

SLEMCO POWER

JULY/AUGUST
2015

WILSON SAVOY



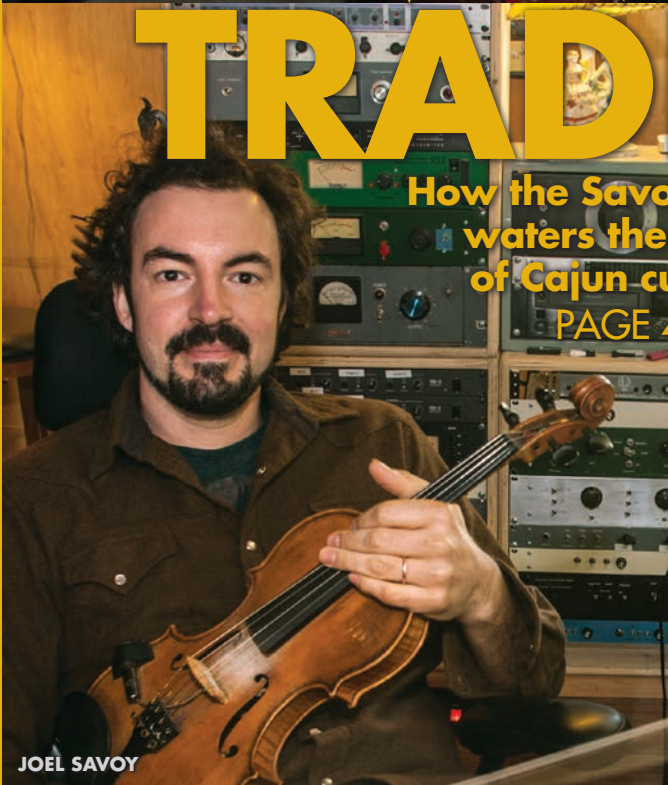
MARC SAVOY



LIVING THE TRADITION

How the Savoy family
waters the roots
of Cajun culture
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JOËL SAVOY



ANN SAVOY



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Cover photos by P.C. Piazza



Annual meeting photos by P.C. Piazza

Our June 6 annual meeting, which drew the largest turnout of SLEMCO members ever, offered plenty of excitement. We had three grand prize winners, twenty lucky students won scholarships for college and 351 generous blood donors helped over 1,000 patients needing blood products.

First grand prize winner Virginia Thibodeaux of Parks wasn't even planning to attend, but her husband Fred told her: "Go. If you get bored, leave." She

stayed and from five possible first grand prizes chose a Kubota tractor provided by Henderson Implement and Marine.

Our second grand prize winner, Vernis Leger of Kaplan, has been attending the annual meeting for years. But this was his lucky year: he won \$10,000!

Third grand prize winner Marie Wiltz of St. Martinville won \$5,000. This was her third annual meeting and proved to be her lucky day as well (Lucky Account Number 2225223004).

Next year's meeting will be
April 16, 2016
due to Cajundome renovations



(Right) MacKenzie Bourg offered a stirring performance of our national anthem.





(Above, left) First grand prize winner Virginia Thibodeaux of Parks chose a Kubota tractor. (Above, right) SLEMCO President David Simon and SLEMCO CEO & General Manager Glenn Tamporello (center) congratulate our other grand prize winners (left) Marie Wiltz, with son Vincent Wiltz, and Vernis Leger, with his daughter Monica Meaux and granddaughter Shaina Meaux.

Our early bird prize winner was Darvey Dupuis of Kaplan. He's been coming for years, but never won anything until this year. With a choice between a Honda four-wheeler and \$5,000 cash, he opted for the cash.

During our business meeting, Johnny Meaux of Lafayette Parish, Charles Sonnier of Vermilion Parish and Merlin Young of Acadia Parish were elected to three-year terms on SLEMCO'S board of directors. The membership also approved changes to the cooperative's bylaws.

Board president David Simon of Gueydan and Glenn Tamporello, chief executive officer and general manager, addressed the crowd, introducing themselves in their new positions and assuring the membership of their dedication to excellent customer service and economical electric rates (Lucky Account Number 3047305907).

Because of the huge crowd, traffic was an issue, as was seating for older members. After our record turnout, we will be working on improving both for next year when our meeting will be held April 16 instead of on the first Saturday in June. The Cajundome will be undergoing renovations in 2016 and was unavailable for the June date.



