

DECEMBER 2005 Edition

The 10th Annual Marketing Awards Program information has been mailed. Deadline to RECEIVE entries is December 15, 2005.

Was your event hit hard by one of the hurricanes this year? For those events hard hit by either or both of the two hurricanes of 2005, the Officers/Board of Directors approved a program to assist those affected. The program is that those affected events would be allowed to have their annual membership be waived for 2006; (waive \$55.00 membership fee for 2006) on a “by request” basis. The event making application must have been in a declared/designated disaster zone. The event would need to submit a listing of damage. The event must have sustained severe damage from either storm or “lost” their event for this year.

Friday Night (at the convention) Costume Contest all “audience” members holding a Friday night ticket will be eligible for the contest. Officers/Board members will judge. Win a prize (more details later) by being judged –“best costumed depicting the convention theme”.

Alternate Hotel for Convention Comfort Suites behind the Holiday Inn has 43 rooms block for LAFF Members. Call for your rooms at 225-923-3377. Room Rates are \$ 82.00 single or double.

Plaquemines Parish Orange Festival will mark the harvest of its celebrated citrus crop at the Parish Fair and Orange Festival on December 3 - 4. The site in Belle Chasse of the Medal of Honor Park will be the setting. For information on the Orange Festival, contact Paula Cappiello at 504-656-7599 or Dale Benoit at 504-394-3700.

The River Parishes Fall Festival in Norco has been rescheduled for December 2 - 4. The annual **Queen of Hearts Pageant** will be held on Saturday, December 3rd beginning @ 12:00 p.m. Come out for fun, food, rides, and craft fair and family activities. Applications for the Baby, Youth, Teen, Miss, and Ms. Queen of Hearts Pageant can be found on the LAFF website laffnet.org. If anyone has any questions, please email Doreen Landry at doreenblandry@cox.net.

PRESIDENT's MESSAGE:

With all the devastation and loss throughout our state, we must still take the time to be thankful this Thanksgiving. We look around at what has been lost, but more importantly than that, we look around at what we still have: family, love, freedom and many good friends. We are truly blessed and thankful. For my family, we are thankful our grandson is well on his way to recovery and I want to take this time to thank everyone who prayed for him.

I have spoken with many fairs and festivals that have been affected by the hurricanes and I must commend each organization for being strong and saying they will be back! This is the spirit we

see and hear across our beloved Louisiana, from the devastation in Cameron Parish to the northern hills of Shreveport, to the flooded cities of Slidell and our great city New Orleans, to the windblown towns of Bogalusa and Franklin – the spirit of Louisiana is strong and the pride of the South will be better than ever. Know that all of us with the Louisiana Association of Fairs and Festivals are here to lend a hand and do whatever it takes to rebuild our fairgrounds and events. Please, do not hesitate to ask; give me a call at 337-478-2355 and we will be there for you.

Dennis Mouton has been working very hard during all the turmoil to insure our convention 2006 will be a huge success and a chance to reflect and exchange ideas. We encourage everyone to make the effort to attend – this is the time for rebuilding and strengthening. Welcome old friends and make new friends – you will get much more from the convention if you truly get involved.

Since the last newsletter, we held our quarterly LAFF Board meeting at the State Fair of Louisiana in Shreveport on October 29th. Many thanks to Chris, Mr. Sam and all their crew for making us feel so welcome. The food was outstanding and the midway was exciting. I have never seen so many rides in one place! What a great job they did considering the State Fair of Louisiana was home to many from Hurricane Katrina and the relief effort. Hats off to you all!

On Saturday, November 5th, I had the privilege of judging the Louisiana Swine Festival Queen's Pageant in Basile. Congratulations to their director, Cathy

Fontenot, for a job well done, and to their new queen, Holly LeJeune.

On Sunday, November 6th, Dennis and I traveled up to Colfax to the Louisiana Pecan Festival. The weather was great and we had the opportunity to meet with their President, Dawna Walker. Thank you Dawna for your hospitality.

We also met Johnny Miller of Miller Spectacular Shows from Greenbrier, Arkansas. They had their rides set up at the Pecan Festival and it was a pleasure to meet them. They are a member of LAFF and can be reached at www.millershows.com if anyone needs a carnival.

November 12th, we headed up to Cottonport to see our reigning Queen of Queens, Lana Meche, crown her successor for Christmas on the Bayou. The crown went to Erica Drounette. Congratulations to Sharon Tassin and her staff for a well-run pageant.

