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TOM HARPER / COURTESY PHOTO
Above right: Jerry and Judy Sheindlin keep an eye on the competition.



DEBORAH GULLY / FLORIDA WEEKLY

By the numbers and by the faces, 11th annual NWWF wins big

BY KELLY MERRITT
Special to Florida Weekly

IF THE ECONOMY'S STILL IN THE TANK, NAPLES WINTER Wine Festival patrons didn't get the announcement. Bidding high and bidding often, they raised \$12 million at last weekend's festival, which was as much an exercise in debauchery as it was charitable. That's always part of the fun, though, and from servers and volunteers who worked the event to those who waved their bid paddles high for once-in-a-lifetime packages and experiences, it seemed everyone was glad to have an excuse to live it up.

"To see the people enjoying the wine and our food and this beautiful weather so much, it's wonderful," Diego Reyes, a member of The Ritz-Cariton Golf Resort culinary team, said as he surveyed the crowd of 580 guests at Saturday afternoon's auction festivities. The weekend also included a series of celebrity chef/wine dinners on Friday in private homes throughout Naples, a Saturday post-auction "Wine

SEE NWWF, A8 ▶

INSIDE



Party in the Glades
Everglades City makes way for seafood, country music, arts, crafts and more. C1 ▶



By the book
Regulations can make or break businesses in Southwest Florida. B1 ▶



Bowled over
Soups and bowls sell out at food bank fundraiser. A33 ▶

Scientists call for thorough research of BP spill effects

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

Twenty years after biologists attempted to determine the ecological damages to marine life from the Exxon Valdez oil spill, scientists dealing with the BP disaster find themselves with the same problem: the lack of critical data to determine the ecological consequences of human-induced environmental disasters, a University of Florida researcher said.

Writing in the Feb. 4 issue of the journal Science, Karen A. Bjorndal, a University of Florida biology professor and director of the Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research, and other biologists said the United States needs "strategic national research plans for key marine species and ecosystems based

on evaluation of cause and effect and on integrated monitoring of abundance and demographic traits."

"It is sad to see that we are in the same place now," said Ms. Bjorndal, adding that not much has changed since the Valdez oil spill when it comes to getting the data needed to assess and restore a marine ecosystem after an environmental disaster. She hopes it will provide an impetus for action.

"We know how to create these research plans — what is needed now is the political will and leadership to do so," she wrote.

"Achieving mandated recovery goals depends on understanding both population trends and the demographic processes that drive those trends," Ms. Bjorndal's article states.

Her team argues it "is not too late to

invest funds from BP to support teams of experts to develop effective strategic plans that identify, prioritize and provide methodologies for collecting essential data."

The team identified seven elements that need to be included in most of the plans.

"In the wake of the BP oil spill, the need for this policy shift is as clear as it is compelling. The largest offshore oil spill in U.S. history should provide the impetus and opportunity to effect this policy shift," Ms. Bjorndal wrote in her article.

Nine other scientists co-authored the study called "Better Science Needed for Restoration in the Gulf of Mexico." The explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil-drilling rig last April killed 11 people and created the largest offshore oil spill in U.S. history. ■

WEST SIDE STORY

Not the same old tale
Marr Hall in Fort Myers presents the latest revival of a classic love story. C1 ▶

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ROGER WILLIAMS	A2	BUSINESS	B1	EVENTS	C6-7
OPINION	A4	NETWORKING	B11-13	BOOK REVIEW	C20
PETS OF THE WEEK	A45	REAL ESTATE	B15	SAVE THE DATE	C30-33
HEALTHY LIVING	A40	ARTS	C1	SOCIETY	C34-37



You Know, He Knows.

weekday mornings



NWWF

From page 1

Down" at Mercato and a Sunday celebration brunch.

