



## **Monroe County (MI) REALTORS® Bring Bidding Wars to New Heights in Annual RPAC Fundraising Auction – December 2013**

For 20 years now, the local REALTOR® association in Monroe County, Mich., (MCAR) on the western shore of Lake Erie, has been hosting an annual auction to raise money for RPAC.

"It's an event our members enjoy and look forward to," says MCAR Association Executive June Clark. "It's a chance to network, and socialize, and to enjoy the competitive spirit when the bidding heats up." This year, with the help of a \$2,500 grant from NAR taking the strain from its operating budget, the 280-member board exceeded its assessed goal of \$6,000 by more than 33 percent, raising in excess of \$8,000 for RPAC.

Clark learned about the RPAC Fundraising Grants through REALTOR® Party training that she had attended, and thanks to reminders from the field coordinators at the state level. "They're very good about letting us know what is available," says Clark, who is assisted by a staff of one. The funds from NAR covered the hall rental at a local boat club, and the cost of the food and open bar. About 80 people attended, their \$20 entry fees slated as RPAC investments. They cooked their own steaks and chicken outside on a huge grill overlooking the water. And they brought along their items to be auctioned off during the evening.

At the MCAR auction, all items are donated by members themselves, rather than solicited from the community. And every single item, no matter how small, is offered live. Clark explains that they had tried a silent auction once, but it lacked the lively engagement that really grabs the members. They are lucky in having an auctioneer who is also a REALTOR® who comes up from Toledo every year to do the honors. "Jack Amlin is wonderful," says Clark, "because he's passionate about RPAC. He really gets through to people during the bidding, telling them how RPAC dollars have been used throughout the year." Amlin generously donates his services to MCAR, and has done so since before Clark came on board, 16 years ago.

The auction is held in May, and that seasonal timing makes items like hanging flower baskets and garden ornaments especially popular. This year, a week-long stay at a member's cabin did well, as did a boat trip captained by another member. "Every year is different," says Clark. "And we never know in advance what will be donated, which is part of the fun." Sometimes offices get together and offer baskets containing gift cards to businesses in their area, or themed collections of items like children's bicycles, a wheelbarrow full of gardening tools, or a grill packed with barbeque supplies. One broker's wife has been donating a batch of chocolate chip cookies for years, and it's become a real ritual: this year, the cookies went for \$100.



The auction is a great opportunity for members to get together, relax, compete, and raise money for RPAC, says Clark. This was a particularly good year, and she notes that the improvement in the economy probably had an impact. "But there's no question," she concludes, "the assistance from NAR was a great help to our association budget!" MCAR is already looking forward to its 21st annual RPAC Auction in the spring.

*To learn more about how REALTORS® in Monroe County, Michigan have been having fun raising funds for RPAC, contact Association Executive June Clark at [juneclark@mcars.ws](mailto:juneclark@mcars.ws) or 734.242.6866.*



REALTOR® Jack Amlin from Toledo serves as auctioneer at the MCAR Annual RPAC Auction