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Auction from 1A

More than 300 people attended the annual Rotary Auction at the Florence Events Center. Groups filled 38 tables with costumes that fit the Olympics theme, including sports-related paraphernalia and Olympics officials, who conducted "drug tests" on attendees. Some people took to the original spirit of the Olympics by wearing togas and other ancient Greek styles.

McMullen and co-chair Kim Erickson coordinated a huge team of Rotarians to pull off the event, from decorations to auction items, food and wine to the dance floor.

"We have a lot of sponsors that really help us out and get us here on the night of the auction with things already paid for," Erickson said. "We're coming into the night and all the money raised is kind of 'profit' to us."



CHANTELLE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS

The 2018 Rotary Auction Cochairs Kim Erickson and Kevin McMullen led a committee of Rotarians to the finish line, making "Lighting the Torch for Our Kids' Future" a success.

Sponsors for the event included table sponsors, cash and item donors and other sponsors, including Reustle Prayer Rock Vineyards, On Your Feet with a Splash, Vacation International, Sea Lion Caves, Iron Horse

Logging, Heceta Self Storage, Katie Prosser, Pavilion Catering, Oregon Pacific Bank, AlSCO, Best Western Pier Point Inn and auctioneers Bob and Blair Sneddon.

"It was their 49th year auctioneering for our Rotary Auction," Erickson said. "We just want to let them know how much we appreciate what they do for us."

In addition, personnel from U.S. Coast Guard Station Siuslaw River and 18 students from the Interact Clubs at Mapleton and Siuslaw high schools helped during the auction. Twenty-five past presidents donated 25 desserts made by area bankers.

"We have a lot of people to thank," McMullen said.

Rotarian volunteers decorated for the event, sought out contributions, set up, tore down and ran the auction, including packaging auction items and ringing up totals.

"We get a lot of credit for this, but without our committees there is just no way we could do it," McMullen said. "I was looking back at the first auction in 1960, and they had two people and raised \$1,000. ... Throughout the years, it's grown bigger and bigger. It's a big thing, and it doesn't happen without our committee."

Committee meetings began in November, and covered everything that went into making the auction so special.

Erickson and McMullen thanked committee members with gold medals and tiny Olympic torches.

The decorating committee, chaired by Crystal Farnsworth and Sherry Harvey, got a shout out for their work in transforming the event center into a regal Greek hall. Olympic medallions hung over every table and colorful Olympic torches formed the centerpieces.

Farnsworth said, "Every member rose to their tasks and did them well. We are a well-oiled machine. Everyone was dependable and worked hard."

Her co-chair Harvey said the process ran a couple hours ahead of schedule because so many people were willing to show up and work hard.

A motto of "Let the Games Begin" accompanied lively bidding on 55 live auction items, as well as many more silent auctions.

"The top donor this year, which provided the item that sells for the most, was the package from Siuslaw News," McMullen said. "And, due to Art Koenig buying a shoe horn that Blair Sneddon wanted to sell during the auction, he was our top spender again this year by about \$24."

The auction featured many "winners" in the community.

"We of course couldn't do this without you two running the whole show," said Rotary President Craig Sanders to Erickson and McMullen. "Thanks, you two."

The Florence Rotary Auction is a tradition that has lasted in Florence since 1960 to support youth scholarships, community events and projects.

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