

Dads Chair Crane's Spring Fundraiser For First Time In School's History

By **Ann Pieramici** / Special to CASA

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CRANE COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL HISTORY, two fathers agreed to chair the biggest fundraising event of the year, and they not only threw a spectacular party, they sold more tickets to the spring gala than any other dinner/dance auction in Crane's 80 years. The men have proved themselves more than capable, and the Crane moms couldn't be happier!

The sold-out crowd of nearly 330 parents and friends packed the campus on Saturday, May 2nd, as Crane's S.S. Minnow set sail at the Gilligan's Island themed event. In true Gilligan form, two men commanded the ship: Skipper Dave Quenzer and his "Little Buddy" Ted Simmons.

Jeppe Madsen, Parents for Crane (PFC) President, said the combination of the two men was extraordinary. Since taking the helm in the fall, Madsen declared the 2008-09 academic term the "The Year of the Dad," introducing several new father/child events and taking on dad Danny Burgner as PFC Vice President. But even Madsen was floored that two men would step up to chair the school's largest fundraiser, and most elaborate event, stating "Dave and Ted complemented each other so well; their ideas were brilliant and beautifully executed." Of course they were assisted by a stellar crew of castaways including Daryl Stegall, Michele Cuttler, Cyndi Richman, Laura Macker Johnston and Tiffany Foster, among many other mates.

Dressed appropriately as the Professor,

Headmaster Joel Weiss welcomed the passengers aboard, exclaiming, "This is a big event for Crane School, and though it comes late in the school year it is arguably our most important fundraiser.

It's also one of those rare times when the entire Crane faculty and parents are together, celebrating and reflecting on our school."

Former parent Kent Massey served as auctioneer and as the live auction began the raffia paddles waved like the South Seas. The amazing array of auction items included elaborate class art projects,

American Idol tickets, a Lucky's restaurant ad featuring the highest bidder's child, and a peak-season ski trip to Aspen that would even make the Howells envious. After the auction concluded Weiss returned to the stage and urged parents to reach even deeper and raise their paddles again in support of the school's Scholarship Endowment. The school distributed

\$720,000 in tuition assistance grants last year, thereby enabling 60 students to attend Crane.

It seems that Tiki, the Tahitian god of money (who was present at every event planning meeting) worked his magic, not only bringing this tight-knit community closer but raising a fair amount of money, in the midst of tough economic times. Though the event proceeds didn't break any records, Simmons says "The

fact that the event sold out a week prior and the sponsorship level exceeded that of previous years is a huge tribute to the school and the power of its parents and teachers."



Matching Maryanns - **Julia Rodgers** and **Ann Pieramici**



Headmaster **Joel Weiss** surrounded by auction chairs **Daryl Stegall** and **Michelle Cuttler**



Kevin and **Nancy O'Connor**



Cathy and **Dave Quenzer** and **Ted** and **Kelly Simmons** (Co-chairs with their wives)



John and **Elizabeth McGovern** as the Howells



Amy Mayfield, **Ginny & Garrett Speirs**, **Laura Shelburne** (Crane Board President)



Rita and **Doug Otto**



Committee members **Liz Dewell**, **Mary Blair** and **Tiffany Foster**

Those in attendance were awed by the transformation of Crane's campus, which is best described as vintage sixties Tiki. Dozens of Gingers, MaryAnns, and Mrs. Howells floated among the varied Gilligans, Skippers and Mr. Howells. Sipping Mai Tais, they were surrounded by blazing tiki torches, palm fronds, tropical flowers, seashells, sand, palappas and Polynesian totems, all enclosed in billowing blue drapes that gave the appearance of stormy seas. The shipwreck chic décor was just part of the evening's extravaganza which included Polynesian fire-dancers, a Crane-inspired spoof of the Gilligan's Island theme song, a moving video entitled "I Believe" featuring Crane students, delectable island fare and music by Spencer the Gardener.

Devoted committee members included Liz Dewell, Pam Raisin, Mia Morphy, Lorie Bacon, Steve Epstein, Lisa Moore, Mary Blair, Carolyn Chandler, Carolene Tacconelli, Bill Cuttler, Debbie Castile, Kelly Simmons, Lynda Schwartz, Nancy O'Connor, Matt Morphy, Teresa Childers, Trish Soriano, Pam Raisin, Julia Rodgers, Marion MacNeil, Molly Green, Anne Davis, and Katy Berrey. Many sponsors ensured a successful voyage and they included Rita and Doug Otto, Gay and Tony Browne, Debbie and John Mackall, Elizabeth and Lee Gabler, Laura and Craig Shelburne, and Leslie and Robert Zemeckis.