

News & Notes

Annual Blue Jean Ball is a denim good time

Jody Acers
For the Pine Knot News

Some might say that communities are more divided than ever. But if you joined us last Saturday night at the Otter Creek Ballroom at Black Bear Casino & Resort, you would agree that we are completely united in one area: quality education for kids in Cloquet.

To look around the room at the 19th annual Cloquet Educational Foundation's Blue Jean Ball, you would see a very casual vibe — friends talking to friends, family members sitting together, people making new friends. It was really hard for me as CEF director to think of this gathering as a “money-raising” event. It felt more than that. There was a warmth and a togetherness of shared goodwill, the feel of a real occasion rather than an event to support a cause.

As one of my predecessors once commented, organizing the Blue Jean Ball is like “planning a wedding every year.” The board of directors strives to create an evening that treats each ticket holder as a guest, welcoming them with hospitality for an evening of fun.

How many times in the year can you get nearly 400 people to stand and declare “heads” (hands on head) or

“tails” (hands on hips) and wait with bated breath for Del Prevost to flip a coin. Or a play-by-play of the “Treasure Chest Game,” where one key opens up a chest of goodies, this year \$300 worth.

Our DJ, Eric of Euphoric Entertainment, joined in the fun and played scavenger hunt games for those who wanted a little more action, and for those who didn't, we had a slideshow to enjoy before or after dinner. Really, the Blue Jean Ball has more of the feel of a birthday party.

My personal feeling about having a big event in the cold of winter is this: Our community craves a place where we can gather and just talk, laugh, enjoy a few fun games, share a meal, and do some good. We want to be joined together, and we are by something as simple as wanting great education in Cloquet.

I am so proud of the board of directors of the CEF, the programs and initiatives that it funds, and the Blue Jean Ball. There are few times in the year where the community can get together for such a good cause, and this year the CEF raised more than \$46,000 to support education in Cloquet. It goes without saying that we are overwhelmed by the support of our community, the sponsors of the event

— big and small — and the businesses and volunteers who simply said “yes.”

As I have said before, during, and now after the ball, I have no good words to express my gratitude and love of this community, especially our major sponsor — the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and Black Bear Casino & Resort — other than “thank you.” What a night. Please join us next year.

Jody Acers is the director of the Cloquet Educational Foundation and a longtime volunteer with the organization. Contact her at jacers@isd94.org.



Gina Painter, center, is congratulated by Heather Johnson, left, and Sheri Englund after Painter's key turned the lock for the Treasure Chest Game. She won more than \$300 worth of cash and prizes. *Jana Peterson / Pine Knot News*



The many volunteers for the Blue Jean Ball pose for a photo before the gala fundraising event began Saturday at the Black Bear Casino & Resort. *Contributed photo*



Tables at the ball are sponsored by and decorated with goodies from businesses, many with elaborate or costly centerpieces that one lucky person at the table can take home. Pictured wearing Pine Knot newsprint hats are (clockwise from top left) Vicki Jarvi, Willa Hanson, Dawn Johnson, Wendy Meisner and Susie Meisner. *Jana Peterson / Pine Knot News*

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