



TBLA's Bass Unlimited Banquet Celebrates Toledo Bend Lake In Grand Style

By Ramona Moore

The 15th Annual TBLA Bass Unlimited – Back A Great Fighter Banquet and Auction was held on April 21, at Cypress Bend Park Pavilion on the #1 Bass Fishing Lake in the nation. The evening was the culmination of Toledo Bend Lake Association's major fundraiser for projects that serve and benefit Toledo Bend Lake and the surrounding communities.

The evening began with guests browsing the many items available in the silent auction, raffle drop boxes, and the live auction. The stage area of the pavilion was decorated by Nichols who uniquely captured the essence of life on the lake.



The crowd browsing the items in the raffle drop-boxes and silent auction items.



The stage designed and set up by the talented artists at Nichols, Inc., of Many. In the foreground is the custom fleur-de-lis fire pit designed by Jamie Hoffpauir of JH Services which sold in the live auction.

Emcee Ricky Yeldell welcomed the crowd, followed by Heidi Knight, a freshman at NSU, who sang The Star-Spangled Banner. TBLA President Gary Moore introduced two men who were instrumental in getting the Bass Unlimited—Back A Great Fighter banquet started 15 years ago—Mr. Robert Conyer and Don Cooper



Robert Conyer, left, and Don Cooper, right, were instrumental in starting the Bass Unlimited Banquet 15 years ago. They were instoduced by TBLA president Gary Moore.

A barbeque dinner, featuring three meats complemented by savory side dishes was catered by Silver Star Smokehouse of Bossier City.

After dinner, auctioneer Kevin McDonald took the stage and kicked off the evening’s main event with the live auction. Among the highlights of the live auction was the 2017 TBLA framed poster signed by the Final 12 Bass Elite Anglers along with the fishing rod used by Pro Angler Jason Christie in the recent Bass Elite tournament on Toledo Bend. Jason generously donated his rod and reel used to catch the big fish of the tournament, 9 lbs, 10 oz, which was a TBLA

tagged Lunker from a year earlier when it weighed 10.32. Mr. P.D. Vinson’s winning bid of \$3,000 snagged this fantastic prize.

A custom fleur-de-lis fire pit designed by Jamie Hoffpaur of JH Services sold for \$2,100, a giclee titled “Sportsman’s Paradise” by Artist Don Edwards sold for \$2,300, and a LSU Tiger head carving by Burt Fleming sold for \$2,000.



Don Edwards’ giclee “Sportsman’s Paradise” is displayed to the audience as it goes up for bid.



Emcee Ricky Yeldell, left, Grand Prize Coordinator Bruce Rogers, center, and TBLA President Gary Moore, right, read the name of the first gun winner drawn at the banquet while the ticket drawer looks on.

Grand Prize Raffle Coordinator Bruce Rogers conducted the live drawing for the first two guns awarded in the 2017-2018 Fifty-two Gun Grand Raffle. The lucky winners were Mike McCormick of Many, LA, and Jack Adams of Welch, LA. The remaining gun raffle winners will be determined by the numbers drawn from the LA Pick 3 Lottery on Friday nights from April 28, 2017 – April 6, 2018.

TBLA thanks the 2017 sponsors and supporters who graciously donated time, merchandise, money and talents toward making this event a success: Platinum Sponsor – Cypress Bend Resort; Gold sponsors - Nichols, Toledo Town Hardware and Supply, Sabine State Bank, and Sabine River Authority of Louisiana; Silver Sponsors – Harbuck Outdoor Sports, Interstate Building Materials, Foy Motors, Toledo Fiberglass, Living The Dream Guide Service, Costa, Kayak Bass Fishing, JH Services Metal Fabrication, and Toledo Town & Tackle; Bronze Sponsors – 1st Choice Real Estate Service, A/Real Estate Connection, Bank of Montgomery, Charlie McGee’s Guide Service, Coca Cola of Shreveport, Artist Don Edwards, Falcon Rods, Joel Lopez, Margaritaville Resort & Casino, Shelby Savings Bank, Southwest Beverage, Toledo Town Realty, and Town of Many.

TBLA is grateful to everyone who attended for their support in making our 15th year an event to remember.