



Regina Buckley (GSSD board chair), Bryanna Datko, Rita Datko (event co-chair), Tange Gavin (event co-chair), E.A. Stewart (honorary co-chair), Barbara Groce (honorary co-chair), Lynne Moore (décor chair), Carol Dedrich (GSSD CEO)



Andrea Naversen (2014 event chair), Cynthia Kronemyer, Tamara Lafarga-Joseph (event co-chair), Sarah Sleeper (event co-chair), Karen Hoehn (2012 event chair), Deborah Cross (CF president), Maggie Bobileff (honorary chair; 2017 event co-chair), Denise Hug (2017 event co-chair)

Girl Scouts and Country Friends

STORY AND PHOTOS BY VINCENT ANDRUNAS • SPECIAL TO THE U-T

URBAN CAMPOUT AT BALBOA PARK

The “Me too” movement has gained great momentum, spurred by the many injustices coming to light recently. But for over a century, one of America’s most venerable and beneficial institutions has diligently helped girls and women become all that they can be. No; it isn’t the Army — it’s the Girl Scouts!

Since its 1912 founding by Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah, Ga., the organization (initially titled Girl Guides of America) has grown to serve girls in the U.S. and American girls living abroad. Girl Scouts prepares and mentors girls to empower themselves, promoting compassion, courage, confidence, character, leadership, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship — in an all-girl, girl-focused, safe environment. Membership is open to girls of all backgrounds, and a large proportion of today’s most successful women were once Girl Scouts.

In recent years, Girl Scouts has been encouraging girls’ interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Girl Scouts San Diego holds its Urban Campout fundraising event annually at its Balboa Park headquarters, and its theme this year was “Mad About Science.” Rita Datko and Tange Gavin chaired; longtime Girl Scout volunteer and major contributor Barbara Groce and her daughter, E.A. Stewart, were honorary chairs. The 555 guests embraced the theme, many sporting lab coats, pocket protectors, and safety goggles—

one such group even showing up with soot-covered faces, as “survivors” of a lab experiment gone awry.

These urban campouts always offer many camping-related activities. While guests enjoyed thematic cocktails and tray-passed hors d’oeuvres (many incorporating dry ice to simulate smoke), others played at archery, “s’mores”-making, and interactive science experiments. Diverse silent auction items included hi-def TVs, household goodies, and an entire table of fanciful “Ro-Bot Sculptures” made from found items. In fact, dozens of hand-made robots decorated the entire venue.

Before a three-course dinner featuring salmon and short ribs, County Supervisor Ron Roberts, whose leadership and advocacy has helped ensure that girls from any economic background can become Girl Scouts, was made an honorary member of the organization — and received a T-shirt reading “Man Enough to be a Girl Scout.”

Board chair Regina Buckley introduced the honorary chairs, who spoke of their family’s four-generation involvement with the Girl Scouts. Emcee Clint Bell’s live auction brought in nearly \$30,000, and after a video and talks by life member Roshni Kakaiya and young Esha Walia, paddle-raise pledges topped \$120,000 (including \$45,000 in matching grants). Overall net proceeds exceeded \$350K, and the evening concluded with The Heroes playing for dancing under the stars.

ART OF FASHION FUNDRAISER

In 1954, a group of charitable women formed The Country Friends, a non-profit organization providing funding to numerous San Diego-based charities. Over the years, its efforts have raised nearly \$14 million for causes focusing on women, children, the elderly, the military, and the disabled.

CF operates a volunteer-staffed consignment shop, filled with top-end items, and hosts various fundraising events throughout the calendar year. But its most famous and highest-earning event is the annual Art of Fashion luncheon and fashion show, held at The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe, which has hosted use of the venue since time immemorial.

This year’s 63rd edition began on the Inn’s lawn with French Gourmet canapes and Moët & Chandon Champagne. Once guests were seated for the fashion show, CF president Deb Cross revealed that the organization was funding 50 non-profits this year. Co-chairs Tamara Lafarga-Joseph and Sarah Sleeper thanked guests and sponsors for their support, and the emcees, NBC San Diego newscasters Catherine Garcia and Mark Mullen, introduced the event honoree — popular local philanthropist, fashionista, and entrepreneur Maggie Bobileff.

Maggie (who chaired the event last year with Denise Hug), then spoke of her longstanding love for fashion, which became

her career. She revealed that she’s been battling cancer for the past year, and credited the support of her friends and family. Now her doctor is calling her “Miracle Maggie,” and she plans to be around for many years to come. Swiss-born, she’s now a proud American. “As a citizen of this country,” she observed, “I want to say that it is time for us to get together, to listen to each other; to support each other.”

The fast-paced half-hour runway show, held beneath a gigantic net canopy, featured the fall/winter collections of 13 top designers, courtesy of the finest retailers from the event’s multi-year fashion partner, South Coast Plaza. The presentation drew raves from the appreciative audience.

Afterward, the 450 guests reconvened under a huge open-sided sunshade on the Inn’s lawn for a gourmet luncheon created by executive chef Chris House. Table centerpieces — unique hats by designer Aimee Fuller — were quickly purchased by admirers. During dessert, stunning opportunity drawing prizes valued at \$40,000 were awarded to lucky winners. The priciest — a pair of diamond, sapphire, and pearl earrings valued at \$7,900 — went to Les Cross, husband of CF’s president. Rather than wear them, he’ll probably give them to someone he knows...

Festivities concluded with cocktails, socializing, and shopping from South Coast Plaza’s boutiques.



Andrea Goodrich, Lisa Helmke, Tammy Carpowich, Mary Doyle, Joie Parmenter, Karen Haze



Rhonda Wilson, Dee Ammon, Vivian Hardage, Barbara Shooter, Jennifer Navarra, Linda Kurtin



Debbie and Mark Godwin, Ann Holler, P.R. and Christina Herschelman, Ed Holler (all were supposedly victims of a lab explosion)



Jerome Strack (Inn at RSF general manager), Suzanne Newman (CF 1st VP; 2012 event co-chair), Kathy Reese (Inn at RSF sales & marketing director), Catherine Garcia (co-emcee; NBC7 anchor), Allie DeKock (with Moët & Chandon), Mark Mullen (co-emcee; NBC7 anchor)



Alan and Louarn Sorkin, Judy Thompson, Mike Conner, Jeanette Day, David Catalino



Tatiana Novick, Melissa Wilkins, Adriana Padilla, Taylor Miller, Sophia Alsadek, Amy Wynne



Marty Cooper and Arlene Harris, John and Sue Major (she’s GS National Board member), Dea Hurston, Ron Roberts (County Supervisor)



Lavinia Homoreanu, Helene Simms, Sandra Alavi, Selma Daniels, Christina Karl, Pam Marks