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Form-fitting fun

By BARBARA HENDEL BLADE SOCIETY EDITOR

The hot weather is out, but cool fall fashions are always in. So far we've had a flurry of fashion shows to illustrate what's in for autumn and the holiday season.

If you didn't go to one, we have some red-hot advice straight from pro Cathy Goodenough, manager of Francesca's Collections at Levis Commons.

"This fall, you will see a lot of textures in accessories," Ms. Goodenough says, adding that handbags, wide belts, boots, patent shoes, and cute flats are the right step for any wardrobe. And to go with that perfect purse and shoes, you can't go wrong with dresses.

"Dresses are really hot right now," she says, "including cute cocktail dresses for



Cay Stout is aglow in a formal by Gallippo's and a fur by Toledo Furs at the Ability Center Auxiliary Fall Fashion Show and benefit. ( THE BLADE/HERRAL LONG )

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holiday parties."



Robbie Bettinger, 5, models an outfit from Kids Clothesline, and Carol Fadell wears Elegant Rags at the fashion show and benefit for the Ability Center at the Stranahan Great Hall. ( THE BLADE/HERRAL LONG )

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stayed to chat.



THE BLADE/DAVE ZAPOTOSKY : Kristen

And go wild by mixing and matching animal prints with stripes and florals, Ms. Goodenough says.

While guests were able to enjoy the delightful duds at local shows, fashion wasn't the only focus: The events celebrated anniversaries, made cash for charities, and offered a perfect place to catch up on some chitchat.

FIFI'S hosted a fashion-show luncheon Oct. 5 to kick off the restaurant's 26th anniversary. The place, rarely open for lunch, was packed with ladies and gents as they leisurely dined in elegance while models from Elegant Rags meandered about in chic day and cocktail wear, perfect for a night at Fifi's.

In addition, for those who wanted a sneak peek at their future, Janet Amid, astrologer, was on hand. Joining in the fun was restaurateur Matthew Westin, who started his career at Fifi's. He helped out, then

The week continued with a Cheese and Wine Tasting in the lounge on Oct. 6, followed by a "Martini, Music, and Memories" gathering on Oct. 13. Among the guests that night was Elaine Nicolaidis, owner of the Oak 'N Bucket, which closed its doors recently. Ms. Nicolaidis was there to celebrate with Fifi Berry and her daughter Kelley. Ms. Nicolaidis said she started her restaurant career 40 years ago and the Oak 'N Bucket 36 years ago.

Ahh, the memories that have been shared at Fifi's. People come there to celebrate life. Classy and romantic atmosphere, with low lighting - flattering to everyone - and live piano music on a baby grand set with a vase of red

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Mori models a gown at Fifi's during the 26th anniversary celebration.

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It's a classy, very upscale neighborhood bar to some who stop in regularly on their way home from work or a night out.

And one cannot forget the special menu items, including Bananas Foster and Caesar salad, that have been served tableside since the start of Fifi's in 1980. New in the last few years has been the bar menu featuring Fifi's Lollipops, which are mini sauteed lamb chops.

A Wine Tasting Dinner on Oct. 25 will round out the celebration.

AUTUMN Elegance, the 22nd annual fashion show presented by the Auxiliary to the Ability Center. was Sept. 27 at Stranahan Great Hall.

The day started at 10 a.m. with a social hour and a silent auction plus a tour of vendors' booths for chances to win raffle prizes. A tasty autumn lunch drew ladies to their seats at tables centered with glass purses filled with fall flowers. Before the show began, guests' hearts were touched by Mrs. Ohio 2006, Cay Stout. She reminded them why they were all there: to support the Ability Center by telling her family's story and how great an impact the center made on them.

"Nearly four years ago, my husband, Doug, and I learned we would be joining 54 million other Americans and their families who live with a disability due to injury, illness, or age. ... After a lifetime of perfect health, at 33 years of age, Doug was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease. Doug courageously lived with this disease for nearly four years before passing away [in August]."

The Ability Center helped the Stouts and their children, Jackson, 8, and Jami, 6, adapt to the new situation.

