Dr. Michel Makaroun could not be more delighted with the “Vascular Spectacular” gala, an addition to the 2019 Vascular Annual Meeting which is sure to be repeated for years to come.

The evening featured entertainment, including the incomparable Dr. Peter Gloviczki, who wowed the crowd with his magic show; a silent online auction and live auction that featured plenty of spirited bidding, and a Paddle Raise to raise funds for the SVS Foundation.

“It was fun from start to finish,” Dr. Makaroun said.

The two auctions and the Paddle Raise together garnered more than $166,000 for the SVS Foundation Foundation’s grants and initiatives.

Dr. Makaroun said he has long thought VAM should include a social event to bring everyone together. He added that most societies have a social gathering, even large societies such as the one that inspired our gala, the Society for Interventional Radiology. “SIR has had a very successful gala dinner for more than a dozen years that everybody tries to attend,” he said, raising substantial sums for its foundation.

He proposed the gala in place of the traditional President’s Reception. When the concept received overwhelming support, he recruited “great people with insight on how to put a party together,” chaired by Drs. Cynthia Shortell and Ben Starnes.

Indeed, the gala was sold out nearly six weeks ahead of time, with extra tables squeezed in to accommodate as many people as possible. Members contributed more than 70 items for live and silent auctions. The crowd included all ages and attendees danced so enthusiastically the DJ apologized for ending the evening.

“I can only say it was an unqualified success,” smiled Dr. Makaroun. “And I think the social life of the SVS meeting will benefit. I heard more than one person say, ‘Now, maybe my wife (or husband) will come with me to the VAM.’

“All in all, I think it was a positive step in making the annual meeting more than just a scientific meeting,” he said, “while also raising money for the SVS Foundation.”

SVS President Dr. Kim Hodgson has vowed the gala will return in 2020.
Since handing over his gavel to Dr. Hodgson, Dr. Makaroun now assumes the chair of the SVS Foundation. How will he top the success of his 2019 gala?

The answer was quick: be able to host more people in 2020. “Hopefully that will be the way to top this year!”

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