

BOSTON Herald

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Rounding out the 10 Best Parties of 2005, in chronological order:

** Big Brothers of Massachusetts Bay's "Big Night": The Caribbean came to the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center on Jan. 8 for a million-dollar reggae fund-raiser co-chaired by Jim Pallotta and Joe Ayoub.

The gala starred reggae-music legends Ziggy Marley and Toots Hibbert and the Maytals, and the 1,000-plus guests dressed in dreadlocks, knit caps, Bob Marley T-shirts and other island gear. This hot time on a cold night was designed by Corinthian Events.

** Cradles to Crayons: Former President Bill Clinton selected an unknown Boston charity for special notice on April 28. He was guest speaker at Cradles to Crayons' first fund-raiser, at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center.

Founded by Lynn Margherio, a domestic-policy analyst in the Clinton White House, the charity donates a wide variety of goods to needy children. Corinne Grousbeck and Alan Solomont co-chaired the million-dollar fund-raiser.

** "Party in the Park": Unseasonable cold and rain could not keep 400 women and eight men from the Back Bay Fens on May 24 for this annual luncheon gala, held under a tent, to benefit the Emerald Necklace Conservancy.

Chaired by Jane Roy, the committee comprised the most socially active women in the metropolitan area, including Molly Dunne, Anna Cheshire Levitan, Lynne Kortenhaus, Carolyn Rodeno and Wendy Shattuck - many in broad-brimmed summer hats in defiance of the weather.

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** French Library's Bastille Day: A Boston tradition with a French accent was revived July 15 when the French Library's executive director, Elaine Uzan Leary, brought the outdoor Bastille Day bash back to Marlborough Street following a three-year absence.

Some 2,000 people visited sidewalk vendors and danced to African, Creole and French music. Another 150 attended a pre-event cocktail party for major donors. Guests ranged from longtime supporters Maggie and Kevin Ahern to newcomer Sarayu Srinivasan.

** "Boogie on Low Beach": Boston Red Sox president Larry Lucchino, a cancer survivor, hit a home run for cancer research July 22 with a benefit at the Nantucket home of George Cloutier and Tiffany Spadafora for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Nantucket Cottage Hospital. More than 600 attended the event, held under a backyard tent, and \$500,000 was raised.

** "Storybook Ball": Fenway Park was a real field of dreams for MassGeneral Hospital for Children on Sept. 23, when its annual "Storybook Ball" was played out under a tent in center field.

John Henry, the Boston Red Sox co-owner, and wife Peggy opened the ballfield to event co-chairs Darlene Jordan, Patty Ribakoff and Simone Winston for a gala dinner, auction and night to remember.

** Boston Public Library Foundation Gala: Also on Sept. 23, the Boston Public Library Foundation's annual gala was set amid the books of the Copley Square landmark's main reading room.

Mayor Thomas Menino and wife Angela co-chaired the event, divided into two chapters: a dinner for major donors, followed by dessert and dancing with the foundation's young professionals group, including Molly Dunne and Anja Kola.

** Mount Auburn Hospital's "Fire Ball": Heating up Harvard University's Palmer-Dixon Tennis Courts on Nov. 5, the "Fire Ball" was the first of four annual events planned to raise funds for the Cambridge hospital's expansion.

** Wang Center's Silver Anniversary: The 25th anniversary of the Wang Center's nonprofit status was celebrated Nov. 22 with a \$1,125-per-person dinner and a dress rehearsal of "Irving Berlin's White Christmas."

Center chairman Bill Poduska and president Joe Spaulding welcomed 600 gala guests.