

SLEMCO

POWER

JAN/FEB 2018



CARNIVAL CREATIONS

**Behind the scenes,
seamstresses and designers
sew Mardi Gras magic**

PAGE 4

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Cover photo by James Edmunds



SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS TO BE MAILED IN UPCOMING BILLS

Plan now to apply for SLEMCO's scholarship drawing if you would like to win one of 20 \$2,000 scholarships at our annual meeting on June 2.

Applications for the 2018 SLEMCO scholarship will be mailed with every SLEMCO bill in February. The entry deadline is Thursday, May 3, at 4:30 p.m. in the Lafayette SLEMCO office; mailed entries must be post-marked by May 3.

When you receive the form, fill out the application if you, your spouse, your dependent child or legal ward plan to attend a public college in Louisiana this fall.

Due to Internal Revenue Service rules, applicants who are dependent children must not turn 24 during 2018. The IRS prohibits parents from claiming children as dependents during the year they turn 24, even if they are full-time students. Any applicants turning 24 during 2018 must have their own SLEMCO account. They can't be sponsored by a parent or guardian, but they may be sponsored by a spouse because all SLEMCO accounts are community property under state law.

If you need more than one application, photocopy both sides of the one you receive in your February bill or download one from www.slemco.com. All area high school guidance counselors have a supply of applications, as do the scholarship offices at UL Lafayette, LSU-Eunice and SLCC.

Only one application per student will be accepted so everyone has the same chance to win. Duplicate entries will be voided. Make sure to fill out the application **completely** and sign the form where indicated (Lucky Account Number 3250803009).

Eligibility requirements are listed on each form, so please read them carefully. Here's a quick overview:

- Only SLEMCO customers, their spouses, children or legal wards are eligible to win a scholarship. A member cannot sponsor grandchildren, nephews, nieces or friends except as their legal guardian. Children cannot be considered a dependent if they will turn 24 years of age anytime during 2018.

- Any student applying must be planning to pursue an undergraduate degree at a public university in Louisiana this fall (Lucky Account Number 2043249503).

- High school seniors and anyone going back to college or to college for the first time must have graduated from high school with at least a "C" average. Continuing college students must have at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (on a 4.0 scale).

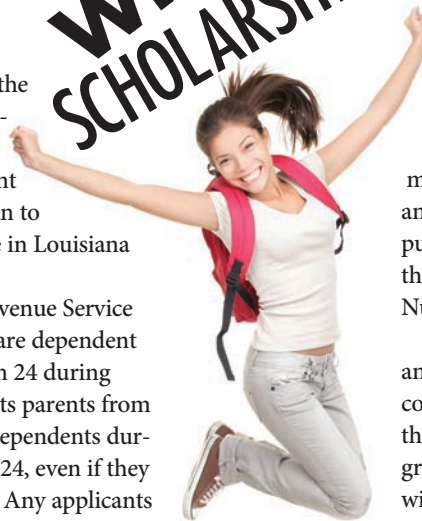
- The sponsoring SLEMCO member must have been a member for the past 12 consecutive months, as of May 3, 2018.

- The applicant is not required to attend the annual meeting on June 2, but the sponsoring member or member's spouse must attend to claim a scholarship. If a member or spouse is applying, either spouse may attend the meeting to claim the scholarship.

Questions about SLEMCO scholarships should be directed to Mrs. Mary Laurent at 896-5384. Completed applications should be mailed to the SLEMCO Scholarship Program, P.O. Box 90866, Lafayette, LA 70509-0866.

Any entry received after the May 3 deadline will be ineligible.

WIN A SCHOLARSHIP!



Application deadline
May 3, 2018

RETURN ENCLOSED CARD TO CONTINUE RECEIVING PRINT VERSION OF MAGAZINE

Beginning with this issue, a few changes are being made to *SLEMCO Power*. As printing and postage costs have increased, we've looked at different ways of saving money while continuing to inform our members (Lucky Account Number 4040093200).

The magazine now includes eight pages of company information, general interest articles and, of course, recipes and lucky numbers.