(Right) Abbeville's Koryn Hawthorne offered an exciting sample of the soulful singing that made her a 2015 finalist on *The Voice*.



Marc performs with his sons Joel and Wilson, and his wife Ann, in the Savoy Family Cajun Band.



Photo courtesy Savoy Family Cajun Band

FANNING THE FLAMES OF CAJUN TRADITION

STORY BY MARY LAURENT | PHOTOS BY P.C. PIAZZA

Love of family. Love of traditional Cajun music. Love of the Cajun language. These characteristics are worn like armor by a truly authentic champion of our Louisiana Cajun heritage and culture—Marc Savoy of Eunice—and his family.

Even as a boy, he was fascinated by the music and folklore of his ancestors. Our Cajun heritage's bonds of family and community, characteristics that make it so attractive to outsiders, were "like a soft, warm blanket on a cold winter night" for Marc. He was much more interested in his friends' grandparents than the friends themselves.

"I never rebelled against the things my parents and grandparents persued. On the contrary, I thought they were a lot more interesting and fun than my peers," he explained.

"Why would I miss an opportunity to listen to an elder telling stories in his beautiful Cajun language in order to pursue modern America trivia?"

From these elders, who spoke only French, he acquired his extensive French vocabulary. And,

oh, how the music and folklore of his elders held him spellbound!

First hearing the "wonderful music" coming from the home of one of his grandfather's tenant farmers in the mid-1940s, Marc asked his father what was making the sounds he heard. "A squeezebox," his father replied.

"What is a squeezebox?" he asked. "An accordion," replied his

father. The magic of that music would become a central thread in the fabric of his life.

Marc would go on to learn to play and become a master builder of accordions that are famous all over the world. He would meet and marry his wife, Virginia native Ann, who has gained renown in her own right for her musical talents, writing and photography. Together



In his workshop, Marc builds one of his highly-regarded Acadian accordions.

with their four children—Sarah, Joel, Wilson and Gabi—the life of the Savoy family has been infused with Cajun tradition, history, French language and music that continues today. Each of them would go out into the world to fulfill their own lives and follow their own paths. But they always return home to recharge at their “home base,” as Ann calls it, the farm in Eunice that has been in their family for seven generations.

“Family is as much a part of life in our culture as music is,” Marc emphasizes (Lucky Account Number 4502776000).

But how do parents inspire four young children to build such a profound cultural connection and carry it so deep within their souls?

As Marc explains, “When the children were young, after dinner instead of watching television, Ann and I would play music while the kids colored. So traditional music was a natural part of family life, however it wasn’t anything we ever tried to force upon the children.”

Ann went on to recall there were always cool people from around the world visiting the house, including movie producers, filmmakers, musicians and historians. “The kids were naturally intrigued and impressed that these prestigious people were in their home to visit mom and dad—not because mom and dad were all-American clones of Anywhere USA, but rather because they weren’t.”

However, the Savoy’s children, all of whom are now fluent French-speaking adults, are by no means cookie cutouts of their parents.

“We believe people are born who they are,” Ann explained. “As they grow, you see their strengths and feed the flower as it’s growing in its own way: in other words, they evolve.”

Oldest daughter Sarah, a self-described “wife, mother, sister, daughter, cook, musician and singer,” tested the waters



Ann Savoy performing with the Grammy-nominated Magnolia Sisters.

as a college student, going through a time when punk music and piercings were a part of her life. But she was too inspired by her parents’ hard work in preserving and protecting Cajun culture

to veer too far. She is now living near Paris and headlines her own band, Sarah Savoy & the Francadians.

Joel Savoy, Marc and Ann’s oldest son, is one of the most gifted and highly requested fiddlers in southwest Louisiana today.

He has played in countless bands and his work leaves no doubt that Cajun music is still very much alive. He lives in Eunice and is the founder of Valcour Records, where he engineers and records for many area musicians.

Youngest son Wilson Savoy has an electric presence, traveling and performing with his band the Pine Leaf Boys. He, too, is accomplished on

several instruments, but makes an accordion or piano’s keyboard come alive with his energy the moment he lays hands on it. Living in Lafayette, he also is an avid filmmaker, particularly of southwest Louisiana bands.

Gabrielle Savoy, or Gabi as she is known, is a modern music historian and photographer. She takes most of the official photographs of the family. The youngest of the Savoy children, she has deep respect and love for her Cajun heritage but is more intrigued by the modern world.

