

Links civic organization celebrates 'April in Paris'

By Dianna Saffold
Sentinel-Voice

Saturday night the pulse of the Strip enjoyed its usual rhythmic groove as cars moved along Las Vegas Boulevard reminiscent of an endless string of cultured pearls. The world-recognized Las Vegas agenda included the Fourth Annual April in Paris Gala. An event elegantly hosted by the lovely ladies of The Links Inc. Las Vegas Chapter.

Their theme, "Linking Our Voices," honored Nevada's only Black press publication, the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice owner Ramon Savoy and staff, as well as KCEP, public, non-profit radio station, under the management of Lee Winston, and staff with the Links' 2004 Service Community Award. Radio personality Franklin G accepted the award in the absence of Lee Winston.

The venue for this event was ideal...the grand Paris Hotel & Casino. The Concorde Ballroom with its detailed gold carvings and crystal chandeliers created a splendid Parisian atmosphere. Silks and sequins, tuxedos and beautiful people of color gave the room elegant warmth.

The silent auction began at 6 p.m. The auction item selections were solicited by Link members and included such items as a diamond panther ring with ruby eyes donated by Simon S. Abraham of King Solomon's, Top of the Stratosphere dinner for four and 23 additional classy auction items.

Of course, the movers, shakers and big ballers were present and accounted for. A couple that never fails to support the efforts of their people are Fire Chief Dave Washington and wife Marcia, who is currently preparing for her upcoming electoral race for the State Board of Education. Newly appointed, and mother-to-be Commissioner Lynette Boggs McDonald, Steven Horsford and Cedric Crear, both running for the same state senate seat.

Philanthropist Dr. Anthony Pollard, and his wife Diane, Link president elect and member of the fund-raising committee were also present. Link Debra Toney of TLC Health Care Services and husband D.C. were also present.

Adding to the sophistication of the setting was educator Dr. Harvey Williams, Mrs. Sarann Knight-Predy, Dr. E. Louis and JoAnn Overstreet,



Sentinel-Voice photos by Albert Jones

Smiling (Widely) for the Camera: Sisters Debra Toney and Dianne Pollard check out offerings from the silent auction.

Karl and Nettie Harrison, and Maxine Porter, president of Bill Pinkney's Original Drifters.

In addition, there was 100 Black Men member Tommy Cason and his lovely wife Christy of Cason Travel. The Casons were definitely the topic of conversational buzz regarding their upcoming Caribbean cruise, one that many plan to attend. Speaking of future Cason cruisers, Bonnie Juniel was enjoying the feel of gay Paris as she entertained her guest Walter Taylor.

President E. Lavonne Lewis greeted her guests as well as the many Link sisters

in the audience. Speaking in the absence of Urban Chamber Link Hannah Brown, Lewis thanked and praised Hannah for her dedication and success as the fund-raising chair for the past five years. She thanked as many of her Link sisters as time would permit. She recognized Link Vice President Christian Clark; Links Lisa Creighton, co-chairperson; Link Marian D. Burns, Souvenir Journal chair; and announced the newly elected president for the next two years will be Diane Pollard.

Link Willa White delivered the invocation and the Parisian feast began.



Urban Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Louie Overstreet and wife, JoAnn, enjoyed The Links' gala event.

Rock

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moment. But it's not like, "You need to hear this!" A message? That's for other people. I'm not Public Enemy. I'm not Mort Sahl.

"I try to get a lot of relationship stuff in there," he adds, "cause I think that's what sells the seats. The politics (comedy) gets a lot of attention, but without the relationship stuff I'd be at Caroline's playing to 320 people."

Now that his tour is done, Rock is looking forward to the arrival of a second daughter next month, and to a new film with Adam Sandler starting midsummer.

More immediate: Sorting files on his two iPods. One he wants loaded just with music, the other for comedy and spoken word. But apart from his two-iPod lifestyle, Rock doesn't make a habit of splurging, he says.

"I live below my means, not above," he says, "so I won't have to be on the road for at LEAST two years" - he is stretching his mouth into that wide, emphatic Chris Rock grin - "at LLLLEAST!"

"Bonjour mademoiselle" said Benny Campbell, our attentive waiter for the evening as he served the salad - Mesclun Field greens with Mackintosh Apples, Roquefort Cheese and Candied Walnut Dressing. The evening entrée was Emmenthal Crusted Chicken Paillard with Capers, fresh asparagus, long-stemmed carrots and truffled mashed potatoes with fresh baked Parisian bread. The desert was Crème Brulee with seasonal berries.

The room soon filled with the song styling of Janis Carter. Having spent five years in Paris, her beautiful French accent was theme perfect. Accompanied by talented musician Woody Woods and band, Janis began her show with classic hit "Ability to Swing," sharing experiences of her Parisian days she segued into the night's theme, "April in Paris." In a beautiful turquoise gown, with a Josephine Baker-style silver bow adorning her head, she moved toward the audience and said, "I feel like Paris, merci." Singing love songs, Janis performed "Tell Me All About It."

"Guess Who I Saw Today." When she sang "I Love Paris," she invited all the Links in the room to come forward. In the free spirit of Paris, Ms. Carter had the Links make two lines and each one modeled their beautiful attire. Upon the completion of the fashion show, she closed with "All of Me."

Michael Sampson, dance coach, and Artist Director Carole Sampson of the International Dance Education Academy gave a demonstration of the latest dances, including the popular step now part of the stepping craze.

The Links Inc. has more

than 11,000 members in 300 chapters located in 40 states and has been incorporated since 1951. Their focus is on educational programs and scholarships and their pilot program, Links to Success, Children Achieving Excellence, targets underachieving boys and girls in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade.

Oops ladies, the discussion about the band in front of your guest...was that part of the ending, or did someone forget just how elegant the evening was....?

Links Inc., the evening was wonderful...merci beaucoup!



Dancing a Jig: Carole Sampson, artist director for the International Dance Education Academy, goes over the basics of the new step dancing craze as others look on.

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