

Calendar Men Take it Off to Support Quilt Show

by Ronni Wilde,
for The Bulletin Special Projects

Oh, the things our mothers get us into. It's not likely that Rigo Ramirez, a business owner in Sisters, ever entertained the notion of being "Mr. November" in a pin-up calendar. But, that's exactly what has happened, thanks to his mom.

Ramirez is one of 12 community-minded men in Sisters featured in the third edition of the "Men Behind the Quilts" fundraising calendar.

"My mother is a quilter, and she knows the ladies of the quilt show. She volunteered me for the calendar, unbeknownst to me," said Ramirez. When Jeannette Pilak, executive director of the quilt show, approached Ramirez and asked him to be in the calendar, he said she was so nice about it he couldn't say no.

"This is not the type of thing I would typically do; it's not my personality type," he said. "This is certainly the first calendar I've ever posed in, shirtless or not shirtless," he said with a laugh. "But it's for a good cause."

Proceeds from the sale of the calendar help offset the cost of producing the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show (SOQS), which is in its 41st year and is free to the public.

The previous two "Men Behind the Quilts" calendars, which were 18-month editions, sold out quickly. This year's calendar, a 12-month version, is expected to go equally as fast.

"The calendar always sells out," said Pilak, adding that pre-orders for the 2017 edition are "through the roof." Pilak said orders come in from all 50 states, as well as from Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Guatemala. The calendar has been completed, and 4,500 copies are being printed.

As with previous years, the calendar will be unveiled during an event titled, "Men Behind the Quilts: Quilt Auction & Calendar Preview," presented by MODA Fabrics. This year's preview party will be held on Wednesday, July 6 from 5:30-8 p.m. in the tent at the Sisters Artworks Building. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased online at www.sistersoutdoorquiltshow.org. All the quilts that the men posed with for the calendar were donated and will be auctioned off during the party. Proceeds from the auction also support the quilt show, which Pilak said is estimated to bring about \$1.7 million in tourism money to Central Oregon this year.

"We have visitors from 27 foreign countries come for the quilt show," said Pilak. "It brings in the equivalent of 4,000 nights' worth of hotel room bookings. Our quilt show has such a following."

The inspiration for the calendar came about after years of joking about the idea, Pilak said. "People had been joking about the idea of doing a calendar ever since the movie 'Calendar Girls' came out a number of years ago. Everybody joked about a calendar with girls, but then the idea came about to feature men. People think of the quilt show as a lady thing, but there are so many men working behind the scenes here. We really wanted to shine a spotlight on the men who do so much not just for the show, but for the entire community."

Ramirez, who owns Dixie's western apparel store in Sisters, is a member of the Kiwanis Club and Chamber of Commerce, and volunteers with the Sisters Little League.

"The store takes up the majority of my time because it's a new business, but I understand the importance of

being involved in the community," he said.

The photo shoot for the calendar went smoothly, he said, and his mother even had a hand in that.

"Originally, they wanted me to pose with a horse, but my mother has a custom-built 1955 Chevy that my father gave her for her 55th birthday, and it's a beautiful pickup. I preferred to pose with the '55 Chevy; I thought it would add a unique twist to the calendar."

"I haven't seen the photo yet, but I'm told it turned out well. I'm happy to have done this."

Matt Cyrus, another of the calendar men, said he also was glad to support the quilt show. Cyrus, who owns the Aspen Lakes Golf Course in Sisters, is a sixth-generation Oregonian and is very involved in the community. He has been a member of the Cloverdale Volunteer Fire Department, where he serves as captain, for 35 years. He is also president of the Deschutes Coun-

ty Farm Bureau, serves on the boards of Water for Life and Oregonians in Action and is committee chair of a local Boy Scout troop.

"I spend half my time going to meetings," he said.

For his photo shoot, Cyrus said he posed at Aspen Lakes Golf Course in front of a GolfBoard, a fun, easy-to-ride small vehicle similar to an all-wheel-drive skateboard that can be taken out onto the golf course as an alternative to a golf cart.

"This show is one of the biggest events in Sisters," said Cyrus. "The calendar is certainly for a good cause. I was happy to help."

As for the implied nudity, he said, "I guess everybody will have to use their imagination."

Calendars will be available for \$10 at the party, and for \$12 after the preview in about a dozen shops in Sisters. For more information, call 541-549-0989 or visit www.sistersoutdoorquiltshow.org.



Ken M., — Mr. October, Canyon Creek Pottery