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Derby Day

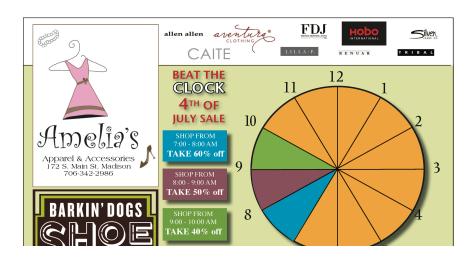
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By Tia Lynn Ivey

managing editor

The crowd cheered as Nyquist, the 2-1 favorite horse, galloped across the finish line to win the race. Mario Gutierrez, a record-setting rider, partnered with Nyquist for the big race. According to CNN, "the official winning time for the 1 1/4-mile race was 2:01.31. That was almost two seconds faster than Triple Crown winner American Pharoah's time last year." They say it's the most exciting two minutes in sports," said Christine McCauley, director of the MCC. The conservancy orchestrated a lavish event for locals to come out dressed in traditional Kentucky Derby attire (fancy clothes and big hats) while enjoying a variety of beverages, food, and games before the big race. "Derby Day is the Conservancy's only fundraiser of the year, designed to raise funds for our operational costs. Membership dues are the largest percentage of our annual budget, and Derby Day helps us meet the budgeted goal every year," said McCauley. According to McCauley, the final tallies won't be in for a couple of weeks on exactly how much was raised, but the conservancy is calling Derby Day a success. "We don't know exact how much we raised yet, but it's our biggest fundraiser yet, that's for sure," said McCauley. McCauley thanked Melissa Martin and Miryn Davidson, co-chairs of the event, who assembled a committee of 22 people to

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coordinate this year's Derby Day. They worked really hard to put all this together. And in the end, the weather was beautiful, the food was amazing, everyone was dressed to the nine, and it was a day of excitement and laughter," said McCauley. The Madison-Morgan Conservancy's Derby Day

was named one of the eight best Derby Parties in the country, two years running. According to the conservancy's press release, "Bonar Hall, a c. 1839 13-acre estate, is the ideal location for the Conservancy's annual event. This grand ante-bellum home is an architectural gem and has undergone little modification since being built.

Current owners, Betsy Wagenhauser and Alex Newton, have recently restored the house and continue to refine the landscape, which includes tree-lit grounds, a formal boxwood garden, and historic dependencies, through which party-goers meander. Derby Day 2016 included a tour of Bonar Hall, live streaming of the Kentucky Derby, Bourbon tastings, a beer garden, delicious Derby Supper by Epting Events out of Athens, live auction, best dressed and best hat competitions..."

According to McCauley, "The Madison-Morgan Conservancy is the first countywide conservancy in Georgia and is a pioneer in authenticity. We are protecting farmland, natural resources, and historic buildings that are the foundation of this beautiful and productive place. The Conservancy aims to protect those resources in concert with balanced growth. And that makes a difference to all landowners and residents, in protecting property values, retaining the beautiful vistas we all love, and creating cultural opportunities like Derby Day and the Ramble that make living here fun. We do this for us, and we do this for future generations."

The Madison-Morgan Conservancy is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide public education on conservation matters and to protect and enhance the heritage and quality of life of the residents of Morgan County by preserving historic sites, greenspace, farmland, and timberland.

About Author



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