

# Singles auction supports local charities

By Jeff O'Brien

SOLANA BEACH — They might be the best matchmakers in all of San Diego, but for Lindsay Trowbridge and Diane Michael, co-founders of the first annual Buy Me Love Benefits Bash, it isn't entirely about trying to spark love.

The singles party, which was held Feb. 14 at The Belly Up Tavern on Cedros Avenue, featured a bachelor/bachelorette auction that benefited local charities. The event attracted 300 singles and raised \$10,000.

"We're total matchmakers," Trowbridge said. "We really want to connect singles, but in a charitable way. This is a fun and sexy way to do it."

According to Michael, the idea for Buy Me Love Benefits



**ON THE AUCTION BLOCK** - At left, DJ Monique posed with bachelors and bachelorettes who were auctioned off on dates to benefit local charities at the Buy Me Love Benefits Bash on Feb. 14. Participants included, from left, Beth Bennet, Bill Fox, Kira Sinkenberg, Jake Morrow, Joey, Jesse Gros, Renee Swift, Lisa Lieb and Calvin Bell. Photo by Todd LeVeck-Malmi

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## AUCTION

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sprung from a previous charity effort.

"Two years ago, Lindsay and I created the Puppy Love Party, which was a special benefit for the North County Humane Society," Michael said. "We decided to start our own business, Buy Me Love Benefits, to raise money for 20 local charities. It's a way for people to identify with the bachelors and bachelorettes, because those who are up for auction can pick the charities of their choice."

Buy Me Love Benefits is now a full-time job for Trowbridge and Michael, who are planning to hold auctions at different venues throughout San Diego.

Among the charities supported at the inaugural event were the Boys & Girls Club of Carlsbad, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the North County

Humane Society.

The benefit was hosted by DJ Monique of JACK FM, and the 20 singles up for auction wore leis and boas for easy identification among the crowd.

One of them was Christophe Schilling, a resident of Del Mar who admitted that he was a little nervous about going on stage.

"I think if you aren't nervous, you have no business being here," Schilling said. "But I'm curious as to how much money people are going to pay."

He selected the Boys & Girls Club of San Diego as his charity, which is a group he has always admired. Schilling was going to take the winning lady for a romantic dinner at George's at the Cove in La Jolla, followed by a few laughs at The Comedy Club.

Bachelorette Erin Maron, a

resident of Cardiff, found out about the event through her roommate. The money from her auction was going toward the North County Serenity House, which helps women overcome alcohol and drug abuse.

"I've never done anything like this before, so I'm pretty nervous," Maron said. "But I'm excited. It's going to be a fun time and everyone feels good."

Wendy Cain, who has been residing in downtown San Diego for four years, was one of the dozens of singles in the audience.

"I just wanted to get out of the house and meet new people," Cain said. "I'm very social. This sounded like a lot of fun, and I've heard a lot of good things about The Belly Up."

The anticipation grew throughout the evening before the

auction began at 8 p.m. The first bachelor, Jake Morrow, strutted on stage and provided some wild dance moves for the cheering crowd.

"I was up there and my heart was racing," Morrow said. "It was hard to slow down my dancing."

After a raucous bidding session, Brooke McManus of Escondido won a date with Morrow for \$325.

Morrow's charity was the Surfrider Foundation of San Diego, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting local beaches.

"He won me over with those dance moves," McManus said. "I'm really excited about our date."

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