

Zoofari Ball XXVI:

Midnight at the Oasis

By **Jeanette Casillas** / CASA

A **MAGICAL CARPET RIDE** transported guests to the mysterious and romantic kingdom of Morocco for a *Midnight at the Oasis*

themed evening at the Santa Barbara Zoo on Saturday, August 27th.

“Zoofari Ball is different than most fundraisers,” shared Nancy McToldridge, SB Zoo Director. “The outdoor setting, casual ambiance, and dress are unique. And of course the themes are always fun, the décor is gorgeous, and the food is delicious. We are interested in providing a wonderful and fun experience for the guests that build

great relationships for the Zoo. The benefit to the animals goes beyond what is raised that evening by creating loyal supporters in the long term.”



Sue Wagner, Honorary Event Chair; **Kirk Martin**; and **Bill Wagner**, Honorary Event Chair

Longtime Zoo supporters Sue and Bill Wagner were Honorary Event Chairs. “Sue and Bill have been perennial sponsors of this event,” shared McToldridge. “Sue served on the Zoofari Committee for many years, dating back to the 90s. She has chaired the event,

produced the décor, and served on the Board of Directors. They are good friends of the zoo and very loyal. We were very pleased to honor them this way.”

Many of the nearly 500 guests wore traditional Moroccan djellabas or elegantly adorned kaftans. Others dressed in safari attire. All were greeted with ice-cold signature *Casablanca Cooler* cocktails featuring Ketel One Citroen Flavored Vodka. A bazaar of treasures awaited guests at the hilltop along with drinks and appetizers as they made their way through an array of silent



Felicia Sutherland, VP & Advertising Manager, SB Bank & Trust; **George Leis**, President & CEO of SBB&T; **Anne Leis**; and **Joanne Cordova**

auction items.

Following the sizzling live auction, led by professional auctioneer Sean Kelly, the Zoofari Committee gathered at the bar to present a special award to a dedicated committee member. The Zoofari’s “lifetime achievement award” was awarded to Elissa Rubin. “Elissa exudes the special spirit of Zoofari Ball,” shared McToldridge. “She’s always there every year and she is one of the most dedicated volunteers.”

Once the sun set behind the sand dunes, guests entered the transformed hilltop where Lisa Carter from Behind the Scenes created the exotic beauty of a royal palace. Dinner was provided by Zoo Catering Services by Rincon and music by Jana & the One had guests on their feet and dancing under a starlit sky.

SB Zoo is a private, non-profit corporation with no tax-based support. The \$8 million operating budget is generated through general operations. For more information call 962-5339 or visit www.sbzoo.org.



Hiroko Benko, **Alice Krebs**, **Lady Leslie Ridley-Tree**, and **Brian King**



Mill Larsen, **Arlene Larsen**, and **Terry Ryken**



Nancy Beaver, **Billy Homes**, and **Deanna Waller**



Lisa Carter, event co-chair; **Elissa Rubin**, SB Zoo Director and event co-chair; and **Nancy McToldridge**, SB Zoo Director and event co-chair