MSAA Conference & Show – “The Great Gathering”

There was a common thread to many conversations at the 2022 MSAA Conference and Show. “It is so nice to see everyone again” or “We really needed this” were comments heard repeatedly.

As we recover from the Covid pandemic, as well as social and political challenges, we were all overdue for a get together. After a two-year break from a MSAA Conference and Show, the MSAA was ready to reconnect and let the good times roll. Great speakers, fun activities and good food and drink, made a simple recipe to keep everyone smiling from start to finish.

Mike Brennan kicked off the Conference and Show this year with our annual Real Estate Continuing Education Seminar. Providing laughs and the best continuing education value in the business made his seminar a great success that was attended by over thirty members.

Andrew Jossund ended his two-year reign as MSAA 2020 & 2021 Champion Auctioneer, with an exceptional line-up of talented auctioneers competing on Thursday evening. The Champion Auctioneer Contest was well attended and broadcast live, via Facebook, for all to view. After a hard-fought contest, JJ Wise was crowned MSAA 2022 Champion Auctioneer and Lydia Lamp was crowned our new Rookie Champion Auctioneer. Frank broke out the accordion as members enjoyed candied bacon, local pizza, and craft beer as they celebrated our new champions and being together again.

Friday was a busy day with something for everyone, including a historic trolly ride through Rochester, a family fun trip to a local arcade and bowling center and a scavenger hunt featuring MSAA trivia. The opening ceremony included a greeting from a local small business owner, Joe Powers, as he thanked our industry for being an important part of his successful journey. Then at 9 am, former Minnesota Viking legend and Supreme Court Justice, Alan Page, provided history, insight and stories during an inspiring question and answer interview by our own MSAA legend, Kurt Johnson. Alan Page thanked the MSAA, as we sold several signed pieces of memorabilia for over $8,000 and donated the proceeds to the Page Education Foundation, which was launched in 1988 by Alan and Diane Page.

There were several great speakers throughout the day that provided opportunities for members to learn and share new techniques as we look to grow our businesses in a post pandemic environment.

Members enjoyed playing board games and listening to a jazz trio, prior to the dinner and Awards Banquet. Cody Aasness and the marketing committee did a great job presenting marketing awards, as our members turned in some phenomenal entries. There was a standout entry this year that won both the Best in Show and Member’s Choice marketing awards. Congratulations to Brooke Gillespie and the Steffes Group for their promotional video entitled, “Every Auction Has a Story”, it was an amazing marketing achievement.

After dinner, members had fun watching the Junior/Amateur Auctioneer’s Showcase, as parents and grandparents vied to bid on favorite toys. MSAA 2020-2021 Champion Ringman, Tony Wisely, did a nice job running the 2022 Ringman’s Competition and our new Vice President, Glen Troutman II, was crowned the MSAA 2022 Champion Ringman.

The classic auctioneers led off the MSAA Foundation Fun Auction with Duane Grafe taking home the Member’s Choice Trophy. Colonel Grafe displayed that there was “plenty of tread left on the tires” as he sold several MSAA shirts for $150 each. The fun auction continued for several hours with everyone, young and old, having a crack at the stage. Kevin Maring and his committee did a bang-up job putting together one of our most successful fun auctions in history, raising over $30,000 for the MSAA Foundation. John Berner and the Wavebid staff did a tremendous job with clerking, cashiering, and keeping tabs on sales throughout the Conference and Show. Finally, a big shout out to Jim and Dave McLaughlin, who provided such a great sound system and tech support for our Conference and Show speakers and events.

Saturday morning began with our annual Town Hall breakfast and announcements. Everyone seemed excited about the competitions, fun auction, and speakers, but there continued to be a genuine jubilance for being together again. The Auxiliary also had a busy day filled with fun during their well-attended vendor fair, bingo, and craft activities.

Lexi Grafe & John Schultz did a great job diving into the Search Engine Optimization world and Sullivan Auctions had a great presentation on the rise of online auctions in the Ag Industry. Our final speaker, national humorist, Charles Marshall, entertained us and inspired many attendees to run to Chick-Fil-A and spill their shake.

During the MSAA Annual Business Meeting, elections were conducted to fill the MSAA 2022 Vice President and three director positions. Glen Troutman II was elected 2022 VP and our new directors, with terms expiring in 2025, are Dylan Kallemeyn, Benjamin Grafe and Ray Caruso. A big congratulations go out to all our newly elected members of the MSAA! Isaac Schultz upheld the tradition of hosting Wally’s Wake where cognac was shared, and stories were told. (I understand that hip-waders were optional.)

Saturday Evening, the President’s Banquet served over 140 meals and was streamed live on Facebook. MSAA new officers were installed by NAA director, John Schultz. Outgoing board members, Cody Aasness, Jolene Jokela-Veo and Kevin Maring received service plaques and tremendous praise for their efforts and service to the MSAA.

Jim and Dave McLaughlin donated an original print called “Grace” that was established in 2002 as the MN state photograph, and was sold by Champion Auctioneer, Andrew Jossund, for $5,000. Thank you to the McLaughlins for their generous donation and to Carl Radde for his generous bidding. The UTV raffle was our most successful to date, raising $25,000 in revenue. Raffle winner, Ray Caruso, generously donated and additional $5,000 to the MSAA.

President Judd Grafe presented Golden Gavel awards to Duane Grafe for his mentorship, Connie Johnson for all her assistance with the NAA Conference and Show, and to Benjamin Grafe, who did an outstanding job as this year’s Conference and Show Coordinator. First time attendees were all provided sponsorships to attend next year’s Conference and Show.

The highlight of the evening began as we had five new Hall of Fame inductees. Anita Aasness was inducted to the Minnesota State Auxiliary Hall of Fame and Mark Rime, Vince Bachman, Jolene Jokela Veo and Judd Grafe were inducted to the MSAA Hall of Fame. There were hugs, cheers and tears shared by family, friends and members as the inductees celebrated with receptions and music for the rest of the evening. The MSAA gavel was turned over to our new President, Isaac Schultz and the first ever, post pandemic, in-person MSAA Conference and Show was in the books!

During a wrap up meeting, the Double Tree staff shared that the MSAA was one of the best groups they had ever had the pleasure of serving. I smiled and agreed; you are all so amazing! Thank you for making our MSAA 2022 Conference and Show such a memorable event.