We will continue to automatically mail *SLEMCO Power* to every member through our May/June issue. But beginning with our July/August issue, *SLEMCO Power* will only be mailed to members who specifically request a printed copy. As always, *SLEMCO Power* will also be available in its digital PDF version via www.slemco.com.

If you wish to continue to receive a printed copy of *SLEMCO Power* after the May/June 2018 issue, tear off the postage-paid card in the center of the magazine, fill in your name, address and SLEMCO account number and mail the card back to us. Your SLEMCO account number can be found on the mailing label printed on the back of this magazine.

Only members returning the postcard will continue to receive the magazine in the mail beginning with our July/August 2018 issue (Lucky Account Number 4517727800).

Naturally, we will continue to post *SLEMCO Power* on our website and will even include a link on our Facebook page so the magazine can be read electronically, or print it out if you prefer.



Find your
SLEMCO lucky number
in this issue to win a

\$50
CREDIT!

LUCKY NUMBER WINNERS

One SLEMCO member called in to claim a \$25 prize for finding his account number hidden in *SLEMCO Power* magazine. **Joseph Broussard** of Kaplan was the lone winner in the November/December 2017 issue.

Nine other members missed out on \$25 prizes, including **Joseph Steen** of Erath, **Todd Latiolais** of Lafayette, **Jon McCain** of Broussard, **Winford Amos** of Breaux Bridge, **Glenn Cornett** of Lafayette, **Tina Sue Miller**



of Lafayette, **Melanie Ann Blanchard** of St. Martinville, **Michelle Allemand** of Breaux Bridge and **Sharrekia Solomon** of Breaux Bridge (Lucky Account Number 4500964400).

Ten more numbers are hidden in this issue. And, to encourage more people to participate, we've increased the prize to \$50.

Check to see if your account number is hidden in this issue. If it is, call Michelle Courvelle at 896-2504. Once she verifies you are a winner, she'll credit \$50 to your SLEMCO account. Good luck!

WINNERS NOW RECEIVE \$50 CREDITS!



Nicky Pecoraro evaluates changes to her daughter's costume as Suzanne Chaillot Breaux makes adjustments.

SEW ME SOMETHING, SISTER

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JAMES EDMUNDS

// “feel like a diamond!” Grace Pecoraro exclaimed to her mother Nicky after the first mirrored peek at herself in the royal gown she was to wear as Queen Hephaestus LVII in Morgan City come Mardi Gras weekend.

But neither mom nor daughter’s smile was any bigger than that of Suzanne Chaillot Breaux, the designer of the costumes for the entire ball. In a pursuit that’s about flash and sizzle, a successful fitting for the queen is a behind-the-seams moment that shines as brightly as the glamour of the royal ball.

“This is a client-based business,” Breaux says. “If your client is happy, you’re doing a good job.”

For krewe members and ball attendees, Mardi Gras is a rollicking good time, but for Breaux, who has become a lynchpin for a new generation of costume creators, it is a business. She stumbled onto costume production as she retired from a career in the military and was searching for pursuits that would



Seamstress Suzanne Chaillot Breaux

be flexible enough that she could do some traveling. She quickly discovered that not only was there work, there was pent-up demand for costume creators at all levels

in south Louisiana (Lucky Account Number 2325847600).

“Most of the women who have been sewing these costumes were reaching their seventies or even their eighties,” she explains. “Meanwhile, the number of krewes keeps increasing, and maturing krewes are upping their game and the scale of their events. There is more demand than ever.”

Breaux reports that she was welcomed and swept up by these elder costumers. She has since served as a gateway to a new

generation of designers and seamstresses, in what almost amounts to an apprenticeship program. “We have even looked into some industrial development support,” she notes, “because we really are developing new business people. As it stands now, we have people getting what amounts to on the job training that is nicely paid.”

One of Breaux’s earliest recruits was Shannon Billeaud, a professional costumer in her early thirties who



Seamstress Renée Breaux



Meggy Sorenson gets fabrication tips from Shannon Billeaud.



