

LET THE FESTIVITIES BEGIN!

THURSDAY NIGHT'S welcome gala featured Crandall the Butt Sketcher, who made art out of people's rear profile. THE INSIDER notes that most people have a portrait done from the front, but not with the Butt Sketcher. A number of women present for the event were adamant about not having their rears sketched; however, one remarked after seeing the first couple of drawings, "he's very slimming."

Another fun activity that folks could try their luck at was the wine toss. Party-goers could buy leather rings, specially made for the event by Dan Crates and his team at Crates Leather, and toss them at bottles of wine in hopes of "ringing the neck" of one or more bottles and winning the wine. THE INSIDER has it on good authority that Bob Wert of Basic Bob's Western Wear made four out of seven of his tosses, and was heard to say, "and I don't even like wine."

Many at the reception also purchased a "Mystery Box" for \$25, all of which contained industry merchandise valued between \$25 and \$200. Money raised from all three activities went toward the WETA Marketing Initiative.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

WETA'S RECENTLY launched national media campaign to promote Western wear was featured prominently in the Denver Business Journal on March 31. The article quoted then-president Ron Schmitz making positive statements about the future of Western. The story also noted that Western wear companies were reporting that business was up anywhere from 10 to 25 percent since 2004.

TRADESHOW MANIA

AT PRESSTIME, the lineup of trade shows on the East Coast and beyond in August and September was set—Atlantic City, Dallas, Indianapolis, Billings, Baltimore, SPOGA in Germany, Denver, Kansas City, Reno and Indianapolis (again). THE INSIDER hears most people in the industry saying that this number and frequency of trade shows cannot be sustained, so if you want to be part of a historic alignment of the stars, this fall is your opportunity. Whether or not markets get support from both vendors and retailers will determine which ones remain on the schedule for next August. Stay tuned.

If you have something you'd like The Insider to hear about, call (952)930-4363, or email your information to the editor at pwahl@tackntogs.com, and he'll pass the details along. 📧



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