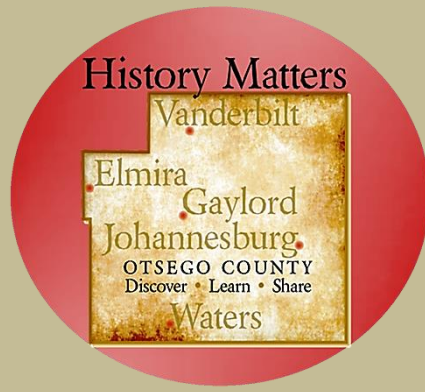


Update # 56
April 6, 2019



Phil Alexander
History Detective



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Gaylord's native son, Claude Shannon, is often described as "the most important person you've never heard of"; however, that is changing. Here's how.

To commemorate Shannon's life changing advances in information technology, the statue of Shannon shown to the left was unveiled on October 6, 2000 by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. Shannon developed theories that resulted in the Digital Age. Cell phones, digital photos,

thumb drives, cable television, and the Internet are possible because of his work.

The impressive bronze bust was the first of 6 statues of Shannon that can be found across the United States. Be sure to read the inscription on the plaque. Also, take a close look at the note in Shannon's left hand. The inscribed scientific formula is different for each of the statues.

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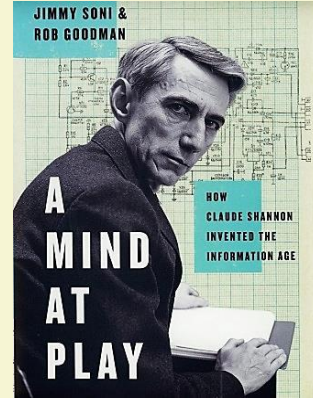
A team of Leadership Otsego County participants called The Juggling Poets has taken on an amazing project. They are working with several partners to construct signage at Shannon Park located at 126 W. Main. See sketch below.

There will be a sign facing Main Street as well as one at the alley entrance to the pocket park. Fundraising efforts are under way. For more details, contact Heidi Yocum at myocum@gmail.com or 989-858-1746.

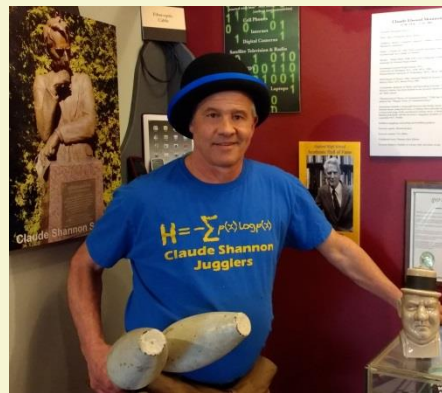


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One of the best ways to learn about Claude Shannon is to read the book "A Mind At Play." Chapter 1 is titled "Gaylord" and tells about Shannon's boyhood years here in Otsego County. The Shannon family lived on North Center Avenue. His father, Claude Sr., owned a furniture and funeral home business, built two buildings on Main Street, and was elected Probate Judge. His mother, Mabel, was a teacher and principal. Shannon's older sister, Catherine, was a talented musician and later became a mathematics professor.



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Claude Shannon and Tommy Tropic (shown at left) share a love of juggling. At Alpenfest, Tommy's act dubbed the "Claude Shannon Jugglers" is a big hit with kids. Notice the formula printed on his t-shirt.

Tommy donated several items to our Museum for the Shannon exhibit.

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Claude Shannon's legacy is visible in his hometown of Gaylord. For example, History Matters founding member Brian Pearson tells us Shannon was the first inductee in the high school's Academic Hall of Fame. Supt. Pearson, who portrayed Shannon in last year's cemetery stroll, also pointed out the Robotics Club is named in Shannon's honor.

Lisa Marie Tobin, also a founding member of History Matters, remembers Claude Shannon speaking at her high school graduation ceremony in 1986. Tobin also leads the Northern Michigan Bioblitz where Shannon's Biodiversity Index is highlighted. An award is given at this event that recognizes Shannon's contribution to the field of biology.

History Matters Detective Colleen Keysor in designing an exhibit at the University Center to honor Shannon.