

Fall/Winter 2008

ENLIGHTENER

Official newsletter of the Sun Prairie Education Foundation

www.sunprairieeducationfoundation.org



KEYS TO THE FUTURE: OH WHAT A NIGHT!

SPEF's dueling pianos and silent auction fund-raiser at Angell Park Pavilion makes new friends, honors Stark Company and founding board member and president Glenn Fenske and raises plenty of money for SPEF projects.

The Sun Prairie Education Foundation (SPEF) conducted its "Keys to the Future" fund-raiser at Angell Park Pavilion on Thursday, October 16, 2008. SPEF President Randy Handel (with microphone, top photo) surprised a teary-eyed SPEF past president Glenn Fenske (waving) with a plaque for his service to the SPEF board. Other board members including Nancy Everson (left, top photo) and Ollie Berge gave Fenske a round of applause for his service to the board.

Handel also announced that Pete Simon and Todd Draws donated \$500 checks they won as prizes as successful bidders in a piggy bank auction held as part of the fund-raiser that featured Shout House Dueling Pianos from Minneapolis. Part of the event included Handel thanking sponsors and acknowledging the contributions of Stark Company Realtors, who assisted in not only securing silent auction

items, but also in setting up tables and organizing the auction items at Angell Park Pavilion. The Sun Prairie Education Foundation expresses our gratitude, thanks and appreciation for making our "Keys to the Future" benefit for a job well done, but specifically, these other special benefactors:

Event sponsors Bank of Sun Prairie, Glenn and Judy Fenske; McGann Construction, Dr. Chris Stevens Family and Cosmetic Dentistry, QBE-General Casualty, Bradley Farms Inc., and St. Mary's Hospital; sunpraiestaronline.com; everyone who donated or purchased silent auction items; Edith's Catering; the Sun Prairie High School Construction Class for taking time out from building their house to help set up the benefit; Les McBurney for his assistance in securing Angell Park Pavilion; Dan Presser for serving as auctioneer; and Shout House Dueling Pianos from Minneapolis for providing the fun!



Retired teachers support Sun Prairie Education Foundation

Retired teachers Jan Thompson, Marilyn Penn and Jeanine Hensler were among those supporting education with their attendance at the Keys to the Future event.

SPEF SIDELINES



The SPEF has had a busy year, with two teachers earning honors, including Patrick Marsh Middle School teacher Sandy Kowalczyk (top photo, taken at the Keys to the Future event) as Middle School Teacher of the Year and Royal Oaks teacher Katie Boos as Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year (bottom photo hugging Royal Oaks fifth grader Megan Kessler, who nominated Boos). The SPEF also sponsored Freshman Challenge Days at Sun Prairie High School (middle photo) designed to help students become more aware of their perceptions of others and of themselves. Diversity Training Consultant Santo Carfora led the groups in communications and trust building exercises meant to help them appreciate diversity.

Harms, QBE donate \$10,000 to Sun Prairie Education Foundation

Matt Harms and Ritter Insurance, in a donation matched by Sun Prairie-based QBE-General Casualty Insurance Companies, donated \$10,000 on Tuesday, Aug. 5 to the Sun Prairie Education Foundation to serve as both a celebration of 25 years in business for Ritter Insurance and as a way to reach youth about the future of renewable energy.

“We obviously could have set this up on our own, but we wanted to do it through the Foundation, but we feel very strongly this is a great organization,” Harms said. “We hope that by giving our gift to the Education Foundation (SPEF), that we can get some publicity for them also – for what they’re doing out here in the community and how they’re helping and get some awareness – so that was one of the main reasons.

“The other reason we did it is because with this gift, our goal is to reach the kids,” Harms said. “With the people involved in this group – business people and school people – this was the best way to take our money and really reach the most kids with the message.”

The goal is to get into every Sun Prairie Area School District public school with something age-

appropriate relating to renewable energy, according to Harms. “The other thing that this group generates is we have businesspeople who generate ideas,” Harms added.

One such example: Hooking Harms up with Sun Prairie Water & Light to engage renewable energy resources from Sun Prairie-based Wisconsin Public Power Inc. as part of the potential to place renewable energy programs in the schools. “The generosity of the Ritters in combination with General Casualty is certainly a boon for us,” remarked Glenn Fenske, outgoing SPEF President and founding trustee of the SPEF board of directors. “I thought it was really unique because it speaks highly of an organization and him personally because to see an organization of that size working that closely with an independent agent . . . that says a lot for what they think (of Matt). I think their cause and direction are timely with what’s going on in society today.”

