

AH, WHAT A NIGHT FOR CANADIANS IN PARIS

BY CAROLINE PHILLIPS MAY 5, 2013 IN AROUND OTTAWA | 1 COMMENT



Photograph by Caroline Phillips

OTTAWA — As any romantic will tell you, nothing tops Paris in the spring.

Perhaps that's why the Snowflake Ball has remained so popular since switching away from a winter gala and reinventing itself with a refreshing Springtime in Paris theme.

Some 550 people attended the black-tie ball, held Saturday at the Hilton Lac-Leamy. Couples were seen parading down the escalator in tuxedos and glamorous gowns as an elegant evening of fine dining, dancing and auction bidding awaited.

Vintage lamp posts, café and street scene stage backdrops, Eiffel Tower motifs and a charming mime artist and accordionist all added to the Parisian ambience.

The ball, organized by members of the Jason family, raises money and awareness for Crohn's disease, colitis and colorectal cancer.

Sighted were the CHEO Research Institute's CEO and scientific director, Dr. **Martin Osmond**, as well as Dr. **David Mack**, director of CHEO's

Inflammatory Bowel Disease Centre. It was one of the gala beneficiaries. Special guests included Chief Justice **Beverley McLachlin** and her husband,

Frank McArdle, and French Ambassador **Philippe Zeller** and his wife, **Odile**.

Entertaining expert **Margaret Dickenson** and her husband, retired diplomat **Larry Dickenson**, served as culinary advisers for the menu.

Federal Labour Minister **Lisa Raitt** enjoyed a nice night out with her other half, **Bruce Wood**. So did **Kimothy Walker** of CTV Ottawa News with fiancé **Eme Onuoha**, a V-P with Xerox Canada. That is, when she wasn't busy MCing.

Walker's chic black gown was a loaner from McCaffrey Haute Couture. The fashion house on Sussex is designing Walker's dress for her wedding in September but Walker revealed it won't be big, white and puffy.

The man who first introduced Walker and Onuoha to each other is none other than our matchmaking mayor, **Jim Watson**, who will be the best man at their wedding.

HONOURING VETERANS OF BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

All hands were on deck for the inaugural Battle of the Atlantic Honouring Our Veterans gala held Thursday at the Canadian War Museum.

Nearly 50 veterans of the Battle of the Atlantic, the longest single campaign of the Second World War, attended the dinner with government, naval and industry leaders.

Present were Vice-Admiral **Paul Maddison**, Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy, and Defence Minister **Peter MacKay**, heard saying proudly, "I think we're going to keep him," when talking about his newborn son.

Veterans included former wireless operator **Jack Coghill** of HMCS Peterborough, which protected convoys across the Atlantic. He called the gala "marvellous" and commended the organizing committee for its work.

"This gives us a formal opportunity to remember our shipmates who weren't quite so lucky," said Coghill, 89, of Ottawa.

The 425-person crowd also included Chief Justice McLachlin and such honorary navy captains as businessman **Jim Balsillie**, Sen. **Noël Kinsella** and **Adrian Burns**.

Jim Irving, CEO of top sponsor Irving Shipbuilding, attended. So did **Peter Bissonnette**, president of major sponsor Shaw Communications. Also sighted were the evening's MC, journalist **Don Newman**, and Capt. (Ret'd) **Jim Carruthers**, president of the Ottawa branch of the NAC (Naval Association of Canada).

Coghill brought with him his priceless scrapbook that he made 67 years ago. It was full of wartime memories, including letters, photographs and even pub receipts. Newspaper clippings told the story of how he and a fellow sailor wrote to Santa, asking for "125 lbs. of the nicest female alive." The jolly old fellow didn't let them down. Two giant fleet mail bags, marked "special delivery," arrived at their vessel at a Newfoundland port and out stepped two WRENS (Women's Royal Naval Service), who reportedly said, "Well, boys, here we are."

SPECIAL NIGHT FOR A SPECIAL GIRL

If you thought St. Joseph was saintly, how about those Westeindes? Not only have they taken in an orphaned young woman but they've also been busy raising money for the St. Joe's Women Centre that helped her.

Colleen Westeinde and her sister-in-law, **Susan Finlay**, co-chaired the Inspire & Ignite gala at the Ukrainian Hall. They're married to brothers and business partners **Jeff Westeinde** and **Jonathan Westeinde** of Windmill Development Group.

The sisters-in-law took the lead role in memory of their moms and out of admiration for **Ruth Okoro**, 21, a native of Nigeria who was orphaned at a young age and forced to flee a life of violence.

Okoro got help in Canada from the refugee outreach committee at St. Joseph's Parish in Sandy Hill and from the St. Joe's Women's Centre, which offers support and services to disadvantaged women.

Colleen and Jeff got to know Okoro through Jeff's involvement with the Algonquin College Foundation and grew to love her like a daughter. Okoro is now part of their family and currently studying film and TV at Humber College in Toronto.

"Ruth is a really special girl," Finlay told Around Town. "She's going to do amazing things some day."

The evening, MCed by TV host **Lianne Laing**, raised more than \$25,000 and saw Walmart serve as top sponsor. It showcased clothes by Green Tree Eco Fashion and food by **Stephen Beckta's** Beckta dining & wine.

Adding to the excitement was a surprise flash mob and an offer by Jeff to give five bucks for every person who got up to boogie. Dozens took to the stage to dance, filling the donation bowls with both his cash and their own.

RETRO DANCE WITH A TWIST

Dance lovers got to break out all the moves, whether it be the jitterbug, moon walk or electric slide, at the YMCA-YWCA's Retro Dance Party held Saturday at the Glebe Community Centre.

Popular fitness instructors **Joseph Cull** and **Kathy Godding** were back to co-host the fundraiser for the Y's Strong Kids Campaign.

About 150 people came out dressed in '50s through '80s garb and tore it up on the dance floor (even YMCA-YWCA NCR president and CEO **Deirdre Speers** was spotted doing the twist). The CASCO dance troupe also entertained the crowd with a special performance.

Metro Glebe owner **Jim McKeen** and Mistura Beauty's **Andi Marcus** helped hand out prizes to partygoers who most impressed them and fellow judges with their dance styles and wacky attire. Thankfully, a Sonny and Cher-type couple accepted their award without the onstage bickering that made the real husband and wife team so famous.