

Junior League of Santa Barbara

The Literacy Ball

By Kerry Methner / CASA

DANCIN' TO THE BEAT OF SOLIDARITY over 300 people, many members of the 500 plus strong women's organization Junior League of Santa Barbara (JLSB), gathered at the Montecito Country Club for the first Annual Literacy Ball last week.

Santa Barbara Chic, complete with white sofas, elegant plantings, and the unbeatable views of the Montecito Country Club as a backdrop, was the ambiance the twelve planning committee members created offering sophisticated opulence. Then they got out of the way so people could enjoy – all to benefit area literacy programs.

"The committee did such an amazing job in attending to details, to the ambiance, and to raising money," enthused JLSB President **Dianne Gayoski-Duva**. "The committee was a group of hard working ladies."

The JLSB's mission is to promote volunteerism, develop leadership in women, and support the community. Every five years the League chooses a new focus area. Promoting literacy in the community was voted in as the focus of the organization at the end of 2006. "We

discovered that literacy was an unmet need in the community," explained Gayoski-Duva. "Only the library and public schools were promoting literacy... If someone is not able to read, they are not able to perform simple tasks to make a living."

The Literacy Ball netted over forty thousand dollars for literacy programs, according to Gayoski-Duva.

Tables of family and woman friendly items were the centerpiece in the Club's entry as participants enjoyed gourmet cheeses, fruit, and a welcoming open beverage

concession.

When the time was right, the ballroom was opened replete with gift packs by Jacqua, and a DJ who made everyone's toes tap.

A high-steppin' moment of the evening was when Gayoski-Duva introduced last year's Woman of the Year, **Wendy Read**, who then introduced the 2008 Woman of the Year **Rachael Ross Steidl**.

The Woman of the Year is "a woman in the community who embodies our mission promoting volunteerism, developing the potential of woman, and working in the community," Gayoski-Duva shared.

Steidl, founder of SB Parent.com, whose family was present, greeted the attentive group with thanks. "The whole night was surreal for me and very special – I believe so strongly in the importance of giving back to your community. To be acknowledged for it by a group of women who are



Rachael Ross Steidl and **Dianne Gayoski-Duva**, JLSB President



Bibi Moezzi, Business First Bank and **Bill Pessa**



Steve Alison Jordan, **David and Shelley Powell Neubauer**



Josie and Jeff Divine, Rabo Bank with **Sherri and Dan Harris**



Anna Gibbs and **Mariaelena Welch**, Jaqua Co-Owner



Linda Vannier



Melissa Franzen, and **Caroline Harrah**



Some of the Planning Committee: Front: **Melanie Waters**; **Shelley Powell Neubauer**, Committee Chair; **Pernille Walker**. Back: Co-Chair **Jill Remy**; **Marcy Eliassen**; **Kristen Beinke**; and **Karen Grandle**

committed to the same idea was so rewarding," she shared after the event.

Steidl continued, "I have three school age daughters and it is important to me to set an example to each of them that you need to find your passion when it comes to both your career and to giving back because it is your passion that will keep you committed..." I am truly excited about the focus on literacy the Junior League has decided to take. I am looking forward to supporting its efforts both through SBParent.com and as a mom."

The League thanked Steidl for her work in the community by providing one of her favorite programs with a donation. "I am also so grateful for the donation they made to the Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation in my name," shared Steidl.

The JLSB has more than 500 women and has been serving since 1925. Membership is open to all women regardless of age, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, physical status, or nation origin, who are committed to volunteerism.

The League is currently partnering with the SB Downtown Public to renovate the children's area. The entire lower floor of the library will be dedicated for the children's area. For more information visit: www.jlsantabarbara.org



Jennifer Hall (sitting), **David Hall** and **Valerie Drye**



Yvonne Rochon and **Lynn Dee Heras**



Ann Johnson, Fidelity Title with **Kelly and Jonathan Martin**



Kathy Clenet, **Michelle Hughes**, **Sandy Elliot**, **Rachael Ross Steidl**, **Julie Sorenson**, and **Irene Milton**



Michelle Piotrowski



Erin Beck



Scott Topper



Jennifer Wyss



Rachael Ross Steidl, Woman of the Year 2008 and **Wendy Read**, 2007 Woman of the Year



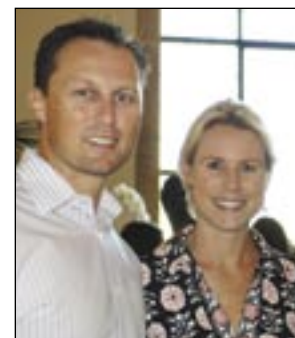
Connie and Steven Trider



David Edelman, Cox Communications, and **David Dominguez**



Sabrina Kelly, Manager SB Tiffany & Co and **Jennifer Guess**, Pres Elect JLSB



Dr. Stephen and Lisa Couvillion



Stephen Yungling and **Sheri Broedlow**



Dick and Gaby Ross; **Kathy and Alain Clenet**; **Rachael Ross Steidl** and **Jamison Steidl**; and **Crosby Ross**

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