific Railway around the turn of the last century. In October of 1918, the Princess Sophia hit Vanderbilt reef in Lynn Canal near Juneau and later sank with the loss of all aboard. It was the worst maritime accident in the history of British Columbia and Alaska – hundreds of people lost their lives. The circumstances of the wreck were controversial, as some believed that all aboard could have been saved.

Spartz has recruited eight local actors to read the parts of the play, and she will serve as the narrator herself, filling in stage directions so that the audience can better envision how the play would look during a full performance with theatrical staging. Spartz has said that one of the reasons she is interested in this particular chapter of history is that the story is a very compelling one, and that Juneau should be proud of the way it stood ready to respond to the grounding - and later to the response – after the ship sank. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking will be in 2018, and Spartz is spearheading a group to commemorate the event.

The event is free and admission to the museum is free during this event.

Winter hours at the museum are 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Discounted winter admission is \$3. Visitors 18 and under are admitted free of charge. An annual pass that allows unlimited visits to the Alaska State Museum and the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka is available for \$15. Assistance is available for visitors with special needs – please contact Visitor Services at 465-2901 before the visit.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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