

Culture cultures and other featured creatures

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Mayor Daley and his wife, Maggie, with support from the board of the Cultural Center Foundation, entertained 400 crazies at a costume/black-tie gala at the Cultural Center. Arriving guests scooted past steaming cauldrons, haystacks and lots of pumpkins to get to the action, where they found the mayor in a jack-o'-lantern-patterned vest surrounded by angels, witches, clowns and a Colin Powell, Ozzy Osbourne, Audrey Hepburn, Austin Powers and Fred Flintstone. The Mystik Krewe of Laff, a 20-person New Orleans parade complete with brass band, strolling performers from the Actors Gymnasium, the Bumblinni Brothers, Red Mink Productions, Redmoon Theater, Lid Productions and the Sanctuary School for Physical Theatre, performed during the evening, too.

Dinner included butternut squash soup, filet mignon and flourless chocolate cake served on tables covered with spiderweb lace. Michael Lerich and his orchestra played for dancing, and our first couple stayed on the dance floor until midnight.

More than \$300,000 was raised to support ongoing programs at the Cultural Center, built in 1897, and our country's first free municipal center for the arts.

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The Tiffani Kim Institute held its first "Day of Health and Beauty," bringing together doctors, physical therapists, lecturers and technicians of all sorts.

In addition to facials, paraffin wraps, massages, masks and a host of other treatments, Chicago's social lions heard the latest information on how to prevent aging, how to deal with the onset of menopause, the newest trends in plastic surgery and the latest gossip about one of our aging ingenues, who's packed on the pounds recently.

Most fun was the application of the "woah" mask, as seen in the photo at right making guests really look like ghouls and goblins. Dianne Pauly, who applied the treatment, said it's almost as good as botox injections when it comes to smoothing out wrinkles. The names of the women pictured are not being revealed out of respect for their families.

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The nod for the busiest party of the week goes to the "Be a Kid Again" gala, which celebrated the Chicago Children's Museum's 20th birthday at Navy Pier.

During the cocktail hour, the 450 guests wandered through the museum's exhibits and checked out the newest one constructed with help from Allstate. "Play It Safe" is a simulated home environment that teaches families about home, yard and auto safety.

Dinner was served in the Crystal Garden and included salad, beef tenderloin, Chilean sea bass and a big birthday cake wheeled in by the four co-chairs, Bob Barnett, Janet Bergman, Karen Curtin and Herbert Krueger. They led the crowd in singing "Happy Birthday," and along with all this, there were performances by the Mystique Dancers and the Midnight Circus as well as music by the Rich Daniels Orchestra.

Peter England is president and CEO of the museum, and he and board chair Pru Beidler welcomed guests and major donors, including former Gov. Jim Edgar and his wife, Brenda. More than \$375,000 was raised for the museum's interactive exhibits and their community outreach programs.

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"The best show ever" was how most of the guests at the opening night party for SOFA rated the popular exhibition of work by 800 artists from seven countries. Generally more popular than the art shows held at Navy Pier, this show is more appealing because it features jewelry, furniture, ceramics, glass, fiber, wood and metalwork in price ranges that most people can understand and afford.

Joan Himmel Epstein, Charles (soon to be married to Patti Eyer) Gardner and Lawrence L. Michaelis served as co-chairs of the party, which drew a crowd of 1,000 guests. The evening raised more than \$100,000 for the Arts Program of Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

PARTY OF THE WEEK

Not tired of masks? Join other revelers Friday night at the Service Club of Chicago's annual fund-raiser, "A Venetian Masquer-ade," at the Four Seasons Hotel, with live and silent auctions, a raffle, dinner and dancing to the Ken Arlen Orchestra. For tickets, call (708) 246-0577.

Caption: Cheri Eisenberg; Stuart Rodgers; Katherine Hughes; Steve Becker; FOR THE SUN-TIMES The mayor with performers from Lid Productions.Phil and Geri Wicklander.Isobel and Earl Neal.Women wore "woah" masks at the Tiffani Kim Institute.Pru Beidler (left), Peter England and Gigi Pritzker Pucker.Charles Gardner (left), Joan Himmel Epstein and Lawrence Michaelis.Cecile Keith Brown and former Gov. Jim Edgar.

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