In Suzanne Chaillot Breaux's studio, Shannon Billeaud envisions costumes for the Krewe of Hephaestus.



Costume designer Suzanne Chaillot Breaux adjusts Queen Grace Pecoraro's hem.

has considerable theatrical costuming experience (Lucky Account Number 4517084902).

"Suzanne was really great at helping me understand the elements of costuming that are particular to Mardi Gras royalty," Billeaud says. "You're making a costume that is loaded with bling, but which must be comfortable for parading around a stage or in an actual parade."

Billeaud has now fashioned a full business plan that is largely fueled by Mardi Gras costuming, and is in touch with a few contemporaries in the region forging ahead with similar plans. "Suzanne pointed out to me very early on that this is a fairly recession-proof business," Billeaud notes. "People may cut down on the trips to Disneyworld in leaner times, but they are not going to skimp on Carnival."

Fanning out from careerists like Breaux and Billeaud are dozens of part-time participants, who may already be skilled seamstresses, or who are simply able to make a dent in the volume of work required by a stage full of glamorous costumes.

"My background is working as a visual artist and commercial artist," says Megg Sorenson, who has worked with both Breaux and Billeaud finishing royalty garb. "I don't have Shannon's seamstress

skills, but she is comfortable having me finish a costume and keeping the look that she wants."

For the time being, these costume designers have more work than they can handle. They must turn down invitations to work with additional krewes, so they are keen to draw new players into the game.

"If you have any inclination to be a costume designer, this is a great place to start," says Breaux. "You get to see your work come to life on the stage in a spectacular way. And you can say to yourself, if I can do this, I can do anything!" ●



STROLL THROUGH THE WORLD OF ACADIANA'S SETTLERS

For a living history of our area, one has to go no further than Vermilionville, a museum and folklife park tucked onto 23 acres along Bayou Vermilion on Fisher Road in Lafayette, just across from the regional airport.

Vermilionville was the original name of the Acadian settlement that later became Lafayette. This living history museum does more than preserve the structures of the Acadians and Creoles who settled the area between 1765 and 1890: even the animals and plant life central to the lives and livelihoods of early settlers are on display (Lucky Account Number 2315052001).

On-site artisans demonstrate crafts such as blacksmithing, cotton spinning and fiddle making, among others. And it is only fitting that visitors can purchase these crafts in the site's La Boutique.

Visitors can walk through seven original restored homes from this period, as well as recreations of other buildings including le Magasin-l'Écurie (*the barn*) complete with historic tools and implements, and L'École, a schoolhouse with the admonition "I will not speak French in school" written on the blackboard. In the early 20th century, state law forbade—even on the school playground—Southwest Louisiana's original spoken language. But Acadian French is rightfully celebrated here at well-attended weekly dances in the park's Performance Center featuring local Cajun and zydeco bands.

If your family works up an appetite strolling the paths of Vermilionville or dancing at the weekly *fait do do*, it is only proper that the park's La Cuisine de Maman offers a tempting menu full



Photos by P.C. Piazza



along with the Jean Lafitte Acadian Cultural Center, have partnered to offer boat tours of the Bayou Vermilion on the *bateau Cocodrie (alligator)*, constructed by an Acadian fourth-generation master boat builder (Lucky Account Number 3428575001).

Experiencing Vermilionville from the bayou which still bears its name offers a step back in time, one from which visitors emerge with a better understanding of the historical, cultural and natural resources the original settlers required to prosper in their new home here in Acadiana.

of authentic Cajun and creole dishes at lunchtime, six days a week, with buffets Friday through Sunday.

For an even richer immersion, the Lafayette Parish Bayou Vermilion District,

These recipes are from the award-winning cookbook **Mastering the Art of Southern Cooking**, by Nathalie Dupree and Cynthia Graubart. This hardcover book, with over 750 recipes and 650 variations plus step-by-step photographs, makes it easy to learn the techniques for creating the South's fabulous cuisine. It is available online from \$32, plus applicable tax and shipping.