In addition, Harms said many local businesses have renewable energy components to their businesses. Part of the gift could potentially be a career fair at Sun Prairie High School for youth to explore careers in renewable energy, according to Harms.

“We do hope to make this an annual thing, I would like to point that out,” Harms said.

Rich Kalina (left) and Matt Harms (right) presented the \$10,000 award to SPEF President Randy Handel





FINDORFF GIVES \$50,000 TO FOUNDATION

Donation will be used to present SPEF's Speakers Series

Motorists who drove by the site for the new Sun Prairie High School on Tuesday, Sept. 2 probably envisioned the individuals posing for pictures near the site on Highway N were dignitaries associated with education in the Sun Prairie Area School District.

What those motorists did not know were those educational leaders were celebrating a gift of \$50,000 made by the construction firm Findorff & Son to the Sun Prairie Education Foundation (SPEF).

Rich Lynch, president of Findorff, explained the relationship between Findorff and the non-profit organization whose purpose is to improve public educational opportunities within the Sun Prairie Area School District. "When you have great people like this that have conceived the idea to come up with a program to raise additional funds to enhance the programs the school district already has invested in (it's worth supporting)," Lynch said.

"We are always thankful for every gift – whatever the size – but this is pretty special – the largest gift to date in our five year history," remarked Sun Prairie Education Foundation President Randy Handel about the gift from Findorff. Handel (third from left), along with SPEF board vice president Pam Albi (second from right), SPEF Treasurer Ron Blawusch and past president Glenn Fenske (far right) accepted the gift presented by Lynch and Sun Prairie native Jeff Tubbs, who went through the Sun Prairie schools and is now vice president of business development at Findorff.

"They found a way to pull together some funds and do some special things that the teachers and various administrators have found to incorporate into the school year," Lynch said.

"For us, it was a natural because we've had an outstanding relationship with the district," Lynch said. "We are always so impressed at what a community district it is – everybody comes together. Every groundbreaking that we have been privileged to be involved with, the band's there, the choir's there – the whole community turns out and you can just tell that there is such strong support for the school system in this community, so again for us, it was a natural. For us, we look as an organization for ways to reach as many people as we can. In any contribution or philanthropic effort that we put out there, one of our focuses is to try and be as inclusive as we can. We looked at this foundation as a way to take the best ideas from the teachers, administrators and the community to enhance the programs already in the schools, so that reaches a lot of kids."

A portion of the money will be used to support the SPEF Speaker Series, which began recently as a way to reach school students and the community about education-related topics and issues.

Rich Lynch (far left), and Jeff Tubbs (second from left) from Findorff presented the donation to SPEF board members on Sept. 2

REMEMBERING BOB DEVENISH

Although he resigned from the Sun Prairie Education Foundation Board of Directors, the board is still mourning the death of Bob Devenish (at right) who died Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2008 at St. Mary's Hospital with his beloved family at his side.

He was born on July 19, 1921 in Longmont, Colo., the son of George and Emma (Pulsifer) Devenish.

During the depression, his family moved to New Berry Springs located in the Mohave Desert



where they homesteaded. While attending Pasadena City College, WWII broke out and Bob enlisted in the Army Air Corp. He served as a B-17 pilot and flew missions over Europe. Upon returning to the United States, he married his fiancée, Alpha Piatt on June 1, 1945 in Balboa Island, Calif. He continued his active duty service with the now United States Air Force for 23 years, which culminated with him serving at Truax Field, Madison which brought Bob and his family to the area.

After retiring, he began his second career at the University of Wisconsin where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees. He was then hired by the UW as their Director of Communications, which he held for 18 years retiring in 1985. During that time, he founded and was an active member of A.C.U.T.A. (Assn. of College & University Telecommunication Administrators).

As a resident of the Sun Prairie area, he was



Remembering
Bob Devenish

very active with various organizations. He helped found the Colonial Club, the Sun Prairie Taxi Service, was a member of the Sun Prairie Education Foundation board and the Sun Prairie Rotary Club where he served through the various chairs and then the Rotary District #6250 where he served as District Governor.

Memorials may be directed to Sun Prairie Education Foundation, Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, the Local Rotary Foundation Chapter or the Colonial Club.

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Education Foundation

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