

SLEMCO

POWER

JAN/FEB 2020

ACADIAN BROWN COTTON

HOW A SIMPLE
CAJUN FABRIC IS
WEAVING ITS WAY
FROM THE PAST
TO THE FUTURE

PAGE 4

The Official Publication of the Southwest
Louisiana Electric Membership Corporation

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TakeNote

NEW THIS YEAR!

Private Universities and
Trade Schools Qualify
for Participation

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 6.

Applications for the 2020 SLEMCO scholarship will be mailed with every SLEMCO bill in February. The entry deadline is Thursday, May 7, at 4:30 p.m. in the Lafayette SLEMCO office; mailed entries must be postmarked by May 7.

When you receive the form, fill out the application if you, your spouse, your dependent child or legal ward plan to attend an accredited university or trade school in Louisiana this fall.

Due to Internal Revenue Service rules, applicants who are dependent children must not turn 24 during 2020. 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 2020 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.

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 2020
Lucky Number: 3123006117.

- The scholarship monies can be used by undergraduate students to attend, on a full-time basis, any public or private Louisiana University or trade school as accredited by the University of Louisiana System; Louisiana State University System; Southern University System; Louisiana Community and Technical College System; Louisiana Board of Regents Proprietary School System; Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities or the US Department of Education.

- All applicants must have graduated from high school with at least a "C" average. Continuing college or trade school students must have at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (on a 4.0 scale). Graduate or doctoral students do not qualify
Lucky Number: 2307027002.

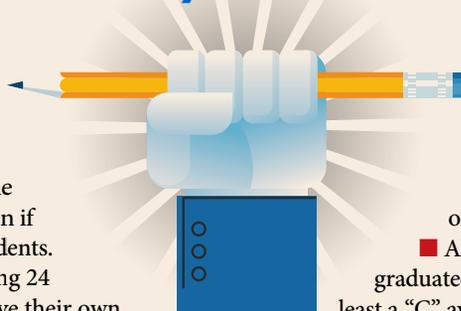
- The sponsoring SLEMCO member must have been a member for the past 12 consecutive months, as of May 7, 2020.

- The applicant is not required to attend the annual meeting on June 6, 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 7 deadline will be ineligible. 📧

APPLICATION DEADLINE
May 7, 2020



YOU ALWAYS HAVE PLENTY OF PAYMENT OPTIONS

Whether you choose to pay your bill in person, by mail or automatically every month, SLEMCO makes payment as easy and convenient as possible, with options to fit every lifestyle.

GO PAPERLESS WITH SMART HUB

If paperless is your preference, saying goodbye to paper is easy once you've signed up for SmartHub *Lucky Number: 4502047101*. With SLEMCO's SmartHub account management tool, you can view and pay your electric bills anytime online, safely and conveniently. When you log on to SmartHub, click the Stop/Start Print Bill link on the left to opt in (or out) of paperless billing. New user? Sign up for SmartHub now at <https://slemco.smarthub.coop> to register your SLEMCO accounts, select your password and begin paying bills online.

MAKE AUTOMATED CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS ANYTIME

SLEMCO residential customers can now pay their bill with a credit or debit card through an automated system by calling 1-844-859-5978 *Lucky Number: 2306820200*. Payments post within 15 minutes to your account, but any payment made after 4:30 p.m. will post the next business day. The fee for phone payments by credit or debit card is \$4.

PAY BY BANK DRAFT OR CREDIT/DEBIT CARD

Paying your bill by bank draft (available for all customers) or credit/debit card (for residential customers only) is fast, easy and convenient. SLEMCO's A.P.O. (Automatic Payment Options) Program saves you time by automatically paying your SLEMCO bill. You may sign up at any time. Visit <https://slemco.smarthub.coop>. Once you sign in to your SmartHub account, click on Financial Info and fill out the required information for the bank or credit/debit card account that you wish to use. Once the authorized payment option begins, you will receive a regular bill as before that will show the net bill but will have a zero balance. It will show

"BANK DRAFT" for the automatic bank draft option and the date the bill will be drafted, or "CREDIT/DEBIT CARD CHG" for the automatic credit/debit card charge option and the date the bill will be charged. Your account won't be drafted or your credit/debit card charged until your due date, giving you ample time to call us with any questions regarding your bill.