Wine Spectator has ranked NWWF, which is the fundraising arm of the Naples Children and Education Foundation, the most successful charity wine auction in the nation since 2004. Since its inception in 2001, the festival has raised more than \$94.5 million; last year's auction raised \$8.1 million, and in recession-bound 2009, the total was \$5.1 million. Proceeds fund children's charities and major initiatives such as primary medical and dental care clinics and an early learning center serving the area's needy and at-risk children.

In April, NCEF trustees will announce grants and other funding made possible by this year's event, the 11th annual.

Once-in-a-lifetime lots

Winning bids at this year's auction ranged from \$30,000 to \$1 million.

For NCEF trustee John Jordan, winning a trip to the 2012 Olympic Games in London was far more than just a bid at an auction.

"This is sort of a bucket list item for us, and we'll get to go with our friend Humphrey Butler, one of the auctioneers here today," Mr. Jordan said. "Of course we're very excited, but it's still all about the kids."

Wielding the auction gavel, Mr. Butler whipped the crowd into a near frenzy and brought the excitement to a feverish pitch. When asked why he attends the Naples Winter Wine Festival and what motivates such passion, he credited the crowd: "Excitement. Impact. Generosity of spirit. This is an auction unlike any other."

While auction sparks flew under the tent on the grand lawn at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, outside the tent, magic was everywhere in the form of food prepared by an army of Ritz-Carlton chefs and wine that seemed to never stop pouring.

In a change from previous years, when celebrity chefs have come in to cater the afternoon, this year's auction sustenance all was created by the family of Ritz-Carlton restaurants.

"Not only is this a great opportunity to say who we are as a culinary destination, it's a great team-building event for us," Derin Moore, executive chef at The Ritz-Carlton, Naples, said. "We all have such a vested interest in these items from our menus."

Not only that, he added, "This year I saw more people eating than socializing."

Guests meandering around what could only be described as a gourmand's version of heaven made several trips back to their favorite stations. When asked whether he would bid on any of the travel packages or wine lots in the auction, one Midwesterner who preferred not to be identified smiled and shook his head in the negative. "I'm just a glutton," he confessed. "I'm here for this food and, of course, the wine. It's amazing."

Among the bites on the menu: lentil salad and barbecue pork belly, slow-cooked veal cheeks over goat cheese ravioli, gazpacho, lobster quesadillas and grouper tacos. Fresh from the new menu at H2O+ in the Ritz-Carlton Spa, Naples, was a serving of tabbouleh and beet salad with alfalfa sprouts and cucumber tzatziki (Chef Eric Zeer explained that the spa menu substitutes fats with vinegar and fruit juices). Cheese and dessert tables nearby groaned with goodies decidedly not high in vinegar and fruit juices.

One of the day's unexpected superstars was Grieve Family Winery, which dared to present its very first vintage: a 2008 sauvignon blanc. It proved to be a huge hit, as the winery's Catherine

>> Going, going....

Here are some of the auction's top lots:

- \$1 million: "Reina Mariana," a 2,000-pound, 8-foot-tall bronze sculpture by Manolo Valdés [1, 3]
- \$990,000: 2011 Ferrari 458 Italia sports coupe [4]
- \$480,000: 10-day Alaskan cruise aboard a 170-foot luxury yacht
- \$400,000: "Perfection," a custom cabinet of 100 bottles of 100-point wines
- \$400,000: Nine-night trip for two couples to the 2012 Olympic Games in London
- \$320,000 (twice): Silver Oak wine dinner and a private Clint Black concert for 24 guests
- \$300,000: Fully restored 1956 Corvette with a Napa Valley driving trip [5]
- \$240,000 (three-way tie): Private magic lesson with David Blaine, lunch with Regis Philbin and dinner with Judge Judy; a star-studded Emmy Awards trip for two to Los Angeles; and a package including tickets to the Super Bowl, the NCAA Final Four, the U.S. Tennis Open and the MLB All-Star Game and Home Run Derby
- \$190,000: Four 3-liter bottles of 2000 Domaine Serene Monogram Pinot Noir and 12 assorted bottles of Domaine Serene
- \$100,000: 39-bottle collection of Sine Qua Non
- \$150,000: 25-year complete vertical of Shafer's Hillside Select and 24 bottles of the winery's Silver Anniversary Sensation
- \$130,000: Four magnums of Colgin Cellars X Estate Napa Valley Red Wine
- \$850,820: Raised through the sale of "Lunch Boxes of Love" to help end hunger for children in Collier County [2]



MLA BROGGIER/COURTESY PHOTO

Above: The crowd goes wild in celebration of Patty and Jay Baker's winning \$1 million bid for the sculpture by Manolo Valdés.