What, you may ask, is the big deal with Cajun heritage? Why would anyone want to work toward preserving Cajun culture? Marc’s response: “If you think you need a reason for wanting to preserve your heritage, turn on your television for a few min-

continued on page 6



Wilson Savoy fills the floor at one of Vermilionville’s Sunday afternoon dances.



Fiddler Joel Savoy takes five in his Eunice recording studio.

continued from page 5

utes and see what passes for traditions in the rest of the world.”

Marc has made it his lifelong mission to preserve and promote the traditional Cajun way of life—to turn it from a one-time stigma to an asset—and to show that the beauty of their heritage can coexist favorably with success (Lucky Account Number 3046905001).

Many may not know that Marc is a prolific writer. He often pens his thoughts for others to read and absorb. His no-nonsense philosophy leaves no doubt as to the depths of his passion and personal mission to preserve, protect and share the Cajun culture in a world that often embraces change for its own sake instead of letting it evolve naturally.

An excerpt from his “The Day The Cajuns Were Discovered,” eloquently sums up this philosophy.

They (the Acadians) arrived on our shores, a hardy destitute people, with a strong, independent will to overcome any obstacle and a talent to adapt. Independent from the rest of the world and self-reliant, they were able to survive and thrive in this foreign land. Their past was definitely connected to the French world, but after arriving here, their past no longer had the same connotation it had before being expelled from their home by the English. They totally deleted these bad memories of their past. I think that the only remnant of their past that did survive, and was very deeply rooted in their oral history, was their hatred of the English! To give credit to the French world for having an influence on how the Acadians became Cajuns would be about the same thing as how the coastal redwoods became Louisiana cypress trees. The roots are the same, but the trees are no longer alike. To consider that the Cajun people see themselves connected to any French speaking country would be as misleading as suggesting that the natives of Amazonia have connections with the Native American tribes of the Great Plains.

The French language in Louisiana is in its death throes, and there isn't much that can be done to avert this. When a culture becomes an academic study, then it is already too late for its survival. The reason that my generation is the last to speak French is simply because this language was necessary to learn so that we would be able to communicate with our grandparents, who were not bilingual. That is no longer a necessity today since everyone speaks English. Without la raison d'être, we will lose the language, just as we lost our tails after descending from the trees...

Even though I fear that the French language will not survive, I feel sure that many important aspects of our culture will survive, aspects that really define what makes a culture what it is. The music will definitely continue in some form or another, but most important of all cultural aspects will be that certain vision that these

people will have of themselves: how they live, how they see the world around them in this given time, and how they deal with their place in this world.

I have made my life's work the promotion and preservation of Cajun culture, and though I have been moderately successful at

recruiting a few followers, I realize that without the critical mass needed for some sort of chain reaction, my efforts haven't been much more than a life support system. This doesn't mean that I am going to pull the plug. I will continue my uphill battle as long as I can crawl. I will continue playing the music I heard from the wonderful old people I grew up with and do my utmost not to change it. I will let it evolve, but will definitely not deliberately change anything. I will continue to present my culture in an honest and accurate manner without attaching any false, romantic patina. I do this because my life depends on it. Wish me luck. I need all the help I can get.

As a descendant of Le Grand Derangement (the Great Deportation or Exile)

myself, I cannot help but admire this intense, towering and articulate man who seeks, with every fiber of his being, to “open the eyes of Cajun people to their own heritage and the beauty of it.”

If anyone can do it, through his love for his family, his Cajun music and our precious Cajun culture, Marc Savoy can.

He will carry the torch for as long as there is breath in his body before handing the fiery flame to his wife Ann and their children to carry it forward to the next generation.

For further information on the family and their work, visit www.savoymusiccenter.com, www.savoyfamilycajunband.com, www.annsavoy.com, www.sarahsavoy.com, www.joelsavoy.com, www.pineleafboys.com and www.gabriellesavoy.com



The Savoy Music Center in Eunice hosts a popular Saturday morning Cajun jam.



The Savoy family: Wilson, Ann, Marc, Sarah with daughter Anna, Gabrielle and Joel

Photo courtesy Savoy family



SCENES FROM APRIL'S ACADIANA SPECIAL OLYMPICS TRACK MEET

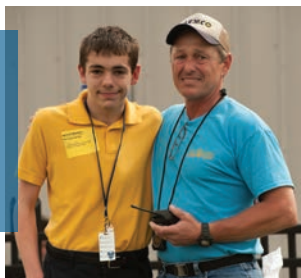
For 27 years, SLEMCO has been sending volunteers to assist the Acadiana Special Olympics track meet, our signature volunteer effort and a long-time favorite of SLEMCO employees (Lucky Account Number 4515755100).