On Thursday, November 17th, we attended the new Moss Bluff Merchants Harvest Festival and Queen's Pageant. They are a new member of LAFF and joined our association at Convention 2005. I must say this group is off to a great, although very cold weather wise, beginning. We wish them the best of luck for the remainder of their event which will run through Sunday, November 20th.

Janet and Dennis are working very closely with the Holiday Inn Select to make certain all the queens are booked into the hotel. ***We still have several queens that do not have rooms booked so we are attempting to contact each organization to make these reservations***

NOW as the rooms being held within the Queens' block will be released in early December. Remember, it is up to each organization to secure their queen's hotel room.

Again, from my family to yours, have a very happy and safe Thanksgiving.

s/Rob Piraro

VICE-PRESIDENT's MESSAGE:

Happy Holidays to all. I hope your Thanksgiving was a very enjoyable one.

Convention news: The Convention is coming up soon. As the first registration deadline has now passed, convention registration is now \$120.00 per person.

Events have until December 15th to register their queen for her room at the Holiday Inn Select. If you have not confirmed her room with the hotel, the reservation will be released.

We have secured a second "overflow" hotel at convention rates. As stated, the Holiday Inn Select will be the host hotel, with the near by Embassy Suites hotel as well as the Comfort Suites off College Drive. Rates are \$82.00 night. After January 15th, all room rates will go back to their regular rates.

The Convention is coming together and it looks like we will have a very patriotic weekend. Reminder to wear your red, white and blues.....

I am glad to see the festivals that had to reschedule their events after the storm, are having good attendance.

Congratulations to Sam and Chris Giordano with the Louisiana State Fair in Shreveport for having a successful event this year. And my thanks for hosting the 3rd quarter LAFF board meeting. It was definitely a fun filled weekend.

The Louisiana Pecan Festival was very nice to visit, (First time visit). I enjoyed seeing everyone attempting to catch a greasy pig at the Swine Festival, I also attended the Cracklin Pageant, and went on down to Cottonport where I was able to see Lana Meche, 2005 Christmas On the Bayou Queen and 2005 Queen of Queens; relinquish her title (Christmas on the Bayou).

REMINDER: The Womanless pageant is still scheduled for the Thursday night of the convention and begins promptly at 8:30, so all you guys/ I mean "gals", start shopping for your dresses. It is sure to be a great pageant.

s/ Dennis Mouton

PAST-PRESIDENT's MESSAGE

Seasons greetings from our family to yours. Our prayers are that your holiday gatherings will be safe with those that you love and that we all remember our troops protecting our freedom on foreign soil; that God will keep them safe so that they can return to their loved ones to enjoy the freedom that they defended for us. Also, our prayers and thoughts are with our many LAFF families and organizations that have had their lives interrupted by the catastrophic damage done by Katrina and Rita. May your recovery be swift and your holidays merry, with those that you love.

Dennis Mouton, our convention coordinator and vice-president has been working non-stop to provide us with another top notch convention filled with great educational workshops and fun entertainment. The Queens from around our great state are gearing up for the Queen of Queen's pageant and I am very glad that I don't have to be a judge, because this year we have so many exceptionally lovely and talented queens. If you have not registered for the convention yet, you better not wait too long, because if you miss this convention, you're going to miss a good time.

As we move ever closer to the end of another LAFF year, I would like to thank the Board and District Directors for their dedication to our cause and working diligently to make our organization as successful as it continues to be. I would like to personally extend my offer again to assist in any way that I can wherever I am needed. I am as near as an e-mail or phone call, so please call if I can be of assistance.

To the lovely Queens of our Fairs and Festivals; please accept my thanks for your continued dedication in making LAFF and our great state Fairs and Festivals the showcases for our culture, history and cuisine. Tourism may be the crown jewel of our states economy, but without the sparkling gems that you are, we would not be the success that we are.

Over this past year my wife and I have had the opportunity to visit Fairs, Festivals and Pageants throughout this great state, and we would like to thank everyone who has welcomed us so warmly. I also want to thank all of you

who have offered your well wishes and prayers during my illness and say that it is because of your caring and love that my recovery has been such a success. God has blessed me with meeting so many wonderful people who genuinely care about others and it is because of this that I can say, "But by the Grace of God, go I." I will be forever grateful to all of you for caring so much. Until January, Please accept my wishes for a very Blessed and safe Holiday season and a very Happy and Prosperous New Year.

s/ Warren Deemer

TREASURER's REPORT:

Even though the state of Louisiana has been ravished by Katrina and Rita, we still have so much to be thankful for. Here's hoping that all of you have a wonderful Thanksgiving and that you are indeed thankful for everything you have -- I know I am!

