

Having a ball - The First Season of the Bentonville-Rogers Junior Cotillion Closes With The Holly Ball

By Tonya McKiever
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Again and again, the comments were the same - "They love it, and they've had so much fun. I'm so glad they've had this opportunity." Parents of children participating in the **Bentonville-Rogers Junior Cotillion** all seem to agree that the experience has been a great one. Parents and youngsters are already looking forward to next season.

The **Cotillion** is a four-year program for children in the sixth through ninth grades. The mission of the **Bentonville-Rogers Junior Cotillion** is to improve the self-esteem, self-confidence and social skills of boys and girls. The curriculum includes the teaching of dance and social graces. Manners and etiquette are taught and put into practice at each dance.

Line dances, as well as traditional ballroom partner dances are introduced. Proper etiquette for receiving lines, grand marches, trading partners, introductions and the serving of refreshments are mastered early in the program.

At the Nov. 22 final dance of the season, the Holly Ball, parents were invited to accompany their children. Dressed in semiformal or formal wear, both parents and children thoroughly enjoyed the evening. A variety of music from speakers filled the gym. Students had opportunities to show off the dance steps they had mastered.

Welcomed by **Junior Cotillion** owner/director Renee Swindell, parents were seated at holiday-decorated tables around the perimeter of the gym at the Benton County Boys and Girls Club of **Bentonville**. Proud parents watched and videotaped as their children paraded through during the Grand March. The sixth grade Holly Ball began at 5 p.m. and concluded at 6:15 p.m. The seventh-grade ball followed, and finally, the combined group of eighth- and ninth-grade students celebrated at the season's last dance.

Robyn Aronowitz of **Rogers** said her sixth-grade daughter Christina and eighth-grade son Nathan enjoyed being in the **Cotillion**.

"They have both loved it," Aronowitz explained. "I love it because it teaches the kids to be more comfortable in a variety of situations. It's really been fun for them, and I'm happy Renee Swindell has started it in our area."

Swindell was involved as a student in the Little Rock **Junior Cotillion** under the late founder, Ellen Butts. Swindell later served eight years as assistant to the director of the Little Rock **Junior Cotillion** under current owner Kathleen Joiner. Swindell has led dance workshops for several cotillions, including locations in Memphis, Tenn., and Bryant, Ark., and was a dance instructor at the Little Rock School of Dance for nine years. She also directed and owned Paris Dance Arts in Paris, Ark., for two years. A graduate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with emphasis in marketing, she and her husband, Kevin, and daughter, Allison, live in **Bentonville**. Swindell is preparing for the 2009 season, the second of the **Bentonville-Rogers Junior Cotillion**.

Rob and Kendra Adair, parents of sixth-grader Emily, attended the Holly Ball with their daughter. "It's been great," Kendra said. "I think she's enjoyed learning about manners as much as she has the dancing. It's all been fun. She and some of her friends usually get together in the afternoon before **Cotillion** and have a sleepover after the dance. They've had a wonderful time at **Cotillion**."

Dance moves at the Holly Ball ran the gamut from graceful waltzes to the faster-moving beat of the Jonas Brothers. As enthusiastic about one dance as the next, the young students were eager to let their parents see what they had been learning.

"There were almost 200 participants," Swindell said. "All the children were excited about learning the dances and good manners. We learned about writing 'thank you' notes, and you should see the notes I received. They're beautiful and so well done. We had a good year, and it passed so quickly. Next season will be here soon, and I'm sure we'll have another great year."

A highlight of the Holly Ball was the announcement of the Royal Court and crowning of the king and queen from each grade.

