

# Neiman Marcus pulls out all the stops at its gala

## SUBURBAN ACCENTS

Send submissions for Suburban Accents to Sally Gerak, 635 Puritan, Birmingham 48009 or call 646-6290.

SALLY GERAK

If Neiman Marcus' grand opening gala Thursday evening is an indication of the company's service standards, folks, you are in for a treat. An army of valets hustled cars at the curb, and waiters with trays of champagne-filled glasses were poised just inside the door at the Somerset Collection in Troy. Throughout the evening, legions of servers passed an endless array of Jimmy Schmidt's incomparable cuisine to any guest too busy socializing to belly up to the many food stations and bars.

The party featured Michigan wines, food and entertainers. Some 1,400 people paid \$150 each to be there. NM paid all the expenses. Ticket proceeds will be divided between Michigan Cancer Foundation, Michigan Opera Theatre and Cranbrook Educational Community.

"And the leftover food is being picked up by COTS at 11 p.m.," said NM staffer Barbara DiMaria.

Everybody was there, including the honorary co-chairmen and co-chairwomen, Peter and Julie Fisher Cummings, Sam and Jean Frankel, Kathy and Roger Penke, Ron and Mary Lamparter and Chlek and Beth Fisher.

But will people come back to shop? Kathy Antonini seemed to be doing serious reconnaissance. "Darrien will probably be back here tomorrow at 10:02 a.m.," quipped Lee Iacocca.

Julie Nelson, who was spotted checking out the shoe collections, admitted, "I used to have to go to Chicago's Neiman Marcus to support my shoe fetish. Now I won't have to."

And Chris Strumbos summed up the feeling of many who believe this area lacks national respect. "Aren't we long overdue for a store like this?" she asked.

**Fash Bash**  
Aretha Franklin used one word

to describe the Fash Bash show last Tuesday night at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. "Fabulous," said the singer, who knows a thing or two about show business. Franklin's opinion was shared by everyone we interviewed.

You should know that the 23-year-old Founders Junior Council benefit, which was formerly known as a people-watching spectacle with a runway fashion show, has changed dramatically since its move three years ago to the Fox. The hairdressers and fashion star wannabes still come out in force and their costumes are fascinating, but the big Fash Bash show is now on the stage.

Fabulous clothes from Hudson's plentiful collections are featured in the presentation, but the production values of the choreographed show are so outstanding that even a fashion Scrooge would be enthralled. The addition this year of comedian/juggler Michael Davis had the audience of more than 4,500 people roaring with laughter, and set a new show standard.

Mimi Strelak who co-chaired FB with Ed Hogikyan and Tom Maskout, estimated proceeds might top \$200,000. "The auction alone brought in \$90,000, almost twice last year," she said.

That auction, along with donated commodities from 15 restaurants, was enjoyed by the sell-out crowd of 1,000 patron-ticket (\$100) holders at the State Theatre. Carolyn and Peter Levin co-chaired the patron party and their daughter Jennifer, a college student on a summer internship in London, flew home just for the event. "I tell all my friends that Fash Bash is the best party in the world," she enthused, by way of explanation.

Other local FB committee chairmen and chairwomen include Jonathan Boos, Charlie and Robyn Polzin, Ann Olson and Kathy (FJC president) Rines. Other local supporters included Jonathan Holtzman, the Brian Schubert, Joe Blanco, Bob Machus, Frank Plikus, Marshall Chins, Ryan and Sandra Plezia Husayne, Bonnie Blanding with Denis O'Shaughnessy and Scott Romney with Ellen Rogers, to name but a few.



**Fashionable charity:** Neiman Marcus opening gala co-chairman and co-chairwoman Peter and Julie Cummings socialize with Hattie (Belkin) and her husband, Garry Whitehead.



**Good listeners:** Barbara McIntosh (left) makes a point to Lee and Darrien Iacocca at the NM charity gala.



**Check this:** Stephany Austin (left) and Susan Winton-Feinberg look at Neiman Marcus price tags.



**Fash Bash:** Big smiles on the faces of Peter Levin and his daughter Jennifer confirm the success of Founders Junior Council benefit.



**Sally's Porch:** Gretchen Lyon (left) and Jackie and Bob Hamill socialize in the new alfresco cafe at Machus Sly Fox.

Martin Singer's presentations, especially the linguist-stuffed quail, garnered rave notices.

Folks seemed to be in the mood for the mid-summer rendezvous. Bloomfield attorney Ron Chapman was accepting congratulations for sailing success with Sensation, his new Class A Nelson-Marek 40. He and partner Michael Thomas won

first in class and first overall in both the Port Huron and Chicago Mackinac races. "It's maybe the first time anyone has ever done that," he said.

The Bob Hamills, Lyman Lyons, Bill Greenwalds, Paul Gelfers, Bob Emde, Sid Goldstels, Roland Hardys, Gene

Thompsons, Nick Posts, Gordon Pollock with Debra Cummins and Herb Abrash are a few more of the localites spotted savoring the scene.

"Tell your readers that Mondays through Thursdays anyone named Sally gets a drink on the house, I mean the new porch," said Machus. Sounds good to this Sally. See you there.

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