DRIVE UP TO OUR KIOSK

We installed two 24-hour kiosks in our Lafayette office drive-thru where you can pay your bill with a credit card, cash or electronic checks *Lucky Number: 4501239807*. ☎



LUCKY NUMBER WINNERS

There were no SLEMCO members who called in to claim their \$50 prize after reading the November/December issue of *SLEMCO Power*. Those missing out on a \$50 SLEMCO credit include **Roy Nugent** of Melville, **Alla Jeanne Campbell** of Kaplan, **Michelle Alexis** of Youngsville, **Dean Duhon** of Youngsville, **Michael Fontenot** of Ville Platte, **Kevin Lifsey** of Carencro, **John K. Fusilier** of Opelousas, **Margarite C. Bourque** of Kaplan, **Timmy Romero** of Erath and **Bryan Vicknair** of St. Martinville *Lucky Number: 3030045003*.

We've hidden ten more SLEMCO account numbers in this issue of the magazine. Look to see if you find your SLEMCO account number. If you do, call Michelle Courvelle at 896-2504. Once she verifies you as a winner, she'll credit \$50 to your SLEMCO account. ☎



WINNERS RECEIVE \$50 CREDITS!

Simple as ABC

A RELIC OF THE PAST, ACADIAN BROWN COTTON
IS BEING WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC OF ACADIANA'S FUTURE



Sharon Gordon Donnan
with an Acadian Brown
Cotton blanket made by
Elaine Larcade Bourque

“The first time I held an Acadian Brown Cotton blanket in my hand, I knew I had to know who the people were who created these textiles,” recounts Sharon Gordon Donnan, Los Angeles textile conservator who had encountered similar materials in Peru and Mexico as she pursued the anthropological slant to her work. Donnan had come to Louisiana for the food and music, and encountered Acadian blankets at an antique store. Her inquiries soon led her to Elaine Larcade Bourque, who had apprenticed herself to Gladys LeBlanc Clark, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellow who carried these weaving traditions into the middle of the twentieth century. Bourque had not only become the leading practitioner of traditional weaving methods, but had also conducted research into weaving traditions in communities throughout South Louisiana.

Bourque figured prominently in the 2015 film *Coton Jaune*, produced by Donnan and the woman who had introduced her to the blankets, Suzanne Chaillot Breaux. Often, when the film is exhibited, Bourque is present to demonstrate spinning and weaving techniques, and the short movie has been a centerpiece of the revival of interest in Acadian Brown Cotton.

For all the history attached to Acadian Brown Cotton, the efforts of Donnan and others are focused on the future as much as the past. “We’re in a fashion revolution that prizes fabrics with a low carbon footprint,” Donnan explains. “When you add the rich story of the Acadians and their traditions, this becomes a very marketable product.” Acadian Brown Cotton devotees are intent on creating a full “farm-to-fashion” stream

that will honor weaving traditions and history and create a market for locally produced products. The entire process is being generated step by step, and it begins with the seeds of the brown cotton plant.

“We began with seeds with a very clear provenance,” says Mark Simon, retired operations manager of the University of Louisiana Experimental Farm in Cade, where he helped open the Wildflower

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JAMES EDMUNDS



Elaine Bourque
harvesting cotton
from her own rows

Seed Bank and now volunteers as liaison between the seed bank and the Acadian Brown Cotton project. “Mrs. Elaine Bourque obtained the seed from Gladys Clark. And in the recent years that growers have been planting, we have carefully preserved seed to carry forward.” Growers are now producing Acadian Brown Cotton in enough volume that this fall’s crop will begin to put ginned cotton into the hands of spinners and weavers in useful quantity for the first time in many decades *Lucky Number: 4501510500*. Finished goods that emerge from this renaissance may create new products for a modern market hungry for textiles produced through sustainable agricultural methods.