Sixth Grade Holly Ball Awards and Honors Grand March Leaders:

Lydia Fielder, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Fielder Cameron Hill, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eric Hill Natalie Moore, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Moore Jimmy Quinn, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Quinn

Holly Ball Royal Court (elected by their peers):

Allie James, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ryan James Cole Evans, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dallas Evans Mackenzie Jobe, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jason Jobe Mason Evers, son of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Evers Rachel Young, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Young Drake Kaza, son of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Kaza Jenna Rossiter, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Greg Rossiter Jackson Urhahn, son of Mr. and Mrs. Brad Urhahn Jordan Rodriquez, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Rodriquez Chandler Kern, son of Mr. and Mrs. Loren Kern Lexie Reynolds, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Reynolds Foster Pool, son of Mr. and Mrs. Terry Pool

1st Runner-up to queen:

Tie: Jenna Rossiter, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Greg Rossiter Jordan Rodriquez, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Rodriquez 1st Runner-up to King: Jackson Urhahn, son of Mr. and Mrs. Brad Urhahn

Queen of the 6th Grade Holly Ball:

Rachel Young, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Young

King of the 6th Grade Holly Ball:

Drake Kaza, son of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Kaza

Sixth Grade Top Red Ribbon Award winners:

Kristin Moore, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Brian Moore Tie : Riley Eggebraaten, son of Mr. and Mrs. Weston Eggebraaten Spencer McClung, son of Mr. and Mrs. Tim Mc-Clung

Seventh Grade Holly Ball Awards and Honors Grand March Leaders:

Laura Witte, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Witte Andrew Kelley, son of Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Kelley Erin Lundy, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Lundy Alex McClung, son of Mr. and Mrs. Tim McClung

Holly Ball Royal Court (elected by their peers):

Hannah Bigger, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Bigger Neil Kumar, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ravi Kumar Maris Lee, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Shawn Lee Max Harrell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jon Harrell Grace Davis, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Davis III Jacob Kent, son of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Kent Erin Lundy, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Lundy Timmy Seldomridge, son of Mr. and Mrs. Tim Seldomridge

1st Runner-up to Queen:

Grace Davis, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Davis III

1st Runner-up to King:

Jacob Kent, son of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Kent

Queen of the Seventh Grade Holly Ball:

Maris Lee, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Shawn Lee

King of the Seventh Grade Holly Ball:

Max Harrell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jon Harrell

Seventh Grade Top Red Ribbon Award Winners:

Addison Keller, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Doug Keller Tie: Brett D'Amico, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joe D'Amico Carter Forbis, son of Mr. and Mrs. Greg Forbis Alex McClung, son of Mr. and Mrs. Tim McClung Timmy Seldomridge, son of Mr. and Mrs. Tim Seldomridge

Eighth and Ninth Grade Holly Ball Awards and Honors Grand March Leaders:

Mary Kate Brelsford, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Brelsford Councill Leak, son of Mr. and Mrs. Councill Leak Sr. Caroline Koonce, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Max Koonce II Robbie Witte, son of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Witte

Holly Ball Royal Court, Eighth Grade only (elected by their peers):

Kacie Brown, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Steve Brown Hunter Pool, son of Mr. and Mrs. Terry Pool Erin Neely, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kyle Neely Nathan Aronowitz, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eric Aronowitz Allie Comeaux, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Comeaux III J.D. Babcock, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ron Babcock Candace Gerads, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Gerads Owen O'Brien, son of Mr. and Mrs. Christopher O'Brien Julianne Clements, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Clements Conor Baird, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gene Baird

1st Runner-up to Eighth Grade Queen

Tie: Erin Neely, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kyle Neely Julianne Clements, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Clements Candace Gerads, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Gerads

1st Runner-up to Eighth Grade King

Tie: Nathan Aronowitz, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eric Aronowitz Hunter Pool, son of Mr. and Mrs. Terry Pool

Queen of the Eighth Grade Holly Ball

Allie Comeaux, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Comeaux III

King of the Eighth Grade Holly Ball

Owen O'Brien, son of Mr. and Mrs. Christopher O'Brien

Ideal Girl of the Ninth Grade Holly Ball

Marilyn Speed, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Speed

Ideal Boy of the Ninth Grade Holly Ball

Henry Dunning, son of Mr. and Mrs. Tony Dunning

Eighth Grade Top Red Ribbon Award Winners

Morgan Vaughn, daughter of Ms. Laura Vaughn Jimmy Short, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Short
