



Men of the Riverbend amuses many, raises money for Riverbender.com Community Center

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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ALTON - The drinks were flowing and the audience was filled with laughter at the first **Men of the Riverbend Benefit Fundraising Auction** beginning at **7 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 29**, at the **Riverbender.com Community Center**.

The entire event was organized by Riverbender.com Community Center's **Director of Operations Meredith Wright**, with the help of **Riverbender.com's Content Manager Brittany Kohler**. Special guest **Mark Harman from Tarrant and Harman Real Estate and Auction Co.** did his part as the fast-talking auctioneer.

Wright and Kohler worked diligently to approach sponsors and recruit bachelors to participate at the charity auction in the months leading up to the event.



The guys who volunteered their night to become the “Men of the Riverbend” walked out on stage and through the audience, strutting their stuff in an effort to gain some higher bids. The bachelors represented a product or service that a local establishment had graciously donated before the auction.

Attendees began filing through the doors at 7 p.m. and socialized during the event's cocktail hour. Shortly after 8 p.m., the show got started, as Wright called the attention of the crowd to the importance of community support that the RBCC had gained since its inception.

After the formalities were finished, the auctions began. Men walked, but mostly danced out on stage and through the crowd.

One bachelor, **Jaron Lusch**, who was representing the **PBR Bar in St. Louis, Mo.**, came out onstage donning only blue jeans, a cowboy hat and cowboy boots. The ladies in the crowd went berserk.



Another bachelor, **Blake Flener**, who represented **Bull N' Bear Bar & Grill of Glen Carbon**, came out on stage wearing a homemade toga, made entirely of cardboard beer boxes. The outfit was even paired with a sword.



Of course, the fun and sometimes borderline mature content of the evening was for the greater good. The proceeds of the auction, which ranked in to be over \$4,000, will support the RBCC. With this support, the center can maintain a safe, fun environment for kids around the area. The center also holds school dances, summer camps and other youth events throughout the year.

[CLICK HERE OR LOOK BELOW TO VIEW A PHOTO GALLERY OF THE MEN OF THE RIVERBEND BENEFIT FUNDRAISING AUCTION](#)

The participating bachelors and the organizations and businesses they represented in the action are listed below:

1. Mark Collins representing **Riverbender.com Community Center**: Two Hour Center Rental Voucher
2. Ryan Howland representing **Gentelin's on Broadway**: Dinner for Six
3. Kyle Ryan representing **The Sports Academy/ Elite FT**: 1 month Family Membership (Ages 8+)
4. Matt Korte representing **DJ's Krazy Kruizes**: \$150 Party Bus Rental Voucher
5. Jim Thompson representing **The Alton Area Photography Group**: WINNER'S CHOICE: \$300 value photography session voucher or gallery canvas print of your choice

6. Jim Engracia representing **Edison's Entertainment Complex**: Laser tag, bowling, arcade and dine-in combination voucher
7. Adam Bogard representing **Morrison's Irish Pub**: Dinner for four with a beer-flight per guest included
8. Tony Drake representing **Principalli's Cafe**: Dinner for four, appetizer included, and a bottle of wine
9. Jaron Lusch representing **PBR St. Louis**: All-Night Happy Hour Special
10. Joe Palcheff representing **Grafton Harbor**: Two "River Rambler" Tickets aboard the Hakuna Matata River Cruise Boat and a bottle of wine
11. Jordon Herndon representing **Firehouse Bar**: At-home Theatre Package to include movie projector, New Release movies and popcorn combination
12. Brandon "Quickdraw" Lowe representing **Hollow Wear**: One hour personal training session with Lowe, assorted patriotic merchandise, 1 Hollow Wear designed belt/buckle combo and an autographed "Quickdraw" t-shirt
13. Rick Eveans representing **Alton Sports Tap**: Four hour Banquet Hall Rental Voucher
14. Blake Flener representing **Bull N' Bear Bar & Grill**: Four "Dinner for Two" Vouchers
15. Chris "Soup" Campbell representing **The Loading Dock**: Dinner for Four and a bottle of wine
16. Chad "Chiddy" Campbell representing **Nautilus Fitness Center**: Six month membership, Six months of cross-boot classes and a Nautilus training shirt
17. Craig Roark representing **Mac's Time Out**: Eight Sunday Brunch Vouchers



