



**CHECKING OUT A SHOTGUN**, Mike Waldren of Bennett, Colo., was ready to buy some raffle tickets in hopes of winning the TriStar over-and-under 12-gauge gun donated by the national Pheasants Forever group.

## Hunters' banquet offers food, games

Auctions, raffles, prime rib, games and old friends were all part of the annual Pheasants Forever Banquet at The Gateway on Friday, and about 370 hunters and friends got to enjoy it all.

The banquet is the annual fund raiser for Oberlin's Sunflower Chapter of Pheasants Forever, which works to provide wildlife habitat, youth hunting opportunities, scholarships and to help sponsor a wildlife biologist for the area. The group leases much of Sappa Park from the city and works to improve the trails and game habitat there.

The totals aren't all in for this year, said organizer Alvera Bruggeman, partially due to the Veterans Day holiday on Monday, when all the banks were closed. Money from the event was placed in night depositories as it was gathered in Friday night and couldn't be counted until the banks opened on Tuesday.

However, a crowd of locals and out-of-area hunters enjoyed a meal of prime rib, baked potatoes, green beans and rolls. Around the outside of the arena, tables displayed silent and live auction items, including everything from art prints to guns to pheasant- and hunting-themed clothing and miscellaneous donated items. Organizers had games offering a chance to win everything from dog food to knives to shotguns, and there was a beverage station for the thirsty featuring beer, wind and hard drinks.

Before and during the meal, served buffet style, the crowd visited and caught up on news from those who only get to Oberlin once or twice a year.

Some of the hunters said they have been coming to the area every year for 10 to nearly 50 years to see relatives and friends and, of course, hunt the beautiful and tasty cock pheasants.

It takes a lot of work to put on the banquet each year, organizer Charlie Haag said. This year, volunteers sold tickets, prepared the food, set up and ran the games and auctions and made arrangements for the banquet.

Mr. Haag said that more than 60 businesses and individuals donated or helped sponsor the many items auctioned and raffled off.

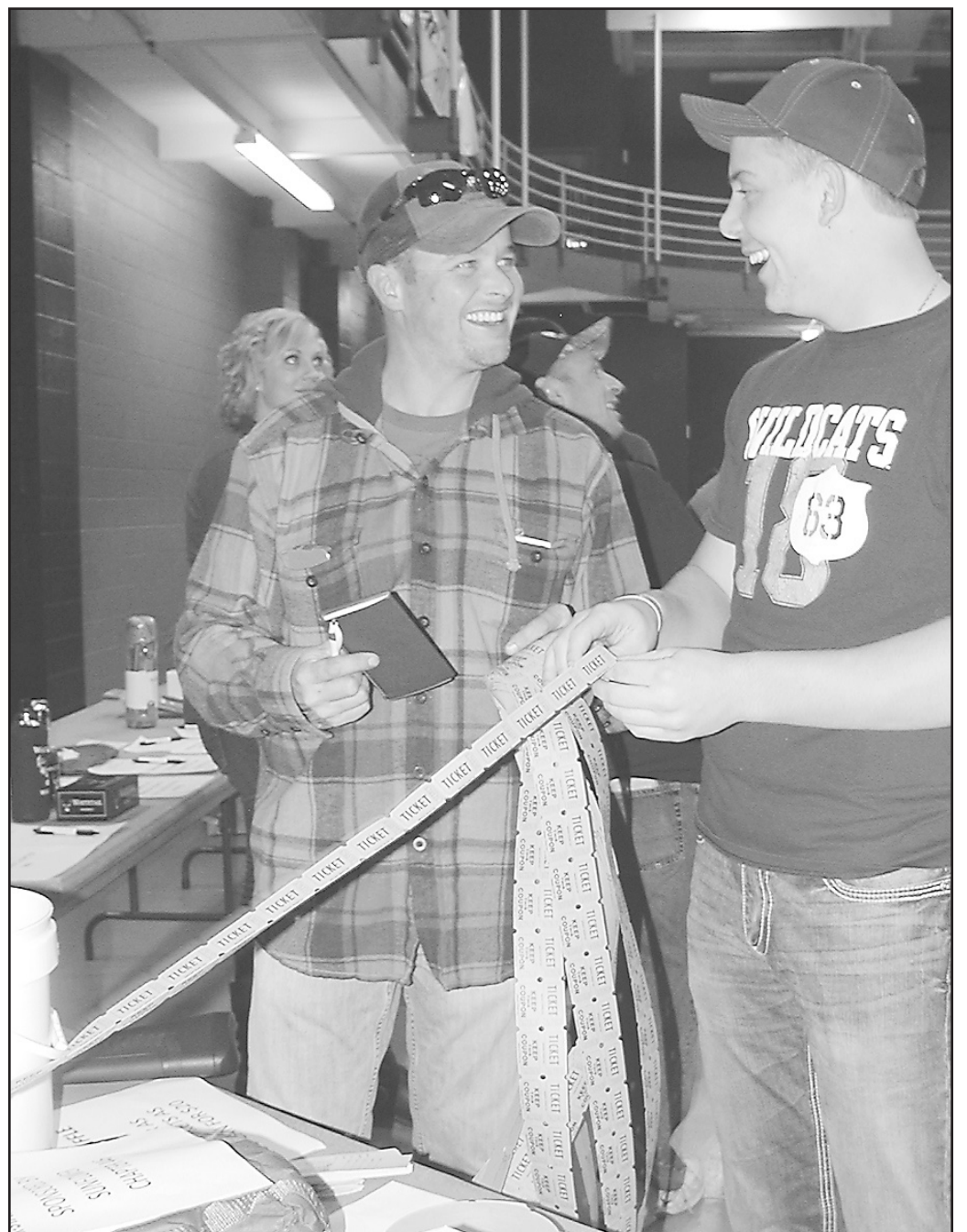
"That's what makes the banquet a success," he said. "If we had to buy all these things, we couldn't make it."

They had some special items on the auction this year, he said. One was a shotgun donated in memory of Norman Wendelin and the other prints of a painting by Anna Seeber Shaw of her husband and son Isaac hunting titled "Pride and Joy."

Mr. Haag said he was pleased with the turnout, and although he didn't know exactly how well the event did, the items seemed to be selling well.

"I was real pleased with the turnout, as dry as it is," he said.

He noted that every young hunter who signed up for the auction received a year's membership to Pheasants Forever Ringnecks group and a \$10 bill. That covered the \$25 fee, he said, and made the prime-rib dinner basically free for them.



**BUYING TICKETS BY THE YARD**, Everett Urban (above, left) was helped by Tyler Bruggeman during the Pheasants Forever Banquet. Carolyn Hackney (left) marked the dinner tickets for Ron and Patti Uehlin's grandsons Jaxon and Koby Smith and Gavon Uehlin (hidden behind Koby). One of the items on the live auction was a pheasant mount (below) donated by Dick Propernick.



Story and photos by Cynthia Haynes