

## Ostentatious yuppies make charity benefit a shameful sham

Last Thursday evening a women's volunteer group held a charity benefit at my place of employment, a movie theater in Lake Oswego. I had been forewarned about the event only a day in advance and as the manager on duty I felt inadequately prepared

chairs to sit on while they waited for their movie. Less than two minutes later the event coordinators took the chairs back, saying, "We don't have enough seating for our benefit."

Demand. Demand. Expect. Expect.

### THE VIEW FROM THE SOAPBOX

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Staff Writer



to handle the 200-person entourage of benefit-patrons. Not to mention that we were still open to the public due to our contracts with movie distributors.

However, I put on my best smile and arrived as scheduled to assist the charity coordinators. Immediately upon arrival I felt out of place and lost (in my own building no less). These women looked like they had purchased brand new outfits for this very occasion. Every finger was garnished with diamonds and necks were wrapped in pearls. They exuded superficiality and superiority to the highest degree. When I introduced myself as the assistant manager I was met with disapproving glares and fake smiles.

Standing there in my black stretch pants from Mervyns and black T-Shirt, my hair still drying from a quick shower and my shoes from Payless a size too big, I could just hear them whispering, "SHE is working OUR event? Didn't they know this wasn't a casual affair?"

Then I began to notice other things. Like the fact that they expected us to drop everything and play servant. If they needed something it was demanded, not asked. The women (without asking) took over our office space for their coats and purses - making it impossible to do our book-keeping and phone calls. However, when asked if they could remove their belongings we were confronted with, "Well, where else should we put them?" As if we should have a coat check at a movie theater. The nerve.

Another circumstance in which I noticed an attitude of "I-am-better-than-you-because-I-am-running-this-charity-event" was when they saw a few of our paying customers eyeing the food table.

You would have guessed that our customers had killed someone. It was made very clear to us that we needed to keep the paying customers away from benefit patrons. In compliance we set up a rope between the two parties and gave our customers a few

I didn't feel like I was at a charity benefit, but rather a gathering for the upper class to flash their money around. Several times I heard people bragging about the money they donated or about how much they bid on a particular item at the silent auction. It felt like a game. A giant game of "who-has-more-money?"

The name of the institution receiving the money (which I won't mention, because I do not want this article to reflect on the institution, but rather those running the benefit) was hardly mentioned. I wondered if these people were even aware of who was getting their money.

Needless to say, a lot of money was earned. (The final number was broadcast at the end of the night.) And the money will go to a good cause. However, it still bothers me, because I wonder about the motives behind the group's actions.

Does the end justify the means? It's a question that many people struggle with. To be honest, I don't have an answer. But I can tell you that I was sickened by the attitude of these ostentatious yuppies, who seemed to think that the rules did not apply to them. I can also tell you that I am delighted over the amount of money awarded to this particular charity.

Unfortunately we can't run everyone through a motive test before they allowed to put on a charity event. We have to make concessions- we have to make choices. It's a fact that people who have a higher socioeconomic status will spend more money at a benefit event. And if they treat you like dirt, don't clean up after themselves and expect to be treated like royalty, hey, at least it's in the name of charity.

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