DEBORAH CULL / FLORIDA WEEKLY



In a show of solidarity, bidders cheer one another on and congratulate the winners.

DEBORAH CULL / FLORIDA WEEKLY

Larsen hardly took a break from pouring throughout the afternoon.

While Grieve Family Winery found its footing and then some at the festival, others needed no introduction.

VIP vintners like Christian Moueix

and his wife, Cherise, worked the crowd with a grace that can only be gleaned from extensive travel and bounteous character. Despite their position in what could only be described as wine royalty, the couple was ever gracious to be

included in the festivities.

"From Paris to San Francisco, traveling to Florida is quite a detour, but we enjoy it so much, and everyone has heard of the Naples Winter Wine Festival," Mrs. Moueix said. Her husband agreed and was

Edison State College Foundation honors festival trustees

BY KELLY MERRITT
Special to Florida Weekly

The Holland T. Salley Leadership in Fostering Education Award from the Edison State College Foundation honors those who've made substantial contributions toward advancing academic opportunities for the citizens of Collier County.

This year, the L.I.F.E. Award honoree is a collective group of individuals — trustees, to be exact.

The 72 trustees of the Naples Children & Education Foundation, the founding organization of Naples Winter Wine Festival, will receive the 2011 distinction during a luncheon ceremony Thursday, Feb. 24, at the Naples Grande.

Not only does NCEF provide grants to nonprofits that benefit children, NCEF has taken the lead in examining the needs of Collier County children and then creating solutions to meet such needs," says Jeff Allbritten, president of the Edison State College-Collier Campus.

LIFE Award recipients must meet specific criteria in one of four categories: distinguished service, professional service, citizen leadership and outstanding contribution to state legislation. NCEF and its trustees were selected for their outstanding support of education in two of those qualifying categories: citizen leadership and distinguished service.

"On behalf of all of us, we are honored to be able to be helpful, but the real recognition is the difference we are all making in the lives of these kids," trustee Jim Malone says. "We are delighted



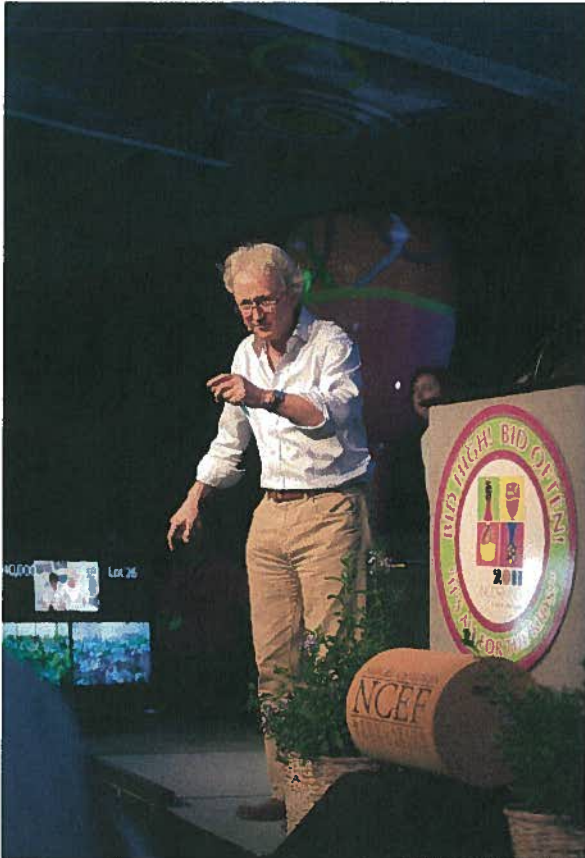
DEBORAH CULL / FLORIDA WEEKLY
Jim Malone, NCEF trustee

to be supportive, and if that recognition is helpful to set an example to get other people involved, that is wonderful."