Blueberry Arugula Salad

- 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1/4 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1/4 tsp. granulated sugar
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 5 cups arugula or baby greens
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans, toasted
- 1 cup blueberries (or other berries)
- 4 oz. crumbled feta cheese

Whisk together vinegar, mustard and sugar in a small bowl. While whisking, slowly drizzle in the olive oil and continue whisking until emulsified. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Toss arugula, pecans, blueberries and feta together in large serving bowl. Toss ingredients with enough dressing to lightly coat arugula, and serve. Yield: 4 servings

Ribboned Carrots and Zucchini

- 1 tbsp. butter or oil, cook's preference
- 1 or 2 carrots
- 1 or 2 zucchini
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh thyme, rosemary or other favorite herb, optional
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

Melt the butter in a frying pan. Ribbon the vegetables vertically with a potato peeler. Add to the hot pan. Cover with a lid and cook 1 to 3 minutes. Remove lid, season to taste with herbs, salt and pepper. Serve immediately, or cool and reheat later. Yield: 2 to 3 servings

Note: Vegetables may be ribboned in

advance and refrigerated for several days, until ready to cook or used in a salad.

Grits with Greens

- 2 cups milk
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup grits
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup butter
- 1 to 2 cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup baby spinach, or chiffonade (shred) larger spinach leaves
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

Bring the milk and water to a simmer in a heavy-bottomed nonstick saucepan over medium heat. Add the grits and garlic, and bring just to the boil. Cook until soft and creamy, adding heavy cream as needed to make a loose but not runny mixture. Add as much butter and cheese as desired, stirring to make sure the cheese doesn't stick. Fold in the greens and remove from heat. The greens will cook in the hot grits. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve in individual dishes or in a bowl. This dish also freezes well. Yield: 4 to 6 servings

Variations: Add enough cream to make the grits "dip" consistency. Chop the greens before adding and serve with crisp tortilla scoops or chips. For shrimp and grits with greens, add small pieces of peeled shrimp to the hot grits; finish with greens.

Chicken with Turnips and Sweet Potatoes

- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 to 2 jalapeño or other small hot peppers, seeded, chopped
- 3 tbsp. soy sauce
- 2 tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 3/4 tbsp. ground allspice
- 1 tsp. freshly ground nutmeg
- 1 tbsp. dry mustard
- 1 tbsp. light or dark brown sugar
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh thyme or summer

savory

- 1 whole chicken (3 1/2 to 4 lbs), cut into 8 pieces
- 1 large or 2 medium turnips, peeled, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 sweet potatoes, peeled, cut into 1-inch pieces
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

For the marinade, mix together the garlic, onion, jalapeño peppers, soy sauce, lime juice, lemon juice, allspice, nutmeg, mustard, brown sugar and thyme.

Rub the chicken pieces all over with the marinade and leave uncovered on a rack (over a tray or rimmed baking sheet to catch drippings) in the refrigerator up to 24 hours, but at least 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 400°. Lightly oil a 13x9x2-inch baking dish.

Spread the turnips and sweet potatoes in the prepared baking dish. Add the chicken stock. Season with salt and pepper. Move the chicken pieces on top of the vegetables, making sure the pieces don't overlap. If there is too much chicken, roast in a separate pan and move to the baking dish later. Roast on the middle rack 25 to 30 minutes, until the vegetables are tender and the chicken is nicely browned, its thickest part registering 165 degrees on a meat thermometer. If the chicken is not brown, move to a higher rack and turn up the heat to 500°. Cook 5 or 10 minutes more, until brown. This may be made several days ahead and refrigerated, covered, or frozen up to three months, but the skin will need re-crisping in the oven. Yield: 4 to 6 servings

Note: This marinated and baked chicken has a crisper skin from sitting 24 hours in the refrigerator, seasoned. The initial water drawn out by the salt and seasoning has dried off, enabling a beautiful brown skin. Be sure to taste the stock to see if it is salty before seasoning further.

