

# SCENE

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



## 'Dancing Classrooms'

### Helping kids become better communicators

By Kara Carrier  
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Local fifth-grade students will compete to see who is the best dancer during Dancing Classrooms' 7th annual Colors of the Rainbow Team Match Ballroom Dance Competition, which is scheduled for 2 p.m. May 3 at Burton Coliseum.

Dancing Classrooms is a social development program that uses ballroom dancing as a tool to help children break down social barriers.

Nancy Vallee, program director, said Dancing Classrooms also helps students learn to respect and interact with each other and it increases their self-confidence. Vallee said one of the most valuable aspects of the program is that students learn how to communicate with each other, make eye contact and touch in a positive way.

She said learning how to do these things helps students later in life when they join the workforce.

"Employers from Google all the way to our local business owners talk about problems with their employees communicating and working as a team," Vallee said. "This program helps kids learn at

an early age how to positively communicate."

Vallee said the competition will feature about 250 fifth-graders from 16 area schools in Calcasieu and Jeff Davis parishes. She said students will compete in several rounds and the top scorers will move on to the state competition.

"It should be a very heated and exciting contest," she said. "The dancers will compete in the merengue, fox trot, rumba, tango and swing. Also joining us, will be our junior high and high school students who will show off their advanced dancing skills for entertainment."

Vallee said she encourages the public to come out and watch the competition and support the students. She said tickets are \$2 and will be sold at the door.

"When people support these kids, they are supporting the community and the future leaders of our community," she said. "Kids learn things from this program that they don't learn at any other time in school. The skills they learn will stay with them forever."

For more information on Dancing Classrooms, call 562-2344 or visit [whistestopkids.com](http://whistestopkids.com).



Photos by Kirk Meche / American Press Archives



### PISTONS AND FLAKE

Classic cars, custom hot rods rolling into Jennings

B4

American Press



By Michelle Romero  
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Contraband Days is gearing up for its first weekend, starting tonight.

"Things are coming together beautifully," said Susan Arimura, Contraband Days marketing director.

This year's festival will feature more local musicians and artists, while also

catering toward family events.

"What also makes this year's festival different is that we're having two fireworks events for the first time," Arimura said. "We'll have a lot of live music outside this weekend."

Each day will feature food booths, laser tag, mechanical bull rides, a Wipeout obstacle course and Human Foos Ball. "Aussie Kingdom" will also be featured each day by McDonald's.

The festival will kick off today with performances by musicians Tim Norris at 6:30 p.m. and 2 Ton Tommy at 8 p.m.

On Friday the gates will open at 4 p.m. A performance by City Heat will follow at 5:30 p.m. Buccaneers will begin their shore landing at the seawall at 6:30 p.m. and make the mayor walk the plank the following hour.

The event will conclude with a fire-

works show presented by Lake Charles LNG at 8:15 p.m. and a performance by The Boomerang Experience at 8:30 p.m.

The Buccaneer Parade will take place at 12:45 p.m. on Saturday. The Ukulady's Man will give a performance at 1 p.m., followed by Ron Fruge and Family at 2 p.m. There will also be a cannon demonstration at 5:30 p.m.

The night will end with performances by ENCORE at 6 p.m. and LA ROXX at 8 p.m.

Sunday is "Bring Your Own Chest Day," where participants can bring up to 12 beverages in a hand-held ice chest. Dean Manning will give a performance at 1:30 p.m. A performance by David Joel will follow at 3:30 p.m. The Buccaneer Parade is set for 4:45 p.m.

For more information, call 436-5508.



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