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gonk

09-23-09 12:46 PM

Donations

When discussing the current state of forum moderation last week, I included the following comments about raffles:

Quote:

Those raffles are a particularly sore subject for many people, both because of the continued uncertainty and the situation itself. All told, there have been several dozen raffles over the last four or five years. These include a pair of concurrent raffles in July 2007, each meant to split approximately \$6000 between Sloan Kettering (on behalf of Dave Fabrikant's late father) and an orphanage in Khabarovsk, Russia. Mark has admitted to having paid only \$3000 to Sloan Kettering and still needing to pay the balance. Some reports from outside AV123 indicate that the \$3000 that was paid came several months after the raffle closed and only after someone contacted Sloan Kettering and found that no money had been received. No information exists regarding the orphanage's money. There were also a total of four raffles (three between late August 2007 and late October 2007 and a fourth in October 2008) to assist with medical bills for Derek Wayland after his daughter Bemil developed significant health issues that included diabetes and kidney problems. Those four raffles raised around \$39,000. As of last week, roughly \$34,000 remains undelivered and more than half of the money that was delivered went directly from a contributor to Derek. Mark has admitted to owing Derek money, but hasn't offered details regarding the magnitude of that debt. In January 2008, a trio of raffles was held to raise \$10,000 to support a friend of Hugh who was dealing with liver cancer. The friend passed away without receiving any of the money from Mark, and I have never heard of any reports of where that money ended up. Mark has said on a few occasions that he has underfunded two raffles. The disturbing reality of the term "underfunded" notwithstanding, the number "two" does not match up well to the six to nine individual raffles whose funds remain partly or wholly missing.

Those comments were made in a thread which is focused on forum moderation, and as such getting away from that topic is not desirable. There have been some additional discoveries this week that raise additional questions about the subject of raffles. Hopefully such questions can be asked and discussed here, without getting any other threads off-topic.

There were more than 30 raffles held over the course of four years: the first started in October 2004, the most recent started in October 2008. Charities included the Ballet Nouveau Colorado, forum member Brucer, the Red Cross (Katrina relief in 2005), Fallen Officer's Memorial, Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund, an orphanage in Khabarovsk, Sloan Kettering, the Denver Children's Hospital, the Wayland family, a close friend of Hugh's, and several others. Some charities were the beneficiary of multiple raffles. The orphanage alone was full or partial beneficiary of nine raffles that yielded over \$38,000 in donations. All told, these raffles raised in excess of \$200,000.

Then some time in 2008, some reports started surfacing of raffle donations not being delivered. Mark went on record at one point (I think early this year, but I couldn't find the specific post) that two raffles had been "underfunded." The following was posted by Mark on 8/18/2009, and it provides some verification of this.

Quote:

No additional raffles will be completed until the two underfunded ones have been completed...

This makes clear my intentions... and what will take place 1st - and then second...

The problem that I had previously with this statement was one of magnitude. The two raffles were actually two *charities*. Mark has specifically mentioned Sloan Kettering (or "SK") and the Waylands as the two in question. Between those two charities, there were actually six raffles (two run concurrently for Sloan Kettering, with half of the proceeds going to the orphanage in Khabarovsk, and four separate raffles for the Waylands). This number also doesn't address Hugh's friend, a third charitable cause that was to benefit from a trio of raffles. That friend died without seeing any of the collected money.

What is more worrisome now is new information from Ballet Nouveau Colorado, which states that they have received a single donation of \$7,500 from Perpetual Technologies in November 2005. That coincides pretty well with the October 2005 raffle that raised \$10,000 for BNC, although it leaves \$2,500 unaccounted for. It also leaves two other raffles completely unaccounted for. The first was in October 2004 (the first raffle ever put on by Mark and AV123), and it raised \$5,250 for BNC. The other was in December 2007, in which \$5,600 of a possible \$7,500 was collected in a raffle of a pair of LS-4's. Overall, that adds up to \$20,850 in donations. And yet BNC has no record of other contributions from Mark Schifter, AV123, or Perpetual Technologies. (See [this post](#) and [this post](#) for the specifics from BNC, but note that I ran my numbers separately and included the lesser total collected value of the December 2007 raffle in my calculations.) That leaves \$13,350 in donations unaccounted for. It also identifies three more raffles and one more charity that have been "underfunded." That brings the total to four charities and a dozen raffles for which some or all of the funds are reported to be unaccounted for (at least \$50,000 overall).

I understand that AV123 has set their focus on the future. They have containers of Rockets arriving at their warehouse. They have LS-9 cabinets arriving and being built out. They have finalized the design for the UFW-12 HR driver. All of that is good and positive forward movement. But sometimes we have to look at our past, no matter how pressing the demands of the present, and make things right. The four charities in question combined to generate a bit over \$70,000 in donations to a dozen raffles (roughly a third of the total collected in all of the raffles over those four years). All of the available information indicates that at least \$50,000 of that money (a quarter of *all* raffle donations, and over 70% of the donations for these four charities) is currently unaccounted for. This matter would seem to deserve some open discussion.

greg_mitch

09-23-09 01:08 PM

If any of this is true, it should be taken to the proper authorities not this discussion board.

scc135

09-23-09 01:09 PM

gonk, are you trying to get banned?

gonk

09-23-09 01:12 PM

No, I'm actually hoping not to, but I also really think this deserves some discussion.

scc135

09-23-09 01:20 PM

true, and I will agree with you considering I'm a part of said raffles...

wesley63

09-23-09 01:24 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **scc135** (Post 738088)
gonk, are you trying to get banned?

As someone that has put money into more than one of these raffles, I'm glad that gonk is asking these questions. I don't know why everyone whose name appears in these raffles isn't posting their support for gonk right now.

Jim

scc135

09-23-09 01:30 PM

I'm not not supporting gonk. In fact, I'm glad he's asking these questions. I've not been on the av123 forum for a bit and the bit of lurking i've done at tca seems to indicate that anyone questioning here seemed to get banned and their tread deleted. And I have contributed to these raffles (and even won one... have yet to receive the mfws... but in communication with mark and kyle) so I do wish to see these issues resolved.

All times are GMT -5. The time now is 01:41 PM.

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