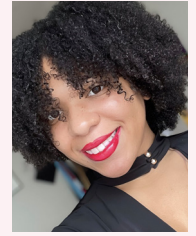
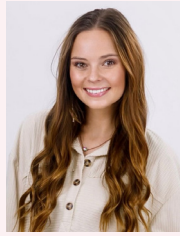
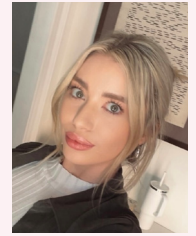


L'OBSERVATEUR

River Parishes

MAGAZINE



20
UNDER
40

L'Observateur

• Movers, Shakers and Policy Makers Across the River Parishes

• St. Joan of Arc Celebrates Milestone

• Photo Galleries

• Home By Dark

SPRING 2025



L to R: Courtney Dufrene, PA-C; Dr. Sireesha Upadhrasta, Cardiologist; Dwayne Andras, ACNP-C; Dr. Alvin Timothy, Cardiologist; Dr. Chad Dugas, Interventional Cardiologist; Mary Rodrigue, PA-C; Dr. Hadi Elias, Interventional Cardiologist

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River Parishes Magazine

20 Under 40 Edition

So good to be back!

That's my overriding sentiment as we are wrapping production on the Spring 2025 edition of The River Parishes Magazine. Our well-received and award-winning lifestyle magazine covering St. John, St. James and St. Charles parishes is back on line and back on the streets with a new look, new features, new writers and this instance, a host of contributors from around the region that helped up compile this edition's cover story '20 Under 40 In the River Parishes'.

It's been so gratifying to see our community and business leaders jump in and help us out with this feature. There are so many bright young folks in our communities that are acting selflessly putting their time and energies into helping make the River Parishes a better place to live and raise a family. What better way to re-introduce our Magazine to the public than to put a spotlight on these inspiring individuals. Local marketing guru Keighley Cotonio receives a special thanks for his work in reaching to the community and compiling this year's list. L'Observateur staff writer Amos Abba also stepped up in a big way with his lead feature on page six, an emerging icon in the local entertainment scene.

Correspondent Monique Roth provides us with a behind-the-scenes look at the 50th anniversary of carnival ball, a local tradition that finds new life

every year with the students at St. Joan of Arc Catholic School. I chime in with a little essay I like to call 'Home by Dark', a series of mini-travelogues to easy-to-reach places just outside our collective comfort zone. This issue, I visit Biloxi for a college baseball game, and by chance meet a couple whose life's journey curiously mirrors my own.

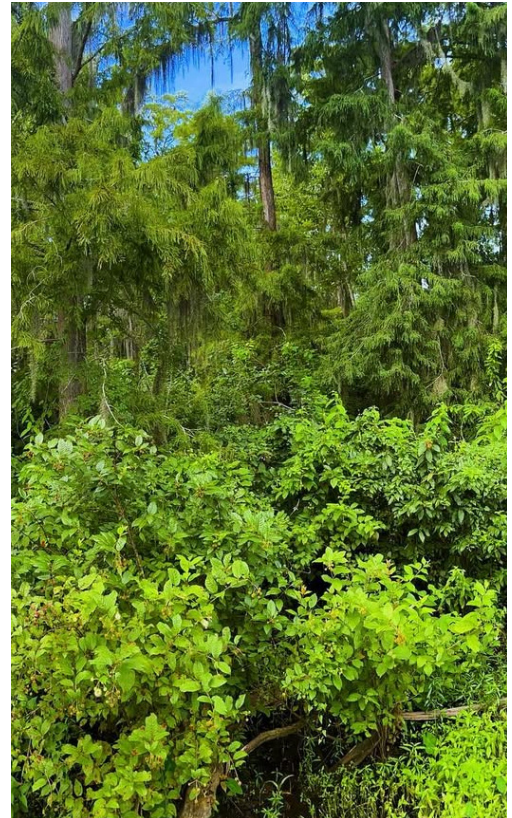
We also have our Gallery with photos from our recent bout of Winter Weather, Mardi Gras and more. So please do take a moment and enjoy the show, so to speak, and feel free to drop us a line. As for us, we can't wait to start on the June edition.

Cheers!



DD Singleton

David D. Singleton
General Manager



L'OBSERVATEUR
River Parishes
MAGAZINE

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By Amos Abba
Special to River Parishes
Magazine

It was the winter of 2014 at the New Orleans Jazz Festival when Kealan Levy of Vacherie, La., as a high school student, performed as part of a music group before the largest crowd he had ever faced. The event left him both enthralled and horrified.