This year's SLEMCO volunteers were (standing, from left) Jamie Broussard, Pam Meaux, Tanya Waddell, Cliff Broussard, Mandi Guidry and Byron Smith; (kneeling, from left) Burt Arceneaux, Petrina Dourousseau, Falyne Dugas, Bobbie Dugas and Hunter Dugas.



SLEMCO employee Byron Smith (right) with his son Nicholas Smith, Carencro High School student and Special Olympian.



SLEMCO's 2015 Special Olympics volunteers

Photos by P.C. Piazza



1

ENTRY ELEGANCE

Welcome your guests with waves of seasonal color from sidewalk to front door. Soft pink and white flowers fill symmetrical beds flanking this wide slate walk. Elegant pedestals on either side of the front door showcase brilliant red flowers to draw the eye. An ornate iron fence echoes the house's formal lines.

2

UTTERLY CHARMING

Climbing vines on a front yard arbor offer lush shade, while pot groups and accents add personality. Whimsical glass art tucked into a flower bed near the street uses color to attract the eye (Lucky Account Number 4502443101).



CREATE AN WELCOMING ENTRYWAY FOR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



3

SOUTHERN CHARM

Vine covered columns stand at attention like topiary soldiers guarding the brick path entrance. The expansive lawn offers space for extensive shrub plantings. Four pots of boxwood visually anchor the steps and front door.

4

CURVE APPEAL

This brick retaining wall makes a bold sweep, leading to arched, leaded-glass front doors. And what is more inviting than the flicker of gas lanterns? Foundation plantings were kept simple for easy maintenance.

5

A POP OF COLOR

A container garden adds pizzazz to this brick wall. Try your favorite monochromatic color scheme in flower beds for a strong first impression.

6

OPEN INVITATION

A pair of benches with brilliant throw pillows on this wide front entryway beckon "Welcome, sit and stay awhile!" Dwarf mondo grass defines diagonally placed stones. At the front of the walk, shaped boxwoods enhance this English formal home.

Text: Anne Darrah | Photos: P.C. Piazza | Landscape Architect: Ted Viator & Associates



These recipes come from *Private Stock* by Claire Foster & Betty Hurst, featuring recipes from East Texas cooks and celebrity chefs from around the world. It is available for \$32, including shipping, by sending a check or money order payable to Special Effects to P.O. Box 366, Longview, TX 75606.

Hot Crab Parmesan Artichoke Dip with Pita Triangles

PITA TRIANGLES

8 large pita rounds
1/2 cup butter, melted
Salt to taste

ARTICHOKE DIP

1 large bell pepper, chopped
1 tbsp. vegetable oil
2 (14 oz.) cans artichoke hearts, drained and finely chopped
2 cups mayonnaise
1/2 cup thinly sliced green onions
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 1/2 tbsp. lemon juice
4 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. celery salt
1 lb. crabmeat, drained and picked over
1/2 cup sliced almonds, lightly toasted

PITA TRIANGLES: Preheat oven to 375°. Cut pita rounds into 8 wedges and separate each wedge into 2 triangles. Arrange triangles, rough side up in a tight layer in a jellyroll pan. Brush lightly with butter. Sprinkle with salt. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until crisp and lightly golden brown. Cool in pans. Yield: 128 triangles.

ARTICHOKE DIP: Preheat oven to 375°. Sauté peppers in oil over moderate heat in a small heavy skillet, stirring, until tender. Set aside to cool. In bowl, combine peppers, artichokes, mayonnaise, green onions, Parmesan cheese, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce and celery salt. Gently stir in crabmeat. Transfer mixture to a buttered ovenproof baking dish. Sprinkle with almonds. Bake 25 to 30 minutes or

until golden brown and bubbly. Serve with pita triangles. Yield: 15 to 20 servings

Sweet Potato Corn Chowder

1/2 cup diced bacon
3 tbsp. diced yellow onions
1/2 cup diced celery
3 tbsp. diced bell peppers
1 cup diced sweet potatoes
2 cups water
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. ground thyme
1 bay leaf
3 tbsp. all-purpose flour
1/2 cup milk
1 1/2 cups hot milk
2 cups frozen corn, thawed
2 tbsp. chopped parsley
1/2 tsp. honey

