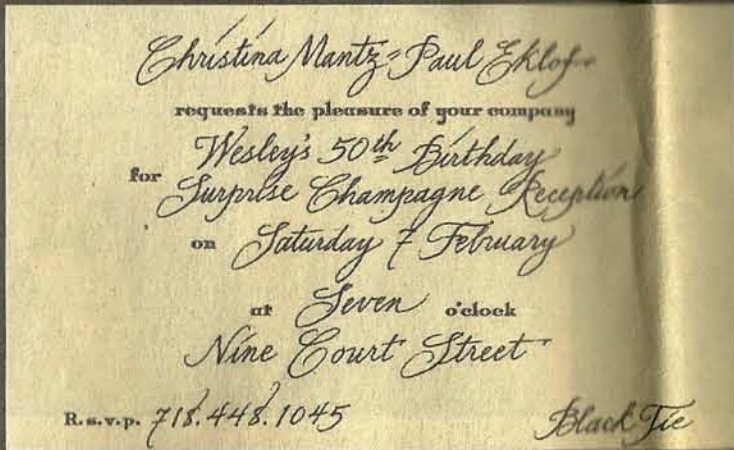


Cocktail reception held in honor of Wesley Kropp's mid-life milestone rivals the most elegant of Manhattan soirees



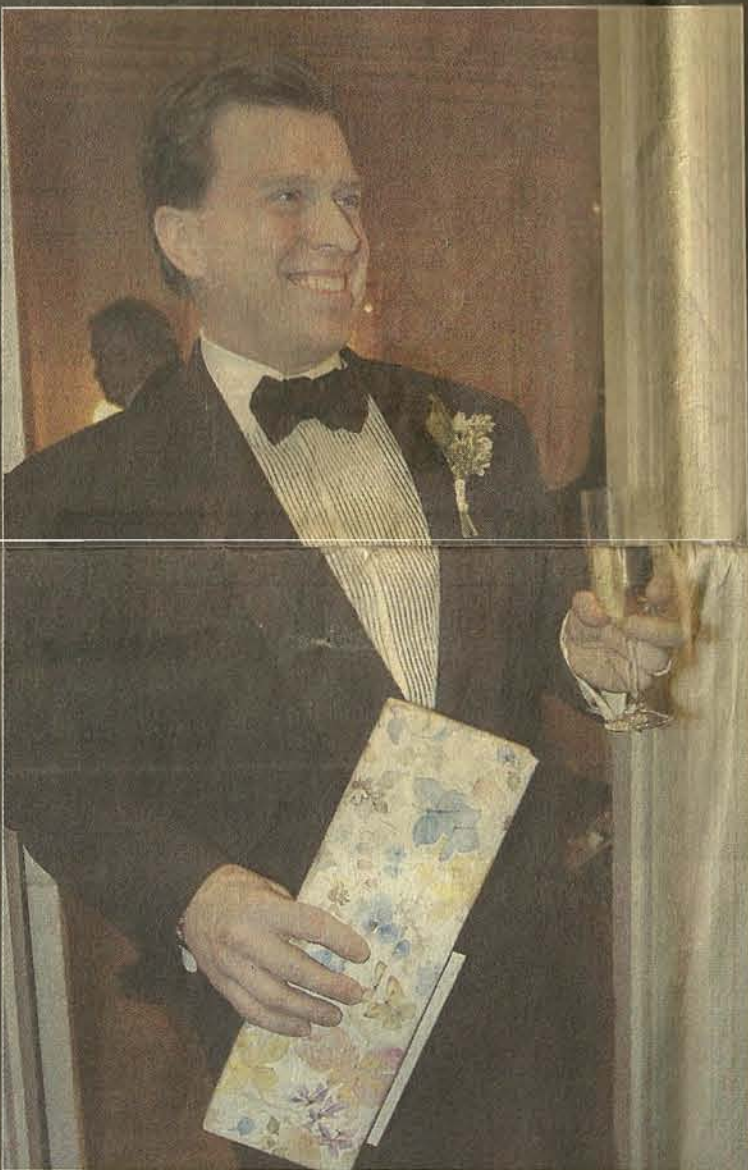
Invitations to Wesley Kropp's 50th birthday party were handwritten on fine Cartier cardstock and mailed to guests early in January.