As thousands of attendees enjoyed the array of performances, Levy was surprised by each performer's short time on stage, quite unhappy that he only had six minutes on the platform.

"I remember walking away from the platform saying, you know, this was great," Levy says.

"But one day, I want to create an event where artists can perform as long as they want."

In 2023, Levy made history by founding St. James Parish's inaugural music festival, K. Levy's Legends

K. Levy Legends Festival: One man's quest to make festivals a lifestyle in St. James Parish

Festival. This festival brought the parish into the entertainment spotlight.

What began as an idea transformed into a reality after several years. Levy wanted a music festival that promoted unique, fun experiences for fans and fostered community building.

Levy sought out festival veterans and those familiar with festival culture, organized backyard tours, and absorbed their knowledge. Soon, he garnered support from his family and friends and began organizing music events in the community's backyards, which he called the Backyard Booming Tour.

He sought to legitimize festival attendance as a hobby in Vacherie, St. James Parish. The four-month backyard tours, which took place from September to December 2022, garnered mixed reactions due to irregular attendance. Nevertheless, he needed to find a way to cultivate a festival culture in Vacherie.

Levy invested his earnings and resources from family and friends until he accumulated enough to support the tour plans. "I went to backyards all around the community and did the backyard tour for four months, and my mindset during this tour was no matter how many people showed up," Kealan says. "I was going to deliver a great performance for the audience."

Two months later, he announced the creation of K.

Levy Legends Music Festival, also known as "Legends Fest," the first music festival held in St James Parish in May 2023. Wearing his signature top hat, Levy performed alongside local artists Altina Smith, Kaithlyn Danos, and Flo Darese, among other local talents in the region.

Organizing a festival of such magnitude demands a passion for music and resilience to handle risk and stress. This year, Levy will have been organizing the Legends Music Festival in Vacherie for three years. What drives him?

"I am a man of faith, which is the centerpiece of my creative process. I am also driven by a desire to avoid mediocrity at all costs because I am legendary," he says. "Apart from that, I have a strong support system from my family and close friends in my inner circle. These are the few things I've been blessed with, and they have shaped my mentality and belief system."

Using his faith to guide him through uncomfortable situations has recently led Levy to his first foray into writing, authoring two books.

"On the day we started the festival, I was excited and relieved. It was finally happening," Levy said. "I remember the hurdles I had to climb to set up the first festival in 2023. It also left me with a buzz and a feeling of satisfaction at the same time that I'd created this thing. I could see in people's faces that it gave them a moment

of escape."

With a core demographic of attendees aged 18 to 40, the K. Levy Legends Music Festival is a significant funfair summer attraction in St. James Parish. "When you're creating a little world," says Levy. "If people believe your dream and you create an emotional connection with them, it becomes something of cultural importance rather than just a day of music in a park."

Every festival presents unique challenges shaped by size, location, and audience. Levy's first taste of success started with the inaugural edition of the K. Levy Legends Music Festival, which drew over 1,500 attendees.

Levy explains that the concept of the Legends Music Festival is more than a creative playground where new expressions can be conceived. In addition to the music, he envisions the festival featuring a children's area, a book tent, and a humanitarian concept aimed at giving back to the community, evolving each year based on audience feedback.

In 2017, he received the Nicholls State University NAACP Humanitarian Award and was featured on the cover of SPEAK Magazine in 2014. Levy holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Nicholls State University and serves our local students by teaching drama at 6th Ward Elementary in the St. James Parish Public School System.



Darren Carpenter Appetite for Adventure

Darren Carpenter is the general manager of Zip Nola, the world's only swamp zip line, located in LaPlace. Originally from the small Cajun community of Pierre Part, Darren developed a deep appreciation for Louisiana's unique landscape and culture.

After graduating from Southeastern Louisiana University, Darren and his wife, Megan, moved to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, where he built a career in tourism. There, he gained hands-on experience in hospitality and adventure tourism, working on catamaran tours, leading kayak trips through mangrove lagoons, and welcoming visitors from around the world at the Marriott Vacation Club, where he worked for nearly a decade.

Five years ago, Darren returned home to Louisiana and

transitioned into eco-tourism, helping to showcase the swamps he grew up exploring. He began at Zip Nola as a tour guide and worked his way up to general manager. Now, he is taking on a new challenge—helping launch Tree Frogs Adventure Park, a high-flying ropes course in Covington.

With a lifelong passion for Louisiana's wild spaces and a belief in the power of outdoor experiences, Darren is dedicated to sharing the magic of the state's natural beauty. Whether it's soaring through the treetops on a zip line or seeing the swamp from a new perspective, he encourages visitors to step outside their comfort zone and embrace adventure.

