



2018 Middletown Days Royal Court

Every year the Queen and Princess candidates have to demonstrate their skill in horsemanship, riding, modeling, and speech. They must sit for an interview and take a written test. In addition, the queen candidates have to sell \$1000 in Beef Raffle tickets and the princesses \$700. Middletown Day's is the biggest fundraiser for the Middletown Central Park Association (MCPA). All funds raised by the event and by beef raffle sales go to improve and maintain Middletown's Central Park and to keep the arena available at no charge the public. This year the beef was generously donated by the Cow Poke Cafe. Raffle tickets may be purchase from any member of the Royal Court up to the drawing on Sunday afternoon.

The candidates this year were coached by Heather DeBerry and Jane Cauley. Heather is the long standing President of the MCPA board and has coached the candidates in this competition for many years off-and-on. Jane has been coaching the contestants for the last 6 or 7 years because she feels "it's important that kids learn the right way." They were also assisted by Deberry's daughter Bailey Deberry and by Shelby Egger.

They began working with the girls' months ago and when they started there were 10 girls competing for Queen and Princess. By the day of the competition, there were only 3 girls left.

Jordan Sullivan, Middletown Days Queen 2018, is no stranger to this event. She was the 2016 Middletown Days Princess and last year's 1st Runner Up for Queen. She is 15 and in the 9th grade. She rode her Quarter Horse Smoke Arab, Shasta. The topic she chose for her speech was "Why Middletown Central Park is important to the community." She got 100% on her written test and she did really well in her reigning pattern. She was an "all around super good sport."

Jordan's favorite events are barrels and one she just got into this year Reigned Cow Horse. She likes it because it starts out slow and then it gets exciting. It's fast paced with lots of turns and difficult skills. When she's not in the arena she likes to play the saxophone, play basketball and hike.

Kailey Snell, Middletown Days 2018 Princess, is also a veteran. She was the 2017 Middletown Days Princess 2nd Runner Up and at 6 years old last year, she was the youngest contestant in the history of the competition. She rode the same horse she rode last year, her 13 year old Quarter Horse, Skeeter.

The first grader did well this year reigning and completing her patterns correctly. She also did well in the Horse Mastership portion of the contest which is all about getting your horse ready to be saddled. She says her best event is barrels and tying goats. Her favorite event, though, is riding sheep because you "don't have to hold the reins up and kick 'em." When she's not riding she likes hanging out with friends, singing and dancing. She also has 3 goats and will be showing a goat at the fair.

Fellow classmate, Alayah Lamar, and Middletown Days 2018 1st Runner Up, is also 7 years old. She was a new comer to the competition this year. She decided to compete because her friend Kailey told her about it. She has been riding since she was 1 and has her own Quarter Horse at home named Cheyenne, but for the competition she rode Rebel, a Quarter Horse that she borrowed from Deberry. At the time of the interview, which was very early on, she stated her favorite event so far was the Queen Wave.

If there were an award for most improved, Alayah surely would have received it as she was the most improved of the competitors. She didn't want to lope with her horse when they first started practicing, but about three quarters of the way through the process she started loping through her patterns. When she's not on a horse she loves to go to fair to show chickens and "help carry goats." She also likes to play with her friends and play in the pond.

Deberry is very proud of all the hard work and dedication the 3 remaining girls put into attending all the practices and improving their skills.