Mrs. Stout, with her husband's encouragement, entered the competition for the title of Mrs. Ohio as a way to spread her husband's legacy. Within days of winning the Mrs. Ohio 2006 title, she joined the Ability Center delegation for a rally on Capitol Hill. She plans to return to Washington in the spring to continue the fight for the rights of people with disabilities.

Then, it was lights, music, and action as more than 30 models - all from the community including Marianne Ballas, Faye Fenwick, and Mrs. Stout - strolled the runway with no commentary, just great tunes by HepCat Revival.

Children in cute clothes were featured early. Among the classy kids were five of Mary Beaber's grandchildren from the DiSalle and Barone clans. Kids Klothesline had nine models that highlighted togs by several popular children's designers, including Michael Simon, My Boy Jake, Eland, Plum, Little Mass, Kitestrings, Rugby's, Hartstrings, and Sister Sam.

Classy and sassy casual wear in traditional fall colors were endless. Elegant Rags had 42 models that highlighted fashions by Escada, One Girl Who, Mythology, Leatherocks, Canvas Back, Isda, Saguero, Theory, Hobo, Last Tango, Basil and Maude, and more. Cashmere, suede, leather, knit, and demin, it as all there in a variety of fall colors. Jackets, pants, coats, sweaters, and a few evening ensembles too.

Evening wear with accessories, cocktail wear, gowns, and furs followed. Gallippo's showcased 23 gowns and/or evening wear, from sexy knee-length black cocktail dresses to long gowns and formal pant ensembles in black, blue, navy, white, red, green, and brown.

roses. Crisp linens and candlelight grace each table.



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Of course, all eyes sparkled when wraps from Toledo Furs were modeled. The coats came in short, midlength, and long, in blacks and browns, and more.

Goody bags held all kinds of wonderful things, including scarves from Sally Bales, owner of Accessorize, and discount certificates for fashions from stores featured in the show, and more.

Diane Churdar, show director with Sue Zemla, thanked Mrs. Zemla for her years of volunteerism with the center's show. "We will miss her; she's moving to Florida."

Among the 480 guests at the affair was Auxiliary president Sue Lovett.

Chairmen Barbara Bettinger and Mrs. Beaber report a net of more than \$15,000, which benefits the Independent Living Program.

THE EPISCOPAL Church Women of All Saints Church presented their annual luncheon and style show Sept. 9 at Gladioux Meadows. Tables were set with blue and white, the club colors. The chicken dinner with mashed potatoes and topped with fruit pies was a dieter's dilemma, but it certainly was tasty.

The door prizes donated by members were hard to beat, but it was the show featuring chapeaus from The Preacher's Wife hat shop paired with models' own fashions that topped the day off.

In addition, the more than 250 ladies came dressed to the nines in their favorite hats. Among those in attendance were Paula Mayes, general chairman; Mary Whiten, president; Shirley Clay, treasurer; Edith Gohlston and Muriel Williams, publicity chairmen, and Marjory Jones, ticket chairman, who was president when the first fashion show started some 18 years ago.

The approximately \$4500 netted with benefit needs for the church as well as community outreach programs.

The shows aren't over, folks. Inverness Club members and guests will be privy to A Holiday Fashion Show and Luncheon slated for Nov. 4 at the club. Fashions will be by the Sophia Lustig Shop, Sophie's Sister, Scarpe shoes, Roth Furs, Jeffrey Mann Jewelers, Strasburg Children's Shop, Posh Tots, Neil's Men's Clothing, and others. Chairmen are Julia Young, Traci Schwann, Corrine Mann, and Trees Daniels.

The Ebony Fashion Show, touted as the world's largest traveling fashion show, is set for Nov. 19 at Stranahan Great Hall. The 49th annual event is once again hosted by Alpha Kappa Alpha, and again Toledo Furs will be showing off some elegant wraps.

Chairman Cheryl Slack of Alpha Kappa Alpha said the show benefits scholarships and community service projects.

Barbara Hendel is The Blade's society editor.

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