NCEF was founded in 2000 by a group of Naples families to improve the physical, emotional and educational lives of underprivileged and at-risk children in Collier County and has raised tens of millions of dollars. The foundation provides yearly grants to children's charities and funds long-term strategic initiatives aimed at filling the most severe gaps in services for the area's neediest children.

Previous recipients of the L.I.F.E. Award are: LIFE Awards are: Holland Salley (2003), Ed Morton (2004), Fred Pezeszkan (2005), Judy Sproul (2006), Raymond and Scott Lutgert (2007), Adria Starkey (2008), Dudley Goodlette (2009) and Myra Janco Daniels (2010).

Tickets to the ninth annual L.I.F.E. Awards luncheon are \$150 per person. For more information, contact Kevin Miller at 732-3718 or ksmiller3@edison.edu. ■



DEBORAH CULL / FLORIDA WEEKLY



Top: Auctioneer Humphrey Butler acknowledges a bid.
Above: Linda Malone, Joan and Bob Clifford and Jay Harrington.
Left: Rusty Staub applauds a winning bid.

happy to credit NCEF trustees Scott and Simone Lutgert for convincing them to attend.

Winemakers Luc and Jodie Morlet of Morlet Family Vineyards participated for the second year and have their own reasons for supporting the festival, reasons that are close to their hearts.

"Jodi is a teacher with her master's degree is special education, so this cause means a lot to us," Mr. Morlet explained. "We know what education is about. Providing these kids with what they need is important."

'Days of Wine and Roses'

Prior to Saturday's auction, festival guests wine and dined at elaborate celebrity vintner/chef dinners staged in various NCEF trustees' homes. Joan and Bob Clifford graciously gave *Florida Weekly* a sneak peek into their "Days of Wine and Roses" event prior to the dinner.

"We are chairing the event next year, so we are especially focused on being supportive of the organization and (this year's chairs) Bruce and Cynthia Sherman," Mrs. Clifford, resplendent in an Oscar de la

Renta gown with roses cascading down the front, said. "Every year is special," she added, "but it's a little more special to me because I work on the grant committee and it really makes you appreciate how much these kids are in need."

The Cliffords had to move out of their home and into the guest quarters, their furniture placed in a truck for the duration of the weekend's festivities.

"When you see that some of these kids don't have a house, it doesn't seem like much of an imposition to have to move out of yours for a little while and go to

these lengths," Mrs. Clifford said.

Chef de Cuisine Curtis Duffy from Avenues at The Peninsula Chicago prepared dishes that included a black truffle and hedgehog mushroom tart and Alaskan king crab poached in citrus broth for the Cliffords' guests. He was assisted in the kitchen by his close friend Steven Green, chef de cuisine of uber-upscale Umstead Hotel and Spa in Cary, N.C.

"Every dish Chef Duffy brings out is like a piece of art," Mrs. Clifford said.

Mike Muser, wine director at the Pen-
SEE MWFW, A10 ▶

in the know

>> And the L.I.F.E. Award goes to...

