

Love Boat themed event benefits arts council

By
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IVN Contributing Writer

This past Saturday, Feb. 22 Illinois River Valley Arts Council (IRVAC) hosted the first Love Boat themed fund-raiser dinner. The proceeds raised will go to the Learning Through Art program that is in place at all three schools. The program teaches students about art, locally and globally, through cultural experiences.

"We appreciate all the support from the community to help the students in our schools understand the material that is presented to them," said Judy Hoyle, president of IRVAC, in reference to the art program in the schools.

Many community members spent their evening enjoying laughs, good food, friends and live music provided by Oregon Little Big Band Duo, Michelle LeCompte and Tim Wallace. The event got off to a great start with Rumba lessons by Patti Jo Edwards and her dance partner, Russ. After the dance lesson had wrapped up, Patti and Russ were found enjoying the live music, putting their talents to work by heating up the dance floor.

Along with dance lessons there was a silent auction that patrons could partake in. Some of the items included jewelry and paintings from local artists, gift certificates from local businesses and many other pleasant items. Dinner was catered by the Vine Restaurant and served by board member relatives and IRVAC supporters, along with Eastern Star members Hazel Griffith and Jean Shubert.

While everyone was still enjoying the wonderful meal, Hoyle took the time to talk a little about what IRVAC does for the community, some of the events that are coming up in the future and to thank many of the people involved.

"The IRVAC mission is to provide art education and art experiences. We do try to incorporate those two goals in every activity we pursue," said Hoyle. "We were very pleased that in the face of several competing events this weekend, we were able to create a fund-raiser that was fun for everyone and successful too."

Some of the people that were behind the scenes making this magical night such a success were: Kent and Joyce Fisher who sold many of the tickets; Linda Corey-Woodward, who organized the silent and live auction; Kathryn Wilson, an activity director

who greeted guests as they arrived and helped with other activities throughout the night; Bonnie Campanoli, Maelagh Baker and Joyce Fisher created wonderful appetizers and manned the wine and beer table. Ken Bourgo took on the colossal job of kitchen clean-up; Barbara Ford, Rebecca Pearson, Barbara Leon and Leslie Kingsford made the magical night that much more special with the décor for the evening. Bruce and Gail Stone were the photographers capturing those special 'cruise' moments.

Kent Fisher, Vice President for IRVAC, was the auctioneer for the live auction that got underway after dinner. The live auction included more paintings, wine, getaways for two, tickets to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and much, much more. With Fisher's efforts and contributions from generous donors and bidders, the live auction brought in more than \$2,000.

"It was a good turnout. I am very pleased with the community support for our efforts," said Hoyle.

Along with the Love Boat dinner, IRVAC has many upcoming events planned for the rest of 2014. Some of those events include the annual Art Walk, Dancefarm and 3 Rivers Chorale Concert. For more information on these events and more, go to IRVAC's website at www.irvac.com.

IV Fire District holds annual awards banquet

By
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Illinois Valley Fire District members and their families, along with community leaders, dignitaries and district supporters, came together to celebrate the firefighters' dedication and accomplishments at Illinois Valley High School last Saturday.

The firefighters, decked out in dress uniforms, cut a striking image far different from how Valley residents typically encounter these local heroes who arrive on scenes of crises covered from head to toe in protective gear.

"Fire can be the most uncontrolled environment known to mankind," said Oregon State Fire Marshal Mark Wallace, the keynote speaker at the awards banquet. "Yet community members expect firefighters to control what often cannot be controlled. Firefighters show up on the worst day of peoples' lives, and in the Illinois Valley, they do it as volunteers."

Sixteen new volunteer firefight-

ers, having recently completed initial training, have grown the IVFD's ranks to about 40. Only four paid firefighters anchor district operations.

Wallace, who authored the book "Fire Department Strategic Planning: Creating Future Excellence," told the crowd that the key to a successful fire district is guidance, direction and strategic thinking.

"Think of it as organized common sense," he said. "And remember, every challenge gives rise to opportunity, and every opportunity provides challenge."

IVFD Chief Dennis Hoke has been on duty in the Valley for just over a year. Previously, much of his career was spent serving alongside paid career firefighters in big cities.

"Our volunteers do a fine job," Hoke told the crowd. "I would put these folks up against any of the firefighters I've worked with. These volunteers have passion and that gives them a lot of drive, which makes them so successful. Eighty percent of our calls are medical. There are people walking around alive today, that had our crews not made that intervention,

they would have died."

Hoke said this district is "all about the volunteers" and that without them the Valley would not enjoy the level of service they experience 24-hours-a-day.

"The future will be interesting as we figure out how to replace antiquated apparatus and take good care of our volunteers," Hoke added, noting that both call volume and demands for service are increasing. "We're embarking upon a strategic planning process, which has not been done before."

Entertainment at the banquet included a video filmed by longtime volunteer Dale Sandberg that featured district firefighters acting out roles of both rescuers and victims in farcical situations. The actors' fresh irreverent humor had the crowd in stitches. Picture Captain Tom Zulliger, a 31-year IVFD veteran, dressed in a head scarf and nightgown, playing the role of an 82-year-old woman with breathing problems. It took the rescuers 27 minutes to show up. They got lost and when they arrived, a seemingly endless train of firefighters emerged from

a truck carrying axes (Monty Python style), and once in the house, one of the crew members raided the refrigerator.

Humor is a necessary component within the organization; many firefighters say it helps them cope with intolerable situations that they encounter over and over again.

Last July, a traumatic two-car accident left local resident Orah Tipton severely injured and trapped in her car for more than forty minutes. The day was hot, over 100 degrees, and some of the firefighters almost succumbed to heat exhaustion as they struggled to free Tipton, who was barely hanging onto life.

Tipton, with the aid of a cane, but now walking on her own steam, slowly made her way to the stage at the banquet to thank the firefighters who helped save her life. Throughout her healing process, Tipton has displayed bravery and determination — qualities firefighters understand well — and her rescuers were thrilled to see her doing so much better than anyone had expected.

"That day was hard on all of us,"

Tipton told the crowd. "I definitely teetered between the two realms, and I definitely felt how much you all wanted me to stick around."

Another theme echoed by several speakers at the banquet is the close fraternity shared between firefighters. That is born, in part, from mutual respect and understanding that each of them is prepared to sacrifice their own lives to save others.

"Firefighters can go anywhere in the world and when they meet other firefighters, it's like they're brothers and sisters," Wallace said. "It's unspoken, but it's there."

The Illinois Valley Equestrian Team volunteered their time and contributed top notch service in providing dining room and kitchen services at the banquet.

Music by the popular local duo, "Guppy," who donated their time and talent, was enjoyed by banquet participants.

The awards banquet ended on a high note, after door prizes were handed out. Hoke also thanked event sponsors: "Without your support, this event wouldn't have occurred."

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