Saxophone player Jim Ferraiuolo was one of two musicians playing light jazz and American standards.



Christina Mantz, one of the party planners, chats with Dr. Robert Rosenberg, one of close to 50 guests in attendance.

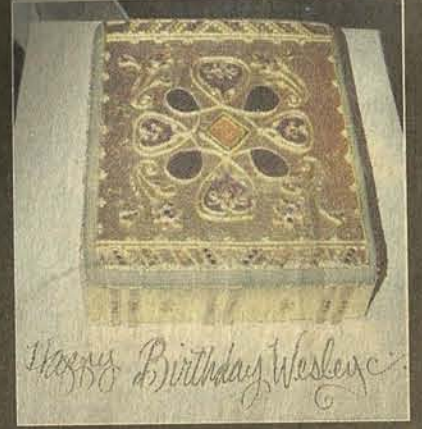


Guest of honor Wesley Kropp actually turned 50 on Feb. 6, the day before his friends feted him at what one described as a "sumptuous cocktail reception."



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX FLINT

This jeweled elephant timepiece is one of dozens of curios that Wesley Kropp has designed.



In keeping with Wesley Kropp's professional bent, the birthday cake was crafted to look like a jewelry box.



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE PHOTOS/JOAN COLLINS

Betsy VanStolk, center, and Paul Eklof, who helped plan the party, sample some of the passed hors d'oeuvres.

A very fine 50th

EDITORS NOTE: In August, we covered George Burke's Southern-style White Party. In October, we gave readers a glimpse of a Halloween wedding where the bride, Alishia Neckin, made personalized masks for each of the wedding guests. This time, we give you a gander at a 50th birthday bash for Stapleton resident Wesley Kropp. It was anything but sobering.

By **MARJORIE HACK**
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

PARTY ON

It was a gem of a party, perfectly in keeping with a debonair gentleman who has found his career niche designing one-of-a-kind objet d'arts studded with the loveliest of jewels.

The champagne flowed, the savories knew no end and close to 50 guests mixed and mingled just like the more publicized swells on Park Avenue, people who would never dream that one can live on a tiny street in Stapleton, rather than a pricey Manhattan high-rise, and still enjoy the finest things in life.

Birthday boy Wesley Kropp said that 25 years ago, he had no expectations about where he would be when he finally turned 50 on Feb. 6, but he says he is happy to be living in a vintage

Four times a year, once each season, the Lifestyle section will report on a unique get-together on Staten Island. Look for more private party coverage sometime this spring.

Victorian home in Stapleton that's decorated to his liking in grand French Second Empire style. And he's thrilled to be designing exquisite jewelry and decorative pieces that are sold these days through Neiman Marcus, Tiffany and Harry Winston, among other high-end retailers.

"I feel as if I'm 25. I'm in perfect health and I feel great. I like where I am and the future is filled with infinite possibilities and promise. Good things keep coming," he said.

Those who gathered on Feb. 7 to help him celebrate a milestone that can sometimes feel burdensome, agreed.

"Fiftieth birthday parties are grim events," noted one of Kropp's Stapleton neighbors, Robert Huber. But, he allowed, this party was cut from a much different cloth. "It's a real tribute," he said, noting the champagne, lush flower arrangements and pleasing strains provided by two musicians, "to whoever put this together."

The party planners, indeed, deserved a congratulatory toast. The event was planned by two of Kropp's dearest friends — Christina Kirk Mantz of West Brighton and Willowbrook resident Paul Eklof, with some major behind-the-scenes input from Staten Island's preeminent gold-leaf expert, Steve Martinez.

"This is an elegant way to celebrate such a special birthday and Wesley has a home that is such a

Menu for a milestone

What they ate

Gravlax	Guacamole in bite-size taco cone
Jumbo shrimp	Chicken wonton with chili-lime dip
Crab claws	Seared tuna 'lollipops'
Puff pastry savory	Baby lamb chops
Spinach dumpling with sesame dip	Beef tenderloin
Miniature crab cakes	

What they drank

Veuve Clicquot champagne
White burgundy,
Puligny-Montrachet 2001

Providers

- The caterer was Alicia Reinisch of Cafe Botanica, at the Chinese Scholar's Garden
- Spirits were purchased from Midland Liquors, Midland Beach
- Cake was designed by Cheryl Kleinman, 448 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn

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