



**EYE ON O.C.** By Anne Valdespino

# 2012 IT'S A WRAP

Eye on O.C. is only a few months old, but in that time we've knocked ourselves out covering dozens of Orange County's glitzy galas and heroic volunteer events. Here's our take on the best of 2012.



DREW A. KELLEY, FOR THE REGISTER

**BEST COCKTAIL BASH**

**Big Brothers Big Sisters Gourmet Dinner, Nov. 1**

It was a sea of suits as 450 guests packed the patio of the Balboa Bay Club & Resort for a macho 90 minutes of Scotch tasting, a martini bar and cigar station.



ANA VENEGAS, THE REGISTER

**BEST MAKEOVER**

**Seegerstrom Center for the Arts' 39th Annual Candlelight Concert, Dec. 7**

Seegerstrom Concert Hall was transformed with rich jewel-colored lights, drapes, vignettes and live ballerinas using banisters as a barre.

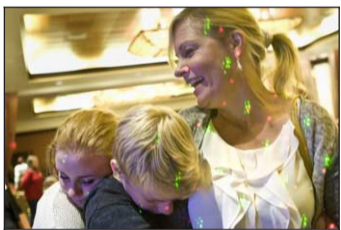


PAUL RODRIGUEZ, THE REGISTER

**BEST MARRIAGE OF THEME AND CROWD**

**Laguna Playhouse's "California Dreamin'" gala, Nov. 16**

The theme of this fundraiser went over big with the surf-centric crowd in Hawaiian shirts and flops, who spent dinner tossing beach balls.



CINDY YAMANAKA, THE REGISTER

**BEST MOTHER AND CHILD CELEBRATION**

**Colette's Children's Home Holiday Dinner, Dec. 10**

Kids received toys, a big dinner, sweet treats and a chance to pick out a gift for their moms. Awww!



STEVEN GEORGES, FOR THE REGISTER

**BEST DEAD CELEB**

**Susan Claassen at the Working Wardrobes' benefit, Dec. 4-6**

The actress owned the role of the costume designer in "A Conversation With Edith Head," reprising it at a luncheon. If she liked your outfit,



CHRISTINE COTTER, FOR THE REGISTER

**BEST SHOW (TUNES)**

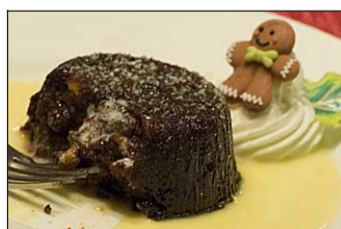
**Chapman University's "American Celebration," Nov. 2**

The annual scholarship dinner and theatrical fundraiser starred a cast of more than 100 fresh-faced students, seen here with donor Julianne Argyros and President James L. Doti. The students sang, danced and sweated. They were great.

**LO MEJOR GOURMEX**

**The Delhi Center's Zocalo fundraiser, Oct. 26**

The Mexican food was more authentic than we had any right to expect at a catered affair for hundreds. "Ay Dios mio!" said Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez as she took her night's first bite of mole. The buffet included posole, tamales and icy horchata spiked with plenty of cinnamon.



JOSHUA SUDOCK, THE REGISTER

**BEST CALORIC INVESTMENT**

**Pacific Chorale's "A Dickens Feast" gala, Dec. 16**

Waiters at the Center Club presented old-fashioned Christmas plum pudding with brandy sauce, fit for Bob Cratchit and his brood. So



LARICE PEOPLES, ENDEE MAGAZINE

**BEST HOSTESS**

**Orange County Sickle Cell Foundation Masquerade Ball, Dec. 15**

Star Simmons, founder of the organization and chairwoman of the event, and her husband, Elliot, took the time to per-

**BEST CHA-CHINGING**

**Tie: Christmas Company and Shopping With a Heart (Nov. 9 and 27)**

The Junior League of Orange County's event at the Hilton in Costa Mesa was like wandering through a department store. At the National Charity League Inc.'s event, vendors offered a boutique-y selection at OC Mart Mix.



JOSHUA SUDOCK, THE REGISTER

**MOST ENTERTAINING ENTERTAINER**

**MenAlive's "Winter Spectacular," Dec. 13**

Liza Minnelli had a head cold. She was away from home. She probably was making less than she'd earn at the Hollywood Bowl. But when she sang, her fellow performers - MenAlive, Orange County's gay men's chorus - were star-struck.



KEVIN SULLIVAN, THE REGISTER



CHRISTINE COTTER, FOR THE REGISTER

**HOTTEST MODELS**

**Guard A Heart Foundation's Black & White Ball, Oct. 27**

Rita Hayworth (Toni Sky) and Marilyn Monroe (Grace Richardson) look-alikes mingled with the crowd, air kiss-



CHRISTINE COTTER, FOR THE REGISTER

**BIGGEST (BEST) DRAG**

**Friends of Dorothy "Haunted Halloween Costume Party," Oct. 20**

The AIDS Services Foundation's Friends of Dorothy swan song was a river of glitz and skin: Hooters girls, stewardesses and an "Eyes Wide Shut"-inspired party-goer.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIGUEL POLA

**BEST LIVE CELEB**

**Project Cuddle's Masquerade, Oct. 20**

John Stamos turned heads at Bruno Serato's Anaheim White House, arriving in a Dolce & Gabbana tux on his back with a satiny mom, Loretta Stamos, on his arm.



DREW A. KELLEY, FOR THE REGISTER

**BEST HOSTS IN COSTUME**

**Festival Ballet Theatre's Sugar Plum & Cavalier Tea, Dec. 9**

Dancers bared their midriffs in Arabian outfits, struck poses in tutus and looked like princesses in tiaras. Tea sippers were dazzled.



COURTESY OF LAUNDRY LOVE

**BEST HANDS-ON VOLUNTEERS**

**Laundry Love, Nov. 15**

At the monthly event, young volunteers helped the needy fluff and fold their laundry. Photographer Moses Chiong added poignant pictures.



DREW A. KELLEY, FOR THE REGISTER

**BEST ORGANIZED VOLUNTEERS**

**OC Noble Vikings' "Christmas Food Boxing," Dec. 23**

Behind the Ritz Restaurant, volunteers packed 1,450 food boxes for needy families. The volunteers had fun and left