Elaine Bourque
works loom



This September, the Hilliard University Art Museum in Lafayette will mount a major exhibit, “Acadian Brown Cotton: The Fabric of Acadiana,” exploring the history of hand-woven brown cotton textiles *Lucky Number: 1438246001*. Bourque and Donnan are joined in an all-star curatorial team that includes museum Curator Benjamin Hickey, Dr. Charles Ray Brassieur, Leah Graeff and historian Dr. Shane Bernard. A wide range of events and demonstrations at the Hilliard and at other participating institutions will provide a detailed exploration of the history, culture and the pursuit of beauty embodied in the Acadian Brown Cotton tradition.

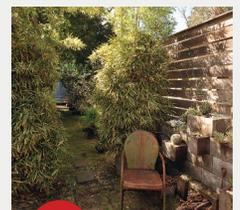
The visual richness and variety of Acadian blanket design is perhaps the most charming mystery element to this tradition. “I often think of the women who wove these blankets, growing a little bit of indigo for blue dye, mixing in a bit of white cotton here and there, to create beautiful patterns,” says Bourque.

“This was work that was likely done at the end of the day — a long and tiring day. Yet they took the extra trouble to make the blankets lovely to look at. These blankets are prized today for their beauty.” ☯



Mark Simon at
the Wildflower
Seed Bank

CENTRAL COURTYARD OFFERS NATURAL LIGHT AND PARTY CIRCULATION



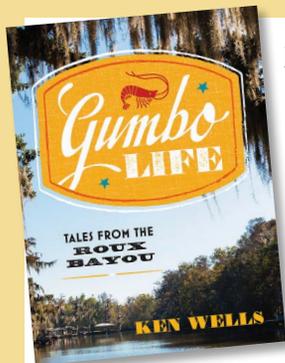
1
FACING INWARD
The core of COURHouse is a courtyard, with a modern glass overhead door in the kitchen and glass doors in the living room and rear master bedroom, all opening to it. High clerestory windows add even more natural light and can vent hot air when needed.

2
JAZZY PORCH
Columns don't always need to be straight! And exposed metal plates celebrate the connections. Together they make an eye-catching front entrance fit for visiting with the neighbors. Antique cypress barn wood contrasts the Hardie board cladding.

3
SLEEK, COMFY KITCHEN
Concrete floors and counters, gray-stained exposed joists and beams, plus the garage door, all lend an industrial look to the home. The vaulted kitchen ceiling soars to 16 feet, making the narrow kitchen feel more spacious.

4
OUTDOOR LIVING
Tucked behind a privacy fence, the yard is divided into outdoor rooms: a seating area with its vibrant sofa, central courtyard for large gatherings, and behind the bamboo a small back yard.

Text: Anne Darrah | **Photos:** P.C. Piazza | **Design:** UL Lafayette School of Architecture Building Institute Students, W. Geoff Gjertson, Professor of Architecture



Journalist Ken Wells spent two years traveling to 15 South Louisiana cities, researching and sampling nearly 100 gumbos from restaurants and home cooks.

The bulk of his cookbook, *Gumbo Life: Tales from the Roux Bayou*, gives us images of these visits and of the gumbo-making in his own family kitchen. It unravels an enlightening history of the evolution of gumbo and culminates with Wells's recipe picks, some from bygone days. The book can be purchased at bookstores for \$26.95 or on amazon.com.

Mr. B's Bistro Gumbo Ya-Ya

Of the many gumbos tested by the author, this was one of his favorites. The recipe makes a LOT of gumbo to freeze for later.