Many thanks go out to the State Fair of Louisiana, especially Sam and Chris Giordano, for hosting the LAFF board meeting in Shreveport on October 29. Everything was GREAT -- the food, the meeting facilities, the Fair, and, of course, the food again!!

On November 5th, Henrietta Caillouet and I, along with Rob Piraro and Peggy Heintz, judged the Louisiana Swine Festival Pageants in Basile. Thank you, Cathy and committee, for your wonderful hospitality!

I attended the Giant Omelet Festival on November 6 in Abbeville and was

amazed by the great arts and crafts, along with the other activities scheduled.

On November 12, Neal, Linda Comeaux, and I judged the Christmas on the Bayou Pageants and watched Lana Meche, our Queen of Queens, give up her title. Lana, we're lucky -- you're still the LAFF Queen of Queens until the next convention in February! Many thanks go out to Sharon Tassin and Manny Marcotte and their committee for the royal treatment shown to us!

Should any festival/fair need help with judging, etc., please feel free to call Neal or me at 337-893-6328 or to email us at bnhoraist@aol.com.

Happy Thanksgiving,

s/ **Barbara T. Horaist**

SECRETARY's REPORT:

I would note that it would take something mighty important for Mona & I to not travel to Cottonport on the 12th to be with Lana Meche as she "gave up" her title of 2005 Christmas on the Bayou Queen. But, that was the same day as my event **Thibodeauxville**. We had a glorious day of perfect weather, large crowds great food and entertainment – in all a very successful event. It would have been nice to be in both places.

As we get closer to the conclusion of another Festival season; The Duprés wish all a blessed and safe holiday season.

If I can help you in any way; information, pageant judge, whatever;

just Email (laffadupre@yahoo .com) or call 985-447-4658.

s/ **Al Dupré**

DISTRICT # 3 DIRECTOR

Well another month has passed by and now we are going into the holiday season. I would like to wish everyone Happy Holidays. With all the hurricanes this year the people of Louisiana will get together with their families and make it the best holiday season ever. **HAPPY HOLIDAYS!** I would like to thank Chris Giordano and his father of the State Fair of Louisiana in Shreveport for hosting the Board of Director's October meeting. We all had a great time. The food was great. The weather was perfect. As the festival season nears the end for this year, there still were a few left. We attended the Port Barre Cracklin Festival. We enjoyed our trip to the Christmas on the Bayou in Cottonport to watch Lana give up her title for this pageant. She is still our LAFF Queen for three more months. In three months it will be time for the LAFF Convention in Baton Rouge. District 3 is in charge of the ditty bags for this year. If any festival or fair has any items they would like to donate, please contact me. We are looking for items to put in the ditty bags. If you know of any large or small business that has anything they would like to donate, call me and I will be glad to go pick it up anytime. Remember the convention on February 16 – 19, 2006 at the Holiday Inn Select in Baton Rouge, La. I would like to make sure that all fairs and festivals have contacted Janet or Dennis about their Queens attending the convention. It is important to do so as soon as possible. Also it is time to start thinking about the poster contest,

the essay contest, festival of the year, volunteer of the year and all the other awards given out at the convention. It is easy and will not take long to fill out the forms and enter. Who knows, you and your festival might just win this year. I would like to see a lot of entrees this year from District 3. Go to the website for all the info or contact me. I would be happy to help.

FREEDOM RINGS WITH LAFF

Have a Safe and Happy Holidays and hope to see everyone at the Convention

Thanks,

s/ **Jim Meaux**



DISTRICT # 5 DIRECTOR

The State Fair of Louisiana enjoyed hosting the Fall LAFF Board Meeting. I'm glad that so many members were able to make the trip up to Shreveport. We had a great meeting and a great State Fair. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the Annual Convention in February. I hope everyone will have a happy holiday season.

s/ **Chris Giordano**

DISTRICT # 6 DIRECTOR

Greeting from District 6; I had a great time attending the Cottonport Christmas Festival Queens Pageant on the 12th of November along with others of the LAFF board. The pageant was supported well with many in attendance and lots of visiting Queens. I also attended the LA Pecan Festival on the 4th of November in Colfax. The festival

had great weather and a very good attendance.

Hope to see many of you at convention.

