Christening 100,000 Tons of Diplomacy

This is the tale of one of those irreplaceable All Charities Weekend (ACW, this season Feb. 7 and 8) unique once-in-a-lifetime insider experiences from just a month ago.

Dateline Newport News: The first time Caroline Kennedy swung the Champagne bottle to christen the new John Fitzgerald Kennedy aircraft carrier (CVN79), the bottle bounced off the hull unbroken. The second time, she swung it with gusto and the bottle exploded soaking those in attendance with bubbly. Christening is a long held naval tradition and is always done by a woman. The theory is that the christener injects her spirit into the ship, which is why ships are always identified as ‘her’ or ‘she.’

With more than 20,000 people attending the Dec. 7 christening, there was a rare mix of VIPs, including naval brass, senators, congressman and celebrities. On top of the list of celebrities were Denny and Gail Cresap, Ocean Reef Members who won the privilege to be there through the generosity of their son John, a Legacy Member. John took advantage of the online bidding feature at last year’s silent auction and prevailed. John noted that his mother saw the christening described in the All Charities catalog and mentioned how exciting it would be to attend. John gave it to her for Mother’s Day.

Putting up such a novel silent auction item was the brainchild of Betty Schievelbein, whose husband, Tom, just happened to be the past president of Newport News Shipyard, the company that has made every carrier ever in service with the United States Navy. In an emerging era of great power competition, CVN 79 will serve as the most agile and lethal combat platform in the world. With nuclear power, her speed is classified, but with a weight of 100,000 tons and a length of nearly 11,000 feet, she would probably have to slow down if you wanted to water ski behind her. Newport News Shipyard is the largest industrial employer in the state of Virginia and utilizes nearly 25,000 skilled employees to build a single carrier. The shipyard also is one of two providers of submarines to the U.S. Navy.

Also among the guests thanks to the Gala package were Pack and Jill St. Clair. Pack commented that having Tom Schievelbein host the event made the experience exceptional because of his vast knowledge of ship-building and Naval affairs.

What is All Charities? In the mid-2000s, the broader Ocean Reef community was overwhelmed by the number of fundraisers each season (over 27 at that time). Thus, organizers conceived of a combined fundraising effort that has evolved into ACW. In the years since, All Charities has brought in over $38 million to benefit The Reef’s own Medical Center, Cultural Center, Art League, Academy, ORCAT, and the Ocean Reef Conservation Association, as well as the lives of thousands in Key Largo, Florida City, and Homestead through grants from the Ocean Reef Community Foundation.

Questions? Contact the All Charities office at 305-367-5996 or AllCharities@oceanreef.com. Lesa Crayne, All Charities Director, and Amy Cornaire, Community Relations Manager, are there to assist you.

And if you’re curious to know more about this season’s ACW offerings, take a look at allcharities.orfound.org (and plan to look at it again and again as it is a work in progress).

THIS WEEK AT ALL CHARITIES

One of our favorite All Charities 2020 live auction items this year is “Big Bold Bordeaux: A Priceless Food and Wine Adventure with Ethan Dupree for Three Couples”. From the Northern Medoc wine village of Saint-Estephe to the Southern Graves wine appellation of Sauternes, this six-day immersive experience through Bordeaux offers an in-depth and exclusive journey through the chateaux, vineyards, and refined gastronomy of this iconic region of southwest France.

With Ethan Dupree as your personal concierge, this intimate exploration through the region of Bordeaux offers a handcrafted adventure through the finest food and wine experiences in the region. Seamlessly blended together with attention to each guest’s comfort and ease of travel, this sensorial journey effortlessly unfolds through the wonders of Bordeaux and offers the pinnacle of refined food and wine travel. Accommodations, food and beverage and ground transportation included.