

## Dancing the night away for a cause

### American Women's Club raises 60 million won at a gala dinner to help local charities

By Inès Cho  
Staff Writer

Simplicity and elegance are keys to success for this annual holiday event.

The American Women's Club's (AWC) holiday charity gala dinner might have begun with a quiet round of martinis and Champagne, but as the night progressed, revelers ended up forming a conga line on the dance floor to celebrate the evening's success.

Hosted by George Snyder, senior vice president of safety and security at Korean Air, and Cheri Dowdall, an AWC member and manager of the American Women's Club Thrift Shop, the event, held Saturday night at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, began with the singing of the national anthems of two countries, Korea and the United States, by the Korean-American soprano Cha Seung-hee.

In her keynote speech, Patricia Hill, the wife of the newly appointed U.S. Ambassador to Korea Christopher Hill, addressed the importance of the long tradition of the AWC in supporting local charities, such as Lydia House, Partners for Future Foundation, Rothen School for Boys, the USO's Warrior Stellar Tour and Habitat for Humanity's "Women Build" program.

The event maintained a lively spirit throughout the evening. Guests cheered and burst into loud applause each time Kathy Scalabre, the AWC president, called out the names of the organizing committee members and their supporters, to thank them.

Gone were the stress and worries among the party organizers that the event might be less successful in raising money than last year because of the current economic slump in Korea.

Toward the end of the evening, the elated organizing chairwoman, Kelly Connelly, said the club had sold 420 tickets and raised more than 60 million won (\$54,000), more than twice the amount the event raised last year.



The reception at the American Women's Club Holiday Charity Gala Dinner at the Grand Hyatt Hotel on Mt. Namsan on Saturday, above. The event, hosted by masters of ceremony George Snyder and Cheri Dowdall, top left, kicked off with a keynote speech by Patricia Hill, center left, the wife of newly appointed U.S. Ambassador to Korea Christopher Hill. Tami Overby, bottom left, executive vice president of AmCham, presided over a live auction. By Chang Young-soo

When asked about a special strategy this year, Mrs. Connelly, who took the position in early October, said, "We didn't spend money on the decoration [of the Grand Ball Room] and focused on the content of the program."

Indeed, the vast ballroom did not feature any fancy decor, a typical element in a gala dinner, except for two large screens that showcased major

sponsors' company logos.

The tables were kept simple and elegant with silver showplates, candles and white roses, but since tables bore the names of American states, the subtle aura of a political convention kick-started easy conversation among the guests.

One guest joked: "You have to be a power broker to be seated at 'Washington D.C.," referring to one of the head tables.

Guests of honor who were seated

at the head tables included the U.S. Ambassador to Korea, Christopher Hill, and his wife Patricia; the Commander of the United Nations Command and the Republic of Korea and U.S. Combined Forces Command, and Commander of the United States Forces Korea, General Leon Laporte and his wife, Judy Laporte; the mayor of Seoul's Seocho district, Cho Nam-ho; Danish Ambassador to Korea Lief Donde and his wife, Ingaborg Donde; and New Zealand

Ambassador to Korea David Taylor and his wife, Theresa Taylor.

For the live auction, Tami Overby, the executive vice president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Korea, took over the microphone.

The two highest winning bids were 5.5 million won each for travel deals on United Airlines and Northwest Airlines.

And there were 91 winners of silent raffles, whose prizes included airline tickets to Bangkok, hotel accommodations, mobile phones, luxury handbags and meal tickets at restaurants.

It seemed that the AWC organizing committee's concept for this year, "Simplicity, Elegance and Class," pleased participants, even if they didn't win prizes.

Cho Nam-ho, Seocho's mayor, who arrived with his own entourage, was particularly pleased with the outcome of the dinner.

Upon leaving, he said, "The investment I made tonight was well worth it, as our Seocho district will have a bright future with our new connection with the American community."

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On the dance floor were Michael Zink, senior executive vice president of Citigroup, with Kathy Scalabre, AWC president, far left; U.S. Ambassador Christopher Hill and his wife Patricia, center; and New Zealand Ambassador David Taylor and his wife Theresa. At the head table, from left, Cho Nam-ho, Seocho mayor; Mr. Hill; Jean-Luc Scalabre, country manager of Crown Relocations Korea; Mr. Taylor; and Lee Se-jong, president of Korean-American Association. By Inès Cho



## Korean films get airing in China

By You Sang-chul  
JoongAng Ilbo

China's film industry is opening to the rest of the world, slowly but surely.

A Korean film festival opened in Beijing for the first time on Thursday at Diaoyutai State Guest House, where the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons have taken place. Over the course of the festival, which ends today, 12 Korean films are being screened, including "My Tutor Friend" and "Spirit of Jeet Keun Do."

Currently, China has a screen-quota system, which allows the import of only 24 foreign films a year.

The festival kicked off with a press conference, and both Korean and Chinese movie makers showed their strong will to produce internationally competitive films. More than 100 broadcasting companies, including Chi-

nese national broadcasting stations such as CCTV and BTV, came to the opening.

Cameramen continually popped flashbulbs at Korean directors and actors such as Kang Je-kyu, Kim Ki-duk, Lee Eun-ju, Jang Seo-hee and Jang Shin-yeong. Jang Seo-hee, known for her role in the Korean television drama "Ineo Agassi (Mermaid)," which was popular among Chinese audiences, drew special attention from the press.

Zhu Yongde, head of the Chinese Center for Promoting Foreign Films, said, "China and Korea should cooperate in making films that can compete in the international film market." Many Chinese reporters asked detailed questions about the direction the two countries plan to take on future collaborations.

Director Kang Je-kyu said that he hoped to work with Chinese director Feng Xiao-

gang. And director Kim Ki-duk said he hoped to have an opportunity to cooperate with Chinese filmmakers on large-scale commercial blockbusters.

Jang Seo-hee said she wanted to make a film with famous Chinese director Zhang Yimo and actress Gong Li sometime in the future.

The festival was co-hosted by the Korean Film Council, the JoongAng Ilbo, China Film and the Chinese Center for Promoting Foreign Films.

Next year, a Chinese film festival will be held in Seoul, with the purpose of introducing Chinese films to Korean audiences. Lee Mi-kyung, head of the culture and tourism committee under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, said she was looking forward to next year's festival.

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From left: actresses Jang Seo-hee, Jang Shin-yeong, Lee Eun-ju; film directors Kim Ki-duk, Kang Je-gyu, Kim Yong-hwa, Lee Han, and Lee Chung-jik, the head of Korea Film Council, at the opening of Korean Film Festival in Beijing. [JoongAng Ilbo]