The NCEF 2011 board of directors

- Bob Scott, chairman of the board
- Cynthia and Bruce Sherman, 2011 festival chairs
- Anne Welsh McNulty, 2011 grant chair
- Ann Bein, vice chair
- Mary Susan Clinton, secretary
- Ken Evenstad, treasurer
- Bob Clifford
- Frank Hussey
- Jerry Starkey

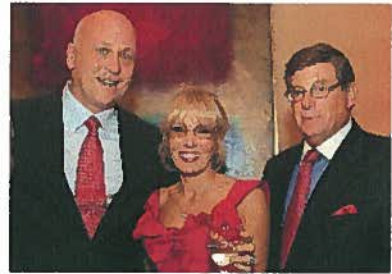
NCEF trustees

- Jean Ackerman
- Usha and Monte Ahuja
- Pat Akulsi
- Penny and Lee Anderson
- Larry Andrews
- William and Ann Bein
- Barbara and Ron Belsler
- Joan and Bob Clifford
- Mary Susan and J.D. Clinton
- Denise and Brian Cobb
- Cheryl and David Cophan
- Marie Copley

- Ariene and Michael D'Alessandro
- Laura and Jim Olson
- Robert and Terry Edwards
- Shirlene and Bob Eldins
- Grace and Ken Evenstad
- Martha and Jim Fligg
- Connie and Tom Galloway
- Valerie Boyd and Jeff Gargiulo
- Pat and Dave Gibbons
- Mosey and Don Gunther
- Mary Pat and Frank Hussey
- Barbara and John Jordan
- John Scott Mueller and Judith Liegeois
- Carol and Tom Lund
- Scott and Simone Lutgert
- Linda and Jim Malone
- Susie and David McCurry
- Jim and Fran McGibbin
- Anne Welsh McNulty
- Sandi and Tom Moran
- Kathleen and Francis Rooney
- Karen and Bob Scott
- Bruce and Cynthia Sherman, 2011 festival chairs
- Retta and Elliott Singer
- Donna Sollimene
- Adria and Jerry Starkey
- Anne and Tom Warner



DEBORAH GULL / FLORIDA WEEKLY
Auction entertainers thanking NCFF for its good deeds included Heather Headley, back, who sang along with Samantha Winters, Ashley Giraldo, Nicholas Vicaria, Rita Saadeh and MacKenzie Lett from YMCA of the Palms.



LOUIS VENNE / DINNER PHOTOS

Above left: Chef Curtis Duffy of Avenues in Chicago plates a dish at the Clifford dinner. Above center: Tom and Sandi Moran, Elliott and Retta Singer at the Clifford-Sherman reception on Friday evening. Above right: Cal Ripken with Cynthia and Bob Sherman at the Clifford-Sherman reception.



Left: The theme for the Clifford dinner was "The Days of Wine and Roses." Above: Joan and Bob Clifford before the dinner in their home Friday evening.

NWWF

From page A9

insula Hotel Chicago, poured wine from Shafer Vineyards. Barbara and John Shafer, certainly among the most amiable couples at the weekend's festivities, spoke eloquently of how the festival provides ample opportunities for them to give.

"One of the biggest attractions of attending this festival is the opportunity

to support this foundation. They do such a wonderful job," said Mrs. Shafer. "We donate our wines and lots to this and are glad to experience the nonprofit work that's being done for these kids."

When the Cliffords were choosing a designer for their party, they selected from among their Chi-town connections. Vince Hart of Keho Designs traveled to Naples to plan and oversee every aspect of the event.

Upon first glance at the décor Mr. Hart orchestrated to the "Days of Wine and Roses" theme, comparisons to famed

Oprah designer favorite Colin Cowie sprang to mind. Mr. Hart commissioned tables made from wine corks (15,000 corks per table), and topped each with a centerpiece of 150 roses.

"Events like this are amazing because the client just gives me the theme and says, 'See what you can do,'" Mr. Hart said. "This is layered decadence."

As for next year's festival, the date is set for Jan. 27-29, 2012, and plans are well underway, with the Cliffords gearing up for their role as chairs and the Shermans at the ready to help their friends and

neighbors however needed. The two couples live in the same building and hosted a joint cocktail reception before their guests adjourned to the Clifford and Sherman penthouse residences for their respective chef/vintner dinners.

"They'll do an even better job than we did," Mr. Sherman predicted about the Cliffords in 2012. "They'll have our help, but they won't need it." ■

— For more information about the Naples Winter Wine Festival, visit www.napleswinefestival.com.