

The Krewe of Lafcadio

The Krewe of Lafcadio parades in the French Quarter celebrating and satirizing New Orleans culture. Our icon is the journalist and writer [Lafcadio Hearn](#) (1850-1904) who published extensively about [New Orleans culture](#), including [the first Creole cookbook](#) about its culinary arts, as well as [political cartoons](#) about its corruption. Just months after moving to New Orleans, Lafcadio famously wrote in a letter to a friend back in Ohio:

Times are not good here. The city is crumbling into ashes. It has been buried under a lava flood of taxes and frauds and maladministrations so that it has become only a study for archaeologists. Its condition is so bad that when I write about it, as I intend to do soon, nobody will believe I am telling the truth. But it is better to live here in sackcloth and ashes than to own the whole state of Ohio. - Lafcadio Hearn, circa 1877

Date: The Saturday of Mardi Gras weekend. In 2019, this falls on March 2nd.

Time: **Pre-Parade Party:** 11:30am -1:30 PM, at Antoine’s Restaurant in the Japanese Room (a happy coincidence). The lunch buffet menu is soup & salad with passed appetizers, a choice of entrees and sides, a dessert, tea/coffee, and a cash bar.

Parade Formation: 1:30pm – 2pm, in front of Antoine’s Restaurant

Parade: 2pm – 4pm

Theme: A celebration of New Orleans culture, and in particular the culinary arts of New Orleans.

Parade format: The krewe presents a walking parade that harkens back to the original Mardi Gras parades. A mule-drawn float carries a top local chef as royalty. Floats are followed by costumed marchers and brass bands.

Royalty: A celebration of our cultural leaders – the people who make New Orleans such a wonderful place to live.

- Our 2018 royalty was [Chef Tommy DiGiovanni](#) of [Arnaud’s](#). Our Dukes were Charles Abbyad (emeritus head maitre d’ with 35 years of service) and Chris Hannah (head of their James Beard Award winning bar program).
- Our 2017 royalty was [Chef Leah Chase](#) and [Chef John Folse](#).
- Our 2016 royalty was [Chef Sue Zemanick](#) of [Gautreau’s](#). Our Duchess was [JoAnn Clevenger](#) of [Upperline](#).
- Our 2015 king was [Chef Michael Regua](#) of [Antoine’s](#). Our Duke was Sterling Constant, in his 47th year at Antoine’s, and probably the longest-serving waiter in New Orleans.
- Our 2014 king was [Chef Alon Shaya](#) of [Domenica Restaurant](#).
- Our 2013 king was [Chef Tenney Flynn](#) of [GW Fins](#), and our Duchess was pastry chef Megan Forman of [Gracious Bakery](#).
- Our 2012 royalty were [Chef Susan Spicer](#) of [Bayona](#) and [Chef John Besh](#) of [the John Besh Group](#).

Mardi Gras is traditionally the pagan feast prior to the Christian Lenten Fast. The pagan part is already well covered by others. We choose to focus on celebrating our local culture, and in particular, our culinary leaders.

Charitable Proceeds: We intend to have a surplus to be donated in support of the New Orleans Navy League program that sends top local chefs to cook New Orleans-style meals for the sailors on our namesake ships (the USS New Orleans & the USS Louisiana). Other potential beneficiaries could be other deployed military units affiliated with the State of Louisiana. We also invite local active-duty service members (Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy) to march with us in the parade and have a special Mardi Gras experience.

Membership: Members must be at least 21 years of age. We seek individuals and couples who wish to celebrate the culture of New Orleans, especially its culinary arts. For our membership, Lafcadio Hearn is iconic for celebrating both our city's cultural gifts, especially its cuisine, as well as satirizing its dysfunctional aspects, in particular: its taxes, frauds and maladministrations (his political cartoons were published in the newspaper and are compiled in a modern book). Members should also desire to support our charitable cause.

