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In The Club

Local women come together for cocktails and charitable causes

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Slipper Club members Catherine Bell and Carolyn Box



Cotillion Club members Colleen Nay, Allison McCutcheon, Samantha Mynatt, Katherine Hemphill, Jenny Pickenpack, and Tanny Graham

By Kristiana Heap
Society Editor

There is a sorority rush during the freshman year of college and debutante balls after sophomore year, but what's a girl to do for a little organized socializing after she graduates from school?

Fortunately for women in Dallas, there's no lack of social interaction. The choice among clubs, however, can be rather daunting. Ladies in the know usually opt for Junior League, Cattle Baron's, and Crystal Charity; but there are two lesser-known organizations in town that many young professional women are choosing to join.

The words slipper and cotillion may not mean much to most people, but up-and-coming local women know that those nouns have a broad definition. The Slipper and Cotillion clubs, founded in 1934 and 1944, respectively, are the female equivalent of the Calyx, Dervish, Idlewild, and Terpsichorean men's clubs.

According to current officers, the Slipper Club is the oldest social club for women in Dallas and was founded by four Idlewild debutantes as a means to promote friendship among women who would be leaders in local society. It has about 400 members. The Cotillion Club began as the Junior Arts League of Dallas and now has 230 members. The majority of women in both clubs are in their 20s to mid-30s with college degrees and full-time careers, and many women are active in both organizations.



Dede Cole and Angie Case

The Slipper and Cotillion clubs offer a variety of events that are open to women only, including wine tastings and fashion shows. The clubs hold mixers with the gentlemen's clubs a few times each season and both host annual black-tie galas.

"I joined CC my senior year at SMU," said Colleen Nay, a Cotillion Club member. "A few good friends had joined the previous fall, and I felt like it was the perfect way to make the transition from being a college student in Dallas to being a young professional in Dallas."

“I have made many great friends through CC over the past three years,” Nay said. “I’ve introduced several of my friends to CC that moved to Dallas straight after college. ... It has brought us closer and allowed them to branch out on their own as well.”

The Slipper Club provides similar opportunities for friendship and prides itself on a strong commitment to charity. In 1995, the group earned the designation of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Charlotte Hudson, a member of the Slipper Club board, said, “I really enjoy the fabulous friendships I have made over the last several years. Slipper Club is a great way to get connected with friends outside of work, especially because all of our fun social events ultimately benefit the greater good of the Dallas community.”

The Slipper Club has given more than \$145,000 to local charities and nonprofits that support women and children in the area. The club’s February gala will benefit Hope Cottage Pregnancy and Adoption Center.

“It is amazing to be a part of an organization that has given so much back to the community,” Slipper president Catherine Bell said. “I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to work with Hope Cottage this year. They have an outstanding ‘Foster to Adopt’ program and I can’t wait to see how much money we can raise for it.”



Cotillion Club members

Katherine Hemphill, president of the Cotillion Club, is also proud of her group’s charitable work. “Due to the way our organization is chartered, we do not directly donate to charity,” Hemphill said. “However, the Cotillion Club puts on several events each year with the other Dallas social clubs to benefit Dallas area charities.”

The Slipper and Cotillion clubs give women opportunities to network with each other and do good deeds for charity, but there are other benefits.

“From the time I graduated SMU, Cotillion served as a wonderful networking circle for me, both professionally and personally,” Amber Strang Taylor said. “The most noteworthy person I met through Cotillion is my husband.”

When Taylor was Cotillion president in 2003, a scheduling conflict with the Terpsichorean Club’s black-tie event arose.

“In an effort to keep couples from splitting their time between the two parties that evening, I placed a call to the Terps president, Daniel Taylor,” she said. “With all the social mixers between the social clubs, it was odd we had never met. In any event, when I got him on the phone, I explained the situation and asked him to push his party back one week. He said he was busy at the office and asked if we could go to lunch the next day to work all this out. I was a little put out as I just wanted to cross that item off my list of things to do that day.

“Later I found out that he thought I sounded cute on the phone so he used it as an excuse to meet me,” Taylor said. “Well, lunch turned into dating and we got engaged three months later. I ended up moving the Cotillion party; Daniel will tell you it was the first and last difference he won.”

For membership information, visit slipperclub.org or e-mail cotillionclub@gmail.com; both clubs are actively seeking new members.



Cotillion Club members **JesAlexis Thomas, Ashley Newman, Allison McCutcheon, and Ashley Elder**

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