

# Chairmen bring memories, experience

By JENNIFER JUDGE YONKOSKI  
Post Correspondent

Joe Dwinchick has fond memories of auctions past, especially the time he almost met actors Sean Connery and Richard Harris in Dallas. It turns out the two, on a break from filming *The Molly Maguires* in the early 1970s, stopped by a friend's house in Dallas to sip Manhattans and take in the auction on a front porch in the center of it all.

"I'm so upset I missed those guys," says Dwinchick, 2005 auction co-chair. "The auction stopped as a crowd gathered around Florence Weir's porch." Florence Weir had met the two actors on the set of the film in which she played a non-speaking role. That's just one of the many stories Dwinchick can tell about the auction.

He'll also tell you about how the auctioneers used to dress. "They were so colorful," he says. "They wore cowboy hats, boots, bolo ties. You had to see it."

And he can also tell you about

the early days when he was still in elementary school and young children were used as spotters to help the auctioneer. "They gave us a whistle, a long bamboo cane, and a jungle hat," he explains. "We'd stand on a platform in the midst of the crowd and our job was to blow the whistle and point out bidders."

Dwinchick, along with his childhood friends, grew up with the auction. "Our parents were involved and then we got involved," he says. Dwinchick is seeing a new group of young people volunteering now. "In the last couple of years, the participation has been fantastic," he says. "Last year we had 20 to 30 high school students helping. What would usually take a day and a half, we did in half a day. They were so enthusiastic about doing it."

This is the second year Dwinchick is serving as co-chair with Paul Nicholson serving a second year as chair. Dwinchick feels the experience has served the team well. "It's old hat to us now," he says. "There are no surprises."

Nicholson agrees, citing the

reliable core group of volunteers that have helped from year to year. "We have very good people working and that helps," he says. "Last year our volunteers were wonderful."

Nicholson, who started working on the auction seven years ago as a member of the finance committee, also has fond memories of auctions past. "When I first got involved, I paid over \$400 to get a football signed by Joe Paterno," he explains with a chuckle, remembering how much he wanted to be the winning bidder. "It's the first thing I bought and I still have it in a case in my house."

According to Nicholson, work on this year's auction has gone smoothly. "Everything is really coming together," he says. This year new food vendors have been added, along with new activities for teens and younger children. Sue Hand will also be back to paint an auction scene, this year bringing two students with her.

"Now we're just hoping for good weather and big crowds," Nicholson adds.



Paul Nicholson, left, and Joe Dwinchick. Behind them is a poster from the days when the auction was held in Howard Risley's barn on Lehman Avenue



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