Affiliates: Our celebration includes New Orleans various cultural treasures: history, architecture (both buildings & landscapes), art, literature, music, and cuisine. We are working to cultivate affiliate relationships with the respective local cultural organizations, and their memberships. In addition to our original affiliate, [the New Orleans Navy League](#), our affiliates now include:

- [The New Orleans Opera Association](#)
- [The Tipitina's Foundation](#)
- [SoFAB \(The Southern Food and Beverage Museum\)](#)
- [The Louisiana Landmarks Society](#)
- [The Tennessee Williams / New Orleans Literary Festival](#)
- [The Culinary Arts Program at Delgado](#)
- [Community Visions Unlimited](#) (public-area beautification through art and landscaping)
- [The Monumental Task Committee](#) ([Facebook page](#))

We desire all new (local) members to be supporting members of either the Navy League or one of our cultural affiliates in order to become a member of the Krewe of Lafcadio. Existing Lafcadio members are grandfathered in.

We would like to add a limited number of additional affiliated local cultural organizations. If you are a member of a local cultural organization that you believe would be a good match, please let us know.

As always, members are welcome to include their spouse or friend, and any out-of-town guests.

Parade Route: A map of the tentative 2018 parade route is on the last page of this document. The route starts at Antoine's and ends a block away.

- The parade will form up (marchers, floats and bands) outside Antoine's.
- Proceed away from the river on St. Louis St., turn right onto Bourbon St..
- Proceed downriver on Bourbon St., turn right onto Toulouse St.
- Proceed toward the river on Toulouse St., turn left onto Decatur St.

- Proceed downriver on Decatur St, continue on N. Peters St., turn left onto Barracks St.
- Proceed away from the river on Barracks St., turn left onto Royal St.
- Proceed upriver on Royal St., turn right onto Bienville St.
- Proceed away from the river on Bienville St., turn right onto Bourbon St.
- Proceed downriver on Bourbon St., turn left onto St. Louis St.
- The parade will disband on St. Louis St., midway between Bourbon and Dauphine.

If the parade route is too long for someone, there are places along the route where it is convenient to take a shortcut. We also always manage to lose some marchers to some of the bars along the route.

Bands: Our brass bands are the Paulin Brothers brass band, and the Refried Confuzion Blowhard Brass Band. The Opera sub-krewe will have six opera singers serenading them, in lieu of a brass band. At the conclusion of the parade, if you enjoyed the performance of your band, it is customary to contribute toward a tip. \$5 to \$10 per person is good.

Costumes: Costumes are required and can be most anything so long as it is in good taste. Marchers will supply their own costumes.

The costume can be simple (you can buy a chef's jacket and toque inexpensively at Caire Hotel & Restaurant Supply, or online at buycostumes.com) but accessorize it with a celebratory or satirical twist. We seek opportunities for group costumes, like our perennial sous-chef brigade and our krewe de fromage.

If you need inspiration for your costume, try to think of a costume that is celebratory of local culture, in particular our culinary culture, or your particular cultural affiliate, or one that is satirical of some dysfunctional aspect of our local culture. Please seek local themes whether they be celebratory or satirical. The best costume concepts are often both local and cultural which are also the hardest hitting and the most exciting to the crowd.

Since a Mardi Gras parade is intended to be entertaining, political satire should be either bi-partisan or non-partisan (ridiculing some dysfunctional aspect of our culture). Political satire that attacks an as-yet-unindicted politician is too easily perceived as being partisan and therefore not in the Mardi Gras spirit of entertaining the Krewe and crowd. It is certainly in the spirit of Lafcadio to satirize a specific tax or fraud or maladministration.

Throws: The Krewe of Lafcadio signature throw is 14" wooden cooking spoons adorned with stickers and/or bows of colored ribbons imprinted "Krewe of Lafcadio". The mandatory throws package is \$30 per marcher for 2 dozen wooden spoons with stickers/ribbons. This works out to ~1 spoon per block of the parade route per member. The spoons & ribbons are distributed at the lunch when you sign in.

