

PHOTOS: Classy cowhands go citified at Foster Care Council bash

By Suzy Dorr - Daily New Correspondent

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NAPLES — Forsaking the farm for city lights, some 250 cowboys and gals, mostly favoring western gear, turned up at the Naples Beach Hotel on May 7 for the 2010 “Boots, Boogie & Bourbon Ball.” While formerly held out in the Golden Gate Estates at a horse farm, this year’s venue eschewed livestock in favor of a spinning, bucking mechanical bull and betting on filmed horse races with colorfully clad jockey-ettes handling that operation.

A Texas Hold ’em poker tournament was thrown in for good measure and coincided with guest emcee Jason Pawloski of NBC Early News Today conducting the live auctions of both a Paul McCartney-signed guitar, donated by Bob Germain, Jr., and a holiday for two at the Texas La Torrenta Lake Resort & Spa, donated by Preferred Travel of Naples.

With cowboy hats seemingly de rigueur, boots galore for them that had ’em and jeans all setting the flavor of the rousing event, the partying passel was quick to knock back bourbon-on-the-rocks, Old Fashioneds and wine, with the latter provided by Foster Care board president Doug Campbell and wife Nancy.

Silent auction chair Cathy Appelbaum and her committee presented a number of displays with items and packages including artwork, gift baskets, getaways, sportif opportunities, an interesting NBC-2 station studio tour and literally masses of fit-for-a-black-tie-function jewelry from Far Corner Trading and Blue River Studio.

The evening’s top attraction — and distraction, too! — was “El Toro,” the big black mechanical bull resting on a puffy red inflated expanse, a patented beast same as the kind John Travolta “tamed” in the “Urban Cowboy” film. Tested by the brave before, during and after dinner, it attracted a full range of cowpokes who rode — and toppled off, as well.

Local band Mixed Nuts struck up their instruments the minute the doors to the banquet room were opened and the hungry folks rushed to find seats, where salads awaited, and then lined up for a Western-style buffet of ribs, corn on the cob and all the trimmings.

Among those crowding the dance floor were “Best Dressed” cowboy, Jonathan Sonne, who explained that, “I bought my entire outfit just two hours before the ball from Two Step Stop on Airport Road.” Also chosen through crowd acclamation: winning cowgirl Tanya Tyndall, very feminine in pink hat and jeans with a flouncy white overskirt.

Not winners but standouts: Rosalyn Franklin, dance hall glamorous with her brunette pigtails matching her all black, cowgirl look. And Sue Huff, distinctive in a white hat with built-in, flashing tiara and white ostrich feather-trimmed brim.

Jennifer Weidenbruch, Foster Care Council executive director who also co-chaired along with Cassie Slone, has announced total net proceeds reached \$50,000. Ball tickets were priced at \$150 per person. These funds will benefit local abused, neglected and abandoned children in the foster care system.



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