Darren and Megan are proud parents of a six-year-old son and a two-year-old daughter.

Addy Reine

The Doctor is in



Dr. Addy Reine is a board-certified internal medicine physician at Ochsner Health Center – River Parish, where she leads her team with compassion and dedication to delivering high-quality, patient-centered care. Since joining Ochsner Health in 2020, she has been a passionate advocate for the health and well-being of the River Parishes community.

Dr. Reine earned her medical degree from Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans in 2017 and completed her residency at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in Baton Rouge. Her commitment to patient care and community health has earned her recognition, including a spot on the River Parishes 20 Under 40 list.

Through her leadership, Dr. Reine continues to ensure that patients receive compassionate and high-quality care, making a lasting impact on the lives of those she serves.

Matthew Jewell

Public Service



Matthew Jewell has served as the sixth President of St. Charles Parish since January 2020. A tenth-generation resident of the parish, he brings a wealth of experience in government and public service to his role.

Before his election, Jewell worked as a congressional staffer in Congressman Steve Scalise's office, serving both in Washington, D.C., and Louisiana, where he most recently held the position of District Director. He also served as a Congressional and Legislative Affairs Advisor for the U.S. Department of Energy under the Trump Administration, managing a portfolio focused on science, renewable energy, and national laboratories.

Jewell earned his bachelor's degree in business

administration with a minor in government from Nicholls State University. He currently represents the Barataria Basin as Governor Jeff Landry's appointee to the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board. In 2023, he served as Chairman of the Regional Planning Commission, a governing board focused on regional transportation, economic development, and environmental matters. He is also an active member and former President of Parishes Advocating for Coastal Endurance (P.A.C.E.), a coalition of more than 20 coastal parishes advocating for coastal restoration.

Jewell lives in Luling with his wife, Cera, and their two children, Aiden and Eloise.

Heidi Poche

A Cut Above



Heidi Poche, a native of Lutcher, has been a dedicated hairstylist for 18 years and is a co-owner of Salon 837 in Gramercy. She balances her career with her roles as a wife and mother, residing in Gramercy with her husband of 14 years, Jason, and their three children, Leia, Jaxon, and Lula Cate.

Beyond her work in the beauty industry, Heidi is deeply involved in her community. She serves on the St. James Parish Economic Development Board, the St. James Parish RPEC, and the Superintendent's Parental Advisory Board. She is also a former President of her local PTO, demonstrating her commitment to education and community growth.

Whether in the salon or in service to her parish, Heidi is dedicated to making a positive impact on the lives of those around her.

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Jude Boynton Faith & Advocacy

At just 20 years old, Jude Boynton is already making a significant impact as an advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities. A native of Garyville, Jude graduated from East St. John High School in 2024 and is currently a student in the Bridge to Independence program at Nicholls State University. Despite facing challenges related to autism, seizure disorder, and tremors, he is dedicated to furthering his education and making a difference in his community.

Jude's advocacy work has led to his appointment by the Governor to the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, where he helps shape policies that support individuals with disabilities. In 2024, he was also a participant in Partners in Policymaking, a leadership training program focused on disability rights. His efforts include speaking before the Senate Finance Committee to advocate for continued funding for the Louisiana Alliance of Postsecondary Inclusive Education. He is also an active member of the local LaCAN chapter, working to improve resources for individuals on disability waivers.

Beyond his advocacy, Jude is deeply involved in his church, where he volunteers with the Children's Church. His passion for creating a more inclusive and supportive community makes him a role model for others.



Meredith Dufrene Designing future Minds

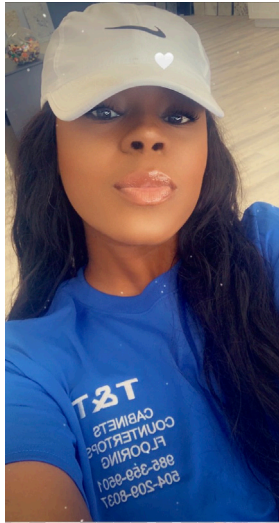


Meredith Dufrene has been a driving force in her community, making significant contributions to local education and cultural traditions. She has played a key role in the school's rising enrollment and serves as the head of the Home and School Association, where she works to strengthen the connection between families and education.

Her impact extends beyond the classroom into the rich Mardi Gras traditions of St. John Parish. As the head of the Queens Committee for the Allovus board, Meredith designs the elaborate dresses for the annual ball, an essential part of the local celebration. She also brings her creativity to Larayo, a recreational baseball and swim organization, by designing materials for various events.

A lifelong resident of LaPlace, Meredith graduated from Tulane University. She lives in LaPlace with her husband, Cain, and their two sons, Cason and Cutler. Her dedication to education, culture, and community makes her a valued leader in St. John Parish.