Cook bacon until crisp in a large stock pot. Remove bacon and reserve. Sauté onions, celery and pepper in drippings. Add sweet potatoes, water, salt, thyme and bay leaf. Simmer 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Blend flour and milk. Slowly stir into soup. Simmer an additional 10 minutes. Add hot milk, corn, parsley and honey. Simmer to heat thoroughly. Remove bay leaf. Serve hot and garnish with reserved bacon. Yield: 6 servings

Chicken Breast in Chutney Cream

6 split chicken breasts, skinned and deboned
All-purpose flour
6 tbsp. butter
2 green onions, thinly sliced
1/2 tsp. minced fresh ginger
3 tbsp. Major Grey chutney
3/4 cup chicken stock
3/4 cup heavy cream
Cooked saffron or curried rice

Pound chicken between two sheets plastic wrap until 1/4-inch thick. Dust lightly with flour. Melt 3 tbsp. butter in a skillet. Cook chicken 4 to 6 minutes or until golden brown. Transfer to a platter

and keep warm. Melt remaining 3 tbsp. butter in skillet. Sauté green onions, ginger and chutney until fragrant. Add stock and bring to boil. Cook until reduced to 1 1/2 cups. Pour in cream and boil, stirring constantly, until reduced to 1 1/4 cups. Serve chicken with rice and spoon sauce over all. Add green salad or steamed vegetables. Yield: 6 servings

Seafood Diablo

1 onion, diced
8 tsp. olive oil
4 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. ground cloves
1 tsp. salt
1 cup tomato purée
1/2 lb. bay scallops
1/2 lb. bay shrimp
1/2 lb. lump crabmeat, picked over
1/2 cup black olives, drained and chopped
2 tbsp. capers, coarsely chopped
1 (2 oz.) jar diced pimiento, drained
3 serrano chilies, minced or 2 jalapeños, chopped without seeds
12 oz. cream cheese, softened
3 large eggs, beaten
2/3 cup grated Monterey Jack cheese

Sauté onions in oil until tender. Add garlic and cook until lightly brown. Add cinnamon, cloves, salt and tomato purée. Bring to boil. Add scallops, shrimp, crabmeat, olives, capers, pimientos and chilies. Simmer 5 minutes.

Cut cream cheese into teaspoon size pieces. Add to hot seafood mixture, stirring until cheese melts. Stir in eggs until blended. Reheat to simmer. Stir in Jack cheese. Serve very hot with tostada chips or over cornbread. Yield: 10 servings

Tomatoes Florentine

6 medium tomatoes
Salt to taste
1/2 cup half & half
1 large egg yolk
12 oz. fresh spinach, cooked, drained and chopped (3/4 cup)
3 tbsp. butter, melted

Slice 1/4-inch off top of each tomato. Scoop out seeds and juice, leaving the fruit. Sprinkle inside with salt. Blend half & half and egg yolk in a saucepan. Add chopped spinach and 1 tbsp. butter. Add salt. Heat and stir until simmering. Fill tomatoes with spinach mixture. Place tomatoes in a 10x6x2-inch baking dish. Top each tomato with 1 tsp. butter. Bake at 375° for 20 minutes. Serve hot. Yield: 6 servings

James Beard's Processor Brioche Loaf

1 (1/4 oz.) pkg. active dry yeast
 1/4 cup warm milk (110–115°)
 1 tbsp. sugar
 2 cups unbleached flour
 1 tsp. salt
 1/2 cup frozen butter, cut into 8 pieces
 2 large eggs, slightly beaten

Proof yeast in warm milk with sugar. Using metal blades, process flour, salt and butter until butter is cut into flour. Add yeast mixture and process about 5 minutes. Turn out dough onto floured board. Knead until smooth. Place in a greased bowl and let rise. Punch down and shape dough into a loaf and let rise about 1 hour until doubled. Place in a 5-cup bread pan. Bake at 350° for 40 to 50 minutes or until golden brown. Yield: 15 servings

Twinkle's Avocado Enchiladas

2 slices bacon, cut 1/4 x 1 inch
 2 tbsp. butter
 1 (10 oz.) can diced tomatoes with green chilies and lime
 1 (15 1/2 oz.) can petite diced tomatoes
 2 jalapeños, minced (seeds removed)
 2 garlic cloves, minced
 Salt to taste
 1 small bunch cilantro, chopped and divided
 Vegetable oil
 24 corn tortillas
 1 lb. Monterey Jack cheese, grated
 2 large white onions, diced
 4 medium avocados, diced and lightly salted
 2 limes, wedged