Makes 6 Quarts

1 lb. (4 sticks) unsalted butter
 3 cups flour
 2 red bell peppers, diced
 2 green bell peppers, diced
 2 medium onions, diced
 2 celery stalks, diced
 1-1/4 gal. (20 cups) chicken stock
 1 lb. andouille sausage, cut into 1/4 inch slices
 2 tbsp. seasoning
 2 tbsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
 1 tsp. ground black pepper
 1 tsp hot red pepper flakes
 1 tsp. chili powder
 1 tsp. dried thyme
 1 tbsp. minced garlic
 2 bay leaves
 3-1/2 lbs. chicken, pre-roasted and deboned
 Hot sauce to taste
 White rice for serving

Melt the butter in a 12-quart stockpot over low heat. Gradually add 1 cup of the

flour, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, and cook for 30 seconds. Add another cup of the flour and stir constantly for 30 seconds. Add the remaining cup of flour and stir constantly for 30 seconds. Continue to cook the roux, stirring constantly, until it is the color of dark mahogany, 45 to 60 minutes.

Add the red and green bell pepper and stir constantly for 30 seconds. Add the onion and celery and stir constantly for 30 seconds. Gradually add the stock to the roux, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon to prevent lumps.

Add the andouille, Creole seasoning, salt, black pepper, red pepper flakes, chili powder, thyme, garlic and bay leaves and bring to a boil. Simmer the gumbo, uncovered for 45 minutes, skimming any grease and stirring occasionally.

Add the chicken and simmer for 15 minutes. Adjust the seasoning with salt and hot sauce. Serve with rice.

Lobster and Andouille Rouxless Gumbo

Serves 8 to 10

4 large steamed lobsters
 Salt and pepper to taste
 4 tbsp. vegetable oil
 (2) 8-oz. cans RO-TEL tomatoes (or equivalent)
 8 large onions, chopped
 4 large bell peppers, chopped
 1/2 celery stalk, chopped
 2 tbsp. garlic salt (to taste)
 2 tbsp. Tony Chachere's Original Creole Seasoning (to taste)
 2 lbs. cut okra (frozen can be substituted for fresh)
 (2) 12-oz. packages Aidells Organ Cajun Style Andouille Smoked Chicken Sausage (or equivalent), cut into 1/2 inch pieces
 White rice for serving

To make the seafood stock, pick the meat off the lobsters and set aside. Preserve the head and shells, and place them in an 8-quart stock pot. Fill it two-thirds with

water, season with salt and pepper, bring to a boil and lower the heat to simmer.

In another 8-quart stockpot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add 1 can of the tomatoes, the onion, bell pepper and celery so that they fill up three-quarters of the pot. Season lightly with garlic salt and Creole Seasoning. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until the veggies reach a deep chocolate color and are reduced to a 1 1/2-inch "paste" that covers the bottom of the pot. (This is a vital step of the recipe and can take 45 to 60 minutes.) Occasionally, add a few tablespoons of water to prevent the mixture from sticking.

In another pot, combine the okra and the second can of tomatoes. Add them to the veggie paste. Continue to stir and cook for 5 to 10 minutes.

Add the lobster meat and the sausage, and cook for 10 minutes stirring often. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes. Serve over white rice.

Feast on This

■ In 1989, Louisiana chef and cooking show host John Folse became the first non-Italian chef to be invited to cook for the Vatican state dinner in Rome, serving gumbo to Pope John Paul II.

■ In bygone years, gumbos were commonly labeled either as gumbo fevi (thickened with fresh or dried okra) or gumbo filé (flavored with dried sassafras leaves pounded to a green powder.)

■ The Gumbo Belt includes Opelousas, Breaux Bridge, Lafayette, New Iberia, Bayou Black, Chauvin, Montegut, Houma, Thibodeaux, Donaldsonville, Hahnville, Tremé District and New Orleans.

■ Many believe that gumbo is a Cajun/Creole invention. But, numerous food scholars, among them Chef John Folse, believe that between 1700 and 1850, gumbo evolved from a fusion of tastes, ingredients, recipes and techniques from seven cultures whose culinary-minded people contributed to the yummy concoction. They came in this order: French, African, Spanish, Acadian, German, American and Italian.

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 Number: 1306597101.*

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 *Lucky Number: 2047343500.*

■ 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. ☎

