

Published February 21, 2010 11:04 pm - How do you toss an elk?

Elk toss, auctions raise money for charities

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The Daily Item

MOORESBURG — How do you toss an elk?

Grasp the green garden hose legs firmly. Spin around once or twice, and let go.

That's what most of the throwers did at the Elk Toss, Charity Auction and Winter Festival on Saturday.

The charity event, in its 75th year, again was held on the Van Wagner property in the Mooresburg area.

The first tosser, John Wadeck, of Mill Hall, wore only a shirt and jeans.



Aaron Jensen of Hublersburg gave it his best effort in tossing the elk at the Danville German Society's annual 75th annual Elk Toss fundraising event.
Robert Inglis / The Daily Item

Wagner, in his Lederhosen and furry hat, threw next, turning around twice and tossing. He was one of several participants in traditional German attire.

Franz Klingermann, of Danville, is a past champion who slapped the elk several times on the ground and threw himself on it about the same number of times before twirling the elk over his head and around in a circle and throwing.

The elk was made from brown jeans, brown burlap, a green garden hose tail covered with orange tape and garden hose legs. The elk, provided by James Canterrberry, of Latrobe, was thrown by at least 50 competitors.

A peacock, chickens and a guinea hen were among the spectators.

First- through third-place winners received trophies and cash.

New this year was a kids' deer toss. Children threw a wooden deer made by Francis Moyer, of Danville. Taking top honors in the event was Wagner's son Luke, 5, with a toss of 19 feet 6 inches. Ana Keller, 7, of Danville, was second with a throw of 17 feet 8 inches.

Handing out ribbons and trophies to the winners was Danville resident Jack Curry.

Elk tossing was started by German immigrants, according to Danville German Society officials. "Traditionally, they tossed an elk. We're not that strong, and it's hard to get an elk," said Karl Shellenberger, of State College, who is president of the society, which hosts the day-long festival. Wagner also is society president.

Money raised from the event fees, a silent auction and a live auction is presented to charities, including the Gate House homeless shelter in the Danville area; The Daily Item Needy Family Fund; the Montour County Summer Concert Series; the Mount Nittany Conservancy and Centre Grounds, both in Centre County; and Deb's House, Lancaster.

With a turnout of more than 100, Wagner expected to raise as much as \$3,000.

"This is the largest turnout ever so far," he said. "People are really being generous this year."

The group also competed in a scrap iron toss, salad toss, beard contest, an elk bugle call — where the only prop used was the participants' own vocal chords — and a block shoot.

About 30 members of the Viking helmet-wearing Shikellamy German Society, which is observing its 74th year, attended the event.

"This is a great charity," Shikellamy society President Shawn Dodge, of Sunbury, said.

Those attending also brought canned goods to donate to the local food pantry.

The Shamokin German Society hung up its 60th anniversary banner in Wagner's barn, where food and drink were available and the auctions were held. A pink banner announced "Sean Connery for President" near the Shikellamy German Society's banner.

Tony Johnson, of Bethlehem, was there for the first time with friend Tim Stengel, of Lancaster, who has attended several times. With Johnson was his girlfriend and Stengel's sister, Emily, of New York City.

"I competed in the salad toss, but I lost in the first round," Johnson said.

"We observed the scrap metal toss. Tony may toss the elk," Emily Stengel, also a first-timer, said.

The participants, with some coming from as far as North and South Carolina, began the day with breakfast at a local restaurant, stopped to buy items for the auction at the Salvation Army Store and went to another restaurant for lunch before going to the Wagner farm. After the fundraiser was over, they headed to downtown Danville, where they visited pubs and restaurants.