

Commitment

Pair's efforts for MDA span 12 years

By Barbara Hoffmeyer
special writer

It's a fact of life. Little boys grow up and leave behind such entrepreneurial adventures as the neighborhood lemonade stand or backyard carnivals. But with David Otis and Ernie Backalar, the story is a different one.

The two 23-year-olds from Southfield began their odyssey 12 years ago in a neighbor's backyard.

"Ernie was 10 when he approached Jerry and Judie Weisman for the use of their backyard for an MDA (Muscular Dystrophy Association) carnival," said Otis. "That carnival got everyone hooked, and we've been at it ever since."

Otis joined forces with Backalar three years after the first carnival when both boys were 13, and together they've raised more than \$65,000 for MDA over a 12-year span.

This year is no exception. With Backalar working from Chicago where he's currently living, Otis is responsible for

the majority of the planning and coordinating for the 1985 MDA fund-raiser. Working as the Bedford Area Citizens For Muscular Dystrophy, the two men have developed a "Las Vegas Night" event that has proven successful for the last three years.

"We solicit the donation of space from an area establishment and put together a Las Vegas atmosphere that includes all the Vegas-style games," Otis said.

BESIDES THEIR yearly fund-raiser, Otis and Backalar devote other time and energies to MDA. Both men participate in MDA Summer Camp, a camping experience for youngsters with muscular dystrophy. Held at Lake Huron Methodist Camp in Lexington, Mich., MDA Summer Camp provides dystrophic patients the opportunity to fish, swim, boat and do other summer recreational activities they otherwise would not be able to enjoy.

Everything at camp is adapted to make it easy for MD patients to make

the most of the experience. Volunteers such as Backalar and Otis are each assigned to a patient in a wheelchair or walker. Additionally, the men coordinate and operate the Farmington-Novi telephone center used during the national Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon.

"I'm pretty much it this year," said Otis when asked how many people were involved with the planning and producing of Las Vegas Night. "With Ernie in Chicago, most of the actual work is left up to me."

But it looks like Otis is well on his way despite Backalar's absence.

THIS YEAR'S VEGAS event is scheduled for this Saturday at the Twelve Mall in Southfield. The bash begins at 9 p.m. and is scheduled to run until 1:30 a.m. Sunday. Admission is \$5 and includes \$2 in chips. A cash bar will be available all evening and partygoers must be 18 or older to enter. All proceeds from the fund-raiser are donated to MDA.

Wayne alumni return to Fountain Ballroom

Wayne State University alumni will return to the Fountain Ballroom of the Masonic Temple for a Golden Anniversary Dance Saturday, Sept. 21. It is the same place the first Wayne University Alumni Association dance was held in 1935.

Alumni are planning a special weekend to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Alumni Association, the reunion of the 1935-36 class, and the 25th

anniversary of the opening of Alumni House at WSU.

The 1935-36 class will begin the three-day celebration with an early Friday evening reception in Alumni House.

Saturday events for the class of '35-36 will include walking and movie tours of the campus and a reception and banquet with President David Adamany as featured speaker.

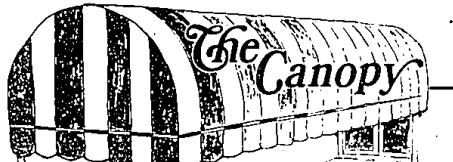
Golf outing benefits retired IHM nuns

The sixth annual IHM Golf Outing will be Monday, Sept. 9, at Plum Hollow Golf Club in Southfield. Proceeds will provide retirement income for the nuns of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

One hundred fifty golfers will each donate \$275 to participate in the day's activities, which begin at 11:30 a.m. and include lunch, 18 holes of golf (Texas Scramble), cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, dinner and a prize drawing. In addition, an auction will be held following dinner for prizes such as the use of a corporate jet and resort condo.

Those unable to participate in the golf activities may attend the 5:30 p.m. cocktail hour and dinner for a donation of \$150. The guest speaker will be Chuck Daly, head coach of the Detroit Pistons.

Persons interested in participating in the IHM Golf Outing, attending the dinner and auction, or donating auction prizes may contact Mike Demery, CMI Corp., P.O. Box 2026, Bloomfield Hills, 48303, or call 458-0000.



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