For extra copies of these recipes or to e-mail a copy to a friend, visit **SLEMCO Power** magazine online at www.slemco.com.

PRE-QUALIFIED SLEMCO CUSTOMERS CAN APPLY FOR DEFERRED BILLING DURING ENERGY EMERGENCIES

In the spring of 2001 the Louisiana Legislature passed the Louisiana Emergency Relief Act of 2001, requiring the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) to adopt rules to ensure that gas and electric utilities under its jurisdiction implement a deferred billing program for pre-qualified customers in the event of an LPSC-declared “energy emergency.”

Under such an emergency, a pre-qualified customer would be able to defer partial payment of their utility bill over a three-month period (Lucky Account Number 4506988500).

An “energy emergency” is characterized by inordinately high utility bills which are the product of one of the following factors: high gas or other fuel costs, unusually inclement weather necessitating extensive use of utilities, or any other circumstances as determined by the LPSC. The LPSC has the authority to determine what constitutes “inordinately high bills,” “high fuel costs” and “unusually inclement weather.”

Only specific groups of customers can pre-qualify for the deferral and pre-qualification is mandatory.

Once an “energy emergency” has been declared by the Public Service Commission, any new applications received will not be eligible for bill deferral until the next energy emergency.

The following groups are eligible:

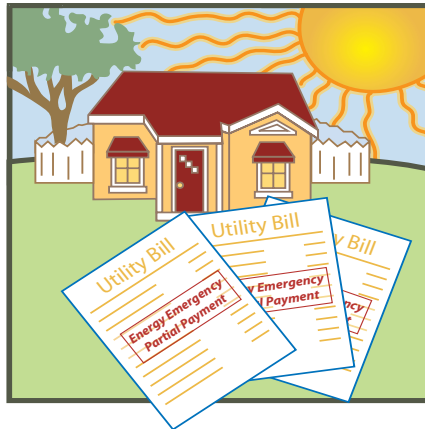
- Customers who are at least 65 years old and whose incomes do not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level established by the federal government.

- Customers of any age who receive food stamps or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

- Customers whose sole income consists of Social Security benefits.

- Governmental entities as identified by the LPSC who provide vital services, the absence of which could result in “imminent peril” to the public health, safety and/or welfare.

- Those customers who need life sustaining, electrically-operated equipment or life sustaining medical treatment that requires electricity.



Enrollment in the program is simple. After determining that you qualify, call SLEMCO’s Customer Services department at 896-5200 weekdays (except holidays) from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and an application will be mailed to you. The application must be filed in the name of the person who is listed on the SLEMCO account. In addition to the application, the following information will be required to pre-qualify for the bill deferral program:

- Customers who are at least 65 years old and whose incomes do not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level as established

by the federal government must provide a copy of their current driver’s license (or valid, pictured identification card) and a copy of their tax returns from the previous year.

- Customers who receive food stamps or TANF must provide a copy of their current driver’s license (or valid, pictured identification card) and a copy of government documents including, but not limited to, a Letter of Certification issued by the Parish Office of Family Support or some other proof that they are receiving Food Stamps or TANF.

- Customers whose sole income consists of Social Security payments must provide a copy of their current driver’s license (or valid, pictured identification card), a copy of their previous year’s tax returns and governmental documents including, but not limited to, a letter from the Social Security Administration office stating the benefits that are being received.

- Governmental entities that provide vital services, the absence of which could result in “imminent peril” to the public health, safety and/or welfare, must provide documents that confirm that the customer is a governmental entity and identifying the services it provides.

- Customers who need life sustaining, electrically-operated equipment, or life sustaining medical treatment that requires electricity for them or another member of their household, must provide a copy of their current driver’s license (or valid, pictured identification card) and a letter signed by a licensed physician which states the diagnosis and prognosis of the patient and also states that “electricity is necessary in sustaining the life of his/her patient.”

For customers wishing to avoid the “energy emergency” issue altogether, SLEMCO’s Budget Billing is a convenient alternative to even out monthly electric bills for a customer’s primary residence. For more information, you can visit www.slemco.com.