Marchers may purchase additional throws for themselves through other outlets. Try to reinforce our culinary and/or cultural themes. As a marching parade you really want to put much more effort into your costume rather than expense into your throws. You may want to carry a few dozen "fancy" Mardi Gras throws along with your spoons but it is not necessary to spend much on throws and you certainly won't want to carry too much.

Floats: The parade uses traditional mule-drawn floats. Our membership designs and decorates the floats. The creative experience is a very rewarding part of the carnival experience. It is a fun krewe experience if

at least one member of each in-town couple helps work on our floats at least one Saturday afternoon prior to the parade. You don't have to actually do much. If all you do is help paint something when asked, that is fine. Float work is generally on the Saturdays during Carnival season. Float work is usually scheduled for three or four of the Saturdays immediately prior to the parade, from 10am until 4pm, with the last Saturday held in reserve. Currently, we have the Title/Ducal float and the one royalty float. When we get enough new members, we may begin construction on additional floats. After the parade, we may need a few members to help prepare the floats and their decorations for storage on the Saturday after the parade.

Warehouse: Our new den/warehouse is at 451 S. Galvez (downriver, lake side corner with Gravier). It is a nice large warehouse with plenty of free space. There is abundant parking on S. Galvez.

Carriage-riders: While this is intended to be a marching parade, we do wish to accommodate those who for different reasons are not able to walk the length of the parade. If there is sufficient interest, we may hire a mule-drawn carriage for a per rider surcharge of \$100 plus tip (\$20 per rider is appropriate).

Parking: Antoine's does not have an arrangement with any parking garages. I personally plan to park in the CBD and walk into the Quarter.

Safety: If a member of the crowd becomes a problem, please point them out to our police escort. You should not have to engage them yourself.

Most importantly, do not go near the mules without explicit permission from the mule handler. Mules are by nature calmer than horses, but they can still spook. Do not march adjacent to a mule nor immediately in front of the mule nor the float. It is the mule handlers' responsibility to keep their mules calm and well behind the preceding parade element. Please help make their job easier for them.

Media coverage:

- 2019: An Advocate article about [Sue Zemanick](#) mentions us in her resume!
- 2018: The Advocate had a nice [article](#) covering our krewe and royalty. NOLA.com included us in their [listing](#) of parades.
- 2017: The Advocate had a nice [article](#) and NOLA.com had a Lafcadio Hearn [article](#) that mentioned our parade.
- 2016: NOLA.com had an [article](#) promoting our parade.
- 2015: The New Orleans Advocate had an article about our [royalty and parade](#). An article about [our royalty and the Antoine's anniversary](#) made the front page of the Times Picayune Metro section along articles about Rex and Zulu. NOLA.com had a [slide show of our parade](#).
- 2014: NOLA.com also covered our [parade](#).
- 2013: NOLA.com covered our [parade and royalty](#).
- 2012 (Our inaugural year): NOLA.com had a longer article the [Thursday before the parade](#) with photos of Chefs Spicer and Besh. The parade itself was on the [cover of the TP Sunday Metro section](#) with a color picture and two more inside. NOLA.com had a series of [photos taken at the start of the parade](#). The guys in the photo weren't with us but we even got a mention in [Bon Appetit](#).

Dues: Some of our costs have increased. Dues are \$190 per marcher which includes attending the pre-parade lunch buffet as well as marching in the parade. The mandatory standard throw package is \$40 for

2-dozen wooden spoons, bringing the fees to a total of \$230 per marcher. You can order extra spoons, \$20 per dozen.

Please communicate with me by email. We have room for additional new members. Family, friends and out-of-town guests are welcome. Make your checks out to *Krewe of Lafcadio* and mail them to:

Krewe of Lafcadio
601 Poydras St., STE 2220
New Orleans, LA 70130

Attending the lunch and not parading is \$95.00 per person.

Contact Information: John Kelly, Captain, Captain@KreweofLafcadio.org, cell: 504-236-5700



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