Chocolate Mousse

Sauté bacon in butter until limp. Drain off oil and chop. Add tomatoes to chopped bacon and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer until sauce thickens slightly. Add jalapeños, garlic, salt and half of cilantro. In a separate skillet, heat oil to 325–350°. Individually soft fry tortillas and drain on paper towels. Spread half of tomato sauce

over each tortilla. Top with 1 to 2 tbsp. Jack cheese, onions and heaping tsp. avocado. Roll up and place seam side down in 2 buttered 12x8x2-inch baking dishes. Top with remaining sauce, cheese and onions. Bake at 350° about 30 minutes or until heated thoroughly. Garnish with lime wedges and remaining cilantro. Serve on warm plates. Yield: 12 servings

Note: For vegetarians, omit bacon and sauté tortillas in vegetable oil.

Chocolate Mousse

6 oz. Godiva Chocolate
 4 egg yolks, beaten
 1/4 tsp. salt
 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
 2 tbsp. coffee
 1/2 cup whipping cream, whipped
 2 tsp. vanilla extract
 2 tbsp. Kahlúa

Melt chocolate in top of double boiler. Beat egg yolks. Stir into chocolate. Cook until thickened. Add salt, cinnamon and coffee. Cool. Fold in whipped cream, vanilla extract and Kahlúa. Refrigerate. Serve cold. May be molded and sliced. Yield: 6 servings

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

LUCKY NUMBER WINNERS

Two SLEMCO members found their account numbers hidden in the May/June issue of *SLEMCO Power*. They are **Lee Roy Lepretre** of Morse and **Angela Owen** of Eunice.

Eight others lost out on a \$10 credit. Those members were **Anna Gary** of Erath, **Samantha Pool** of Maurice, **Mrs. Allen J. Istre** of Crowley, **John Malagarie** of Leonville, **Louis**

Nichols of Basile, **Rochelle Hirstius** of Duson, **Jarrod Keller** of Lafayette and **Marion M. Judge** of Youngsville.

Ten more SLEMCO account numbers are hidden in this issue. Look for yours (Lucky Account Number 1312595000). If you find it, call Mrs. Gayle Babin at SLEMCO at 896-2504. If you are a winner, she'll credit \$10 to your account.



2015 SLEMCO SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



Photo by P.C. Piazza

Student winners of this year's \$2,000 SLEMCO scholarships, pictured with SLEMCO Communications Manager Mary Laurent (center), include (seated, from left) Tyler Edwards of Carencro, Tyler Thomas of Carencro, Hannah Lanclos of Melville and Lucas Vedralier of Kaplan, (standing, from left) Katie Douet of Breaux Bridge, Madison Duhon of Kaplan, Savanna Fontenot of Opelousas, Halie Hebert of Cecilia, Emma Noel of Abbeville, Laura Couvillon of Kaplan, Bailey

Viator of St. Martinville, Todd Wiltz of Breaux Bridge and Darian Mire of Kaplan. Also winning, but not pictured: Zachary Angelle of Cecilia, Gerald Eaglin of Opelousas, Arianna Mallette of Lafayette, Brittney Comeaux of Carencro, Zachary Stagg of Eunice, Cai Mailhes of Maurice and Alexis Dardar of Iota (Lucky Account Number 2043381613).

SLEMCO RECEIVES LSUE'S UNIVERSITY MEDAL FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

At its spring commencement in May, Louisiana State University Eunice awarded SLEMCO the University Medal for Distinguished Service in recognition of its continuing financial support for the campus' Undergraduate Research Summer Institute program, now called the SLEMCO-URSI Program (Lucky Account Number 1447455000).

The university's highest award for people or organizations contributing time, talent and resources to benefit LSUE, this medal has been awarded only 16 other times in the university's history.

Through a five-fold match from Louisiana through the state's Workforce and Innovation for a Stronger Economy (WISE) program, SLEMCO's \$20,000 contribution allowed LSUE to obtain \$100,000 in funding to further the academic and work careers of undergraduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, all fields considered crucial for the economic future of South Louisiana (Lucky Account Number 2317187100).



Photo by Van Reed

Dr. William J. Nunez III, LSUE chancellor, with George Fawcett, retired SLEMCO director of marketing & government affairs, and Francis Delhomme, SLEMCO governmental affairs and special projects representative