

# The road to refinement

## Area teens prepare for annual cotillion

By **Nina Rizzo**

Staff Writer

**NEPTUNE** — More than 40 high school boys and girls attended an orientation Sunday for the 62nd annual Monmouth County Cotillion, a five-month program that prepares bright and ambitious students for their formal entrance into society.

Some 29 senior debutantes, eight junior debs and four escorts have registered for this year's cotillion, which culminates in a debutante ball to be held May 5 at Convention Hall in Asbury Park.

*“These men and women have groomed me for society.”*

**TIARA ANDERSON**, Neptune High School senior

Committee members explained to the teens and their parents during the orientation at Jumping Brook Country Club that they will have weekly rehearsals throughout the season to learn etiquette, poise and dance, such as a classic waltz for fathers and daughters and a “high-spirited” routine for the boys.

“This is my passion, and I want it to be your passion,” said Patricia Wilds, a volunteer coordinator of production. She and other organizers made it crystal clear that inappropriate dress and bad manners would not be tolerated. Those who showed up for rehearsals with their bellies exposed or droopy pants will be asked to leave. (Don't even think about walking in while talking on a cell phone and snapping gum.)

Tiara Anderson, a senior at Neptune High School, has been a junior debutante for the past three years. She is thrilled — and a bit saddened — at the prospect of returning as a senior deb for her final season.

“These men and women have groomed me for society,” Anderson said, describing herself as an outgoing young woman who may have been a bit too loud in the past.



Charles Taylor, a cotillion committee member, leads Tiara Anderson, 18, of Neptune during a fashion show at the Monmouth County Cotillion orientation tea Sunday. STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/MARY FRANK

“When I first came here, I didn't know how to dress for business or how to be a classy lady. Now I know there's a time and a place for everything,” she said in a gentle, clear voice. Anderson is president of her school's student council and head of the Central Jersey Youth Club. She sits on the Mayor's Youth Advisory Cabinet and is a member of nine other school groups.

Her mother, Kerry Anderson, a human services technician at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, said the time and expense of participation in the cotillion has been worth it.

“She turned out to be a great young lady. This

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