Terri Janea Lennix



Terri Janea Lennix attributes her success to a mix of faith, frustration, determination, and hard work. A few years ago, she struggled to find a career that fit her personality and recalls seeking advice from her father, Terry Millet. His words—"If you can't find the opportunity, then create one"—became the foundation for her journey as an entrepreneur.

Inspired by this advice, Terri pitched the idea of starting a renovation company to her father, who had just retired from Valero Refinery. Seeing the passion and determination in her eyes, he partnered with her to create T&T Cabinets, Countertops, and Flooring, a business dedicated to providing high-quality renovation services in the River Parishes.

Beyond business, T&T has allowed Terri to grow both as an entrepreneur and as a community leader. The connections she has made through her work have given her a deeper sense of purpose, and she remains grateful to her father for believing in her vision.

Trinity Jacobs



At just 21 years old, Trinity Jacobs is making a lasting impact in St. John Parish and beyond, setting the bar for individuals living with disabilities. A proud advocate, she is deeply involved in her community, always ensuring that her abilities shine.

Jacobs currently holds the title of Very Special Miss Louisiana and is the co-founder of a nonprofit that, in just six months, has already made a difference in hundreds of lives. She has also launched St. John Parish's first scholarship program dedicated to supporting individuals with disabilities pursuing post-secondary education or vocational training. In May 2025, she will award three local scholarships—coinciding with her own graduation that same month.

Her dedication to advocacy has earned her a role representing Region 3 in Partners in Policymaking as a self-advocate. Through her work, Jacobs continues to break barriers, create opportunities, and inspire countless others in her community and across the state.

Lee Roussel



More than just a football coach and Athletic Director at Riverside, Lee Roussel is a mentor, role model, and a dedicated presence at athletic events across all sports. His leadership has made a lasting impact on the school's athletic program.

A standout athlete himself, Roussel was named Southland Conference Lineman of the Year for three consecutive years while at Nicholls State University. His coaching career has included roles at St. Charles Catholic, Lutchter, and Archbishop Rummel, before returning to Nicholls State as an offensive line coach for six years.

Since joining Riverside, Roussel has led his teams to multiple playoff appearances, including a state championship game in the Superdome in 2023 and a third-round playoff run in 2024. His commitment to excellence continues to shape Riverside's athletic success.

Coach Roussel is married to Kelly and is a proud father to Hallie and Parker.



Geoffrey Michel

Geoffrey Michel has served as a local prosecutor at the St. John the Baptist District Attorney's Office for over ten years and is currently a felony prosecutor. In addition to his work in the DA's office, he operates a private law practice in LaPlace, specializing in successions and personal injury.

Michel earned his business degree from Southeastern Louisiana University in 2007 before obtaining his law degree from Loyola University New Orleans in 2010. He resides in LaPlace with his wife, Laura, and son, Jackson.

Beyond his legal career, Michel is an active community supporter, contributing to organizations such as Larayo and St. Joan of Arc Catholic School.

As the senior communications specialist for Entergy's incident response organization, Adrienne Bourgeois manages critical communication strategies before, during, and after severe weather events and crises. Prior to this role, she spent four years overseeing communications and community relations for Entergy's Waterford 3 nuclear power plant in Killona, Louisiana.

Before joining Entergy, Bourgeois served in St. Charles Parish government's Public Information Office for nearly five years. Her work in local communications and emergency response earned several national awards, including a nationally recognized youth hurricane preparedness campaign that remains in use today.

A committed community leader, Bourgeois has served on the boards of organizations such as the United Way of St. Charles marketing board, the River Region Chamber of Commerce communication task force, and Women United. She was also the board president of A Safe Space of St. Charles, a nonprofit

supporting victims of domestic violence. Through Entergy's employee volunteer program, she participates in numerous community service initiatives and mentors young women in the River Parishes pursuing careers in communications.

In addition to her professional and community roles, Bourgeois is a published author and speaker, sharing her personal journey through abuse and single parenting to inspire others. In 2018, she was a top-five finalist for the National Single Mom of the Year Award, but she considers her greatest achievement to be motherhood. She and her daughter enjoy traveling the world and raising awareness for causes such as mental health, childhood abuse, and diversity and inclusion.

Bourgeois holds a bachelor's degree in English and Mass Communications from Nicholls State University and a master's degree in composition from Liberty University. She is currently enrolled in Loyola University's Women's Leadership Academy and is also pursuing a doctorate at Liberty University.