In the spirit of LAFF, sincerely

s/ **Paul McGee**



DISTRICT #7 DIRECTOR

Greetings from District 7; Wow, it's been a really long time since I've last written. I guess I should say belated greetings from District 7. After rescheduling my festival due to the threat of hurricane Dennis and having to reschedule my appreciation dinner twice from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Rita things have been very unsettling as I am sure is for everyone. But with having to find a way to move on I was finally able to hold my appreciation dinner this month which helped recover the spirits of the community. Since my last news report, which was after my festival weekend I have been traveling as much as possible. I did attend St. Charles Parish Pageant, and had the wonderful opportunity to go down to Delacroix Island for the blessing of the fleets. What a great experience for me to witness being born on the bayou myself. We then attended the introduction of royalty, ate some of the best tasting crabs and stayed for the dance and activities. Other areas I was able to attend were the Rice Coronation Ball, Chackbay Gumbo Pageant, Andouille Pageant & festival, French Food Pageant, and I will be attending the Orange Pageant and ball this weekend. A big thumbs up to all the people with the Orange festival for coming back

from such a heartfelt disaster and emotional distress. To focus on their pageant in such a time is very commendable. Having to reschedule doubles the effort, the second time around; especially when emotions and stress levels are at a peak. I'm sure they will do a great job and host a wonderful event. I am trying to travel as much as I possibly can being somewhere in between preparing for a daughter's wedding. With all the rescheduling and re-planning due to Hurricane Katrina we have really been busy. We are on countdown for the convention and I believe we are all ready for the big event to come and just relax. This has definitely been the year of re-planning and rescheduling, but a wise man once told me whenever we are forced to do things we really have to put forth big effort we are building character. Maybe Katrina has forced us all to build some character. Katrina was an evil force but good character is heavenly.

s/ Kurt Dempster



QUEEN of QUEENS

November was a month of happy endings and new beginnings for me. This month, I relinquished my festival title of Christmas on the Bayou Festival Queen, and I exclusively became the LAFF Queen of Queens. While I look forward to this new adventure, I will never forget the title that brought me to Queen of Queens and "made it all happen."

The first weekend in November, I attended the Basile Swine Festival and

chased a pig with my fellow queen sisters. Although I did not pin him down, I did come close...TWICE! From Basile, I traveled to Port Barre for the Cracklin Festival Pageant. There, I said goodbye to one of my best queen friends, Monica Suire, and I even got a little "misty-eyed" during my introduction.

Next, I relinquished my festival title in Cottonport. I attended interviews, hosted a tea and arts & craft session for approximately 70 queens, and attended my pageant to crown my festival successor. Approximately 100 queens attended the night's activities, and I crowned Erica Drounette as the 2005 Queen. It was great to see the outpour of support from the LAFF Board, queens, and directors.

This month, I also fished in Golden Meadow and attended their festival. It was great meeting these new members as well and spending the day with their beautiful royalty.

Finally, I visited Gheens for the Bon Mangé Festival Pageant. The red carpet was rolled out, and the queens all felt like celebrities with the "Hollywood" theme. A close friend, Ashley Lacassin, relinquished her title that night.

I spent time with my family for the rest of the month, as we gave "thanksgiving" for all of the numerous blessings that have been bestowed upon us this year. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!

s/ Lana Meche



LAFF GENERAL STORE - With convention time drawing near, just a reminder, if your event has any items that can be donated to the LAFF General Store, please do so. Sales generated through the store go to support the LAFF awards. You can bring your items to convention on Thursday or ship them to me before convention and I will deliver them.

Ship items to: Paul McGee, 5805 Hiawatha Dr. Alexandria, LA 71301

**Paul McGee - General Store
Chairman**

EVENTS TO ATTEND –

With the recent storms, information has been updated as available, check the website and always call before going; especially this year!

December 1 – 31
Christmas New Orleans Style

December 2 – 3
A Bayou Christmas - LaRose

December 2 – 4
River Parishes Fall Festival

December 3 – 4
Plaquemine Parish Fair & Orange Festival Belle Chasse

December 3 – 4 10 – 11
LA Renaissance Festival - Hammond

December 10 – 11
Cottonport Christmas Festival

January 2 – 4
St Charles Parish Fair – Norco

January 5 – 7
LA Fur & Wildlife Festival - Cameron

January 6
S W LA Mardi Gras 12th Night - Jennings

January 7
Rice Capitol Cook-Off - Crowley

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**“Freedom Rings with LAFF”
Holiday Inn Select – host hotel With
the Embassy Suites Baton Rouge
February 16th – 19th 2006
Be sure to bring your red, white & blue!**