



## Oddities Overtake the Odd Ball

By Teresa M. Pelham/tpelham@comcast.net

When everybody is odd, is anyone truly odd?

Philosophical questions such as this (plus others like “Do these light-up cone-breasts make my butt look fat?” and “Are those your real teeth?”) were on the hand-painted lips of hundreds of seriously odd partiers at Saturday night’s Odd Ball at Real Art Ways.

The inaugural event brought through the doors of RAW the most creative and daring costumes and ensembles Hartford has likely ever seen. **Bill Stapleton**, a brawny environmental sanitarian with the state Dept. of Public Health, pulled off a stunning yet frightening look as *The Fairy Godmother* – an outfit created by Hartford artist/costume genius **Anne Cubberly**, who designed 12 unique looks for the party.

“I came to my first Real Art Ways party in 1976, when I was 14,” said Cubberly, wearing her own bug legs with a green dress and green wig. Other Cubberly creations included **Cheryl Mandirola**’s red top with glowing pointy cones that poked people as she moved through the crowded space.

Dressed as a somewhat demented and probably unintended cross between **Don King** and the **Heat Miser**, Hartford artist **Tao LaBossiere** was taking a break from prepping for the Junior League of Hartford’s Show House, which will be open for tours throughout May. LaBossiere is painting murals for two rooms of the house, located on Kenyon Street in Hartford’s West End.

A troupe of fire spinners from Wesleyan University showed some skin and skill as they twirled flaming sticks in the parking lot. Bodies were painted. Guests shared their darkest secrets in a private booth, and those wanting to be seen up close were photographed and displayed on a giant screen. And revelers danced (as well as they could while wearing butterfly wings and two-foot-tall wigs) into the morning. Who says Hartford isn’t hot?

Unable to see clearly because of their vision-altering bug eyes (or maybe it was the bug juice) were **Brent Graveley** and **Wendy Shea Murphy-Graveley**.

“We’re very into bugs,” said Graveley, speaking as if wearing a fishnet shirt was perfectly normal attire for an ultra-smart-biologist-guy who works with human embryonic stem cells. “I study fruit flies so it was a good combination of science, art and oddness.”

Arriving as the odd man out was **Bill Curry**, who ran for governor at least 13 times and came dressed in a shocking ensemble of nondescript cardigan and Dockers.

“I’m dressed as a very close, existential version of myself,” he said, likely hoping that talk would soon turn to something simple, like property tax reform. “I didn’t come as me. I came as a disguise of me.”