Adrienne Bourgeois



Vinny Braud

Pivotal in the Parish



Vinny Braud has played a pivotal role in economic development, workforce empowerment, and community engagement in the River Parishes. As the Economic Development Coordinator for St. John the Baptist Parish, she has led initiatives to support small businesses, drive tourism, and foster economic growth.

Her extensive academic background includes master's degrees in business administration, leadership, and workforce development. She holds certifications as a SHRM Certified Professional, Master Project Manager, and Certified People Analytics Specialist, demonstrating her expertise in human resources, project management, and workforce strategy.

A proud member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Braud

embraces the values of service, scholarship, and sisterhood. She is actively involved in the Society for Human Resource Management, the American Academy of Project Management and the Project Management Institute. Her recent selection for the River Region Chamber's Leadership River Region cohort highlights her commitment to expanding her network and deepening her impact on the local community. Currently, she is pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), further reinforcing her dedication to lifelong learning.

Outside of her professional achievements, Braud is an avid traveler, a passionate cook, and a dedicated true crime podcast listener. Her diverse interests reflect her curiosity, creativity, and ability to connect with people from all walks of life.



Kyle Monti

Founder and Innovator

Kyle Monti, CEO and founder of Haptech, Inc., is a Louisiana-born innovator pushing the boundaries of haptic simulation technology. A graduate of the University of New Orleans and Hahnville High School, Monti comes from an entrepreneurial background, shaping his approach to problem-solving technology.

Over the past 10 years, Monti has led Haptech's innovations, securing patents that have advanced hyper-realistic gaming and military training environments. His technology is setting a new standard in cost-effective, adaptable, and highly efficient electronic and motor-driven haptic simulation.

Committed to keeping innovation rooted in Louisiana, Monti has built Haptech's headquarters in downtown New Orleans, where he fosters local talent and continues to develop cutting-edge technology that is making a global impact.



Ali Stein

Owner and Operator

At just 25 years old, Ali Stein has already made a significant impact on the River Parishes through her business ventures and community involvement. She is a successful sales representative for AMP – Advanced Marketing & Promotions and Monster Ink Tees, while also serving as the majority owner of PJ's Coffee in LaPlace.

Beyond her business success, Stein is actively involved in economic and cultural development in the region. She is a Board Member for the Economic Development Committee in St. John Parish and a Board Member for the River Parish Community Theatre, helping to support local businesses and the arts.

In addition to her professional achievements, Stein is also a published author. Her poetry book, *Thick Hair – Thin Skin*, showcases her creativity and passion for writing.

With a diverse portfolio of accomplishments, Stein continues to be a driving force in the River Parishes, balancing entrepreneurship, leadership, and artistic expression.



Samantha de Castro



Samantha de Castro has played a pivotal role in St. Charles Parish Government, serving in key leadership positions under the Jewell Administration since 2020. She was the Director of Communications from 2020 to 2024 before being promoted to Deputy Chief Administrative Officer in 2024.

Under her leadership, the Public Information Office significantly expanded its reach, transforming how the parish communicates with residents and businesses. Her expertise was especially vital during the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple natural disasters, and the Louisiana Flood Insurance crisis. From historic hurricanes to devastating tornadoes, de Castro's strategic approach and attention to detail have been an

asset to both St. Charles Parish and the region.

Beyond government service, de Castro is actively involved in regional leadership. She serves as an Advisor on the Greater New Orleans, Inc. NextGen Council and was a Public Relations and Communications subcommittee member for the 2025 Super Bowl Host Committee.

In addition to her professional roles, she is the founder of Satazi, a local business she launched in 2016, offering handcrafted accessories with a unique local touch.

Originally from Southern California, de Castro has called Southeast Louisiana home for nearly 20 years. She is married to Ziggy and is a dedicated mother to her daughter, Taylor.

Micah Cormier drives the strategic development of Port properties, serves as a liaison for business and industry partners, oversees communications and marketing initiatives, and cultivates governmental and community relationships at the Port of South Louisiana.

Previously serving as the Port's Director of Communications, Cormier played a key role in securing consecutive years of tonnage growth and record-breaking revenue. He was instrumental in negotiating long-term leases, including the \$1.35 billion Woodland Biofuels investment to establish the world's largest carbon-negative renewable natural gas plant and ultra-green hydrogen facility. His efforts, in collaboration with federal and state officials, have helped secure millions in funding for Louisiana's infrastructure and economic development.

A Louisiana native, Cormier's passion for public service led him to work with local, state, and federal leaders, including Governor John Bel Edwards, Governor Bobby Jindal, Congressman Troy Carter, and Public Service Commissioner Scott Angelle. His prior experience includes serving as Executive Director of Communications and Technology for St. Charles



Parish Government.

