



Log photos by JENNIFER RICH

WITH A BANG: Rare fireworks shaped like hearts, smiley faces and butterflies thrill the audience.

Thousands flood Destin harbor and have a ball

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Two-year-old Tristan Dunn couldn't help himself at the HarborWalk Village New Year's Eve bash. When Ron Adams and the Relix kicked off the fun with a Tom Petty ballad after the 8 p.m. fireworks wrapped, Tristan was a dancing fool.

As mom Stacey Dunn and big sister, Kaeleigh, 7, worked together to corral the tot, Kaeleigh told The Log how much she enjoyed the fireworks, impressed by the big explosions over Destin harbor.

"It kept on sparkling all the way down," Kaeleigh said.

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DUNN RIGHT: The Dunn family from Louisville, Ky., was down for a stay in their Destin condo. They rung in the new year at HarborWalk's New Year's Eve celebration.

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Meanwhile, the Time Ball rocked in the breeze above the dancing and dining happening down below, waiting to begin the 11 p.m. showtime. Earlier in the day, the ball was sent on three trial runs down the cable to the guarded landing spot on Norriego Point.

The ball was designed by the father and son team, Ron and Evan Rowe, of Legendary's Audio Visual Services. Maybe these guys have been around the docks for too long, but their technique had Destin written all over it.

"They actually use a fishing rod to pull it (the



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PARTY LIKE ITS 2009: Traditional party hats and noise-makers added to the fun as Ron Adams and the Relix played on the main stage.

ball) back up," said Heather Culbertson, marketing

director.

The 700 light emission

diode (LED) lights on the ball were powered with a 12 volt battery with an inverter that would run for three hours at a time. The lights had a swirly effect so the ball would appear to be spinning on the way down.

"Next year, it's going to go from a tripod on top of the east tower. Engineers are already working on it," said Tom Trigg, Legendary maintenance employee.

HarborWalk saw an estimated 5,000 visitors who turned out to for the celebration.

Culbertson said that Club Aqua, Pat O'Brien's and Commander's Palace

were all booked a week in advance for the festivities prior to the ball's descent. The event had something for everyone in the family.

"Did you see the fireworks shaped as a smiley face?" Bailey Johnson, 8, asked The Log, with a demonstration. "You turn your face like this."

On the contrary, Bailey's friend Lexi Babin, 4, said "they were a little too loud."

Destin Elementary student Miranda Treadway said that the best part of the show was the grand finale "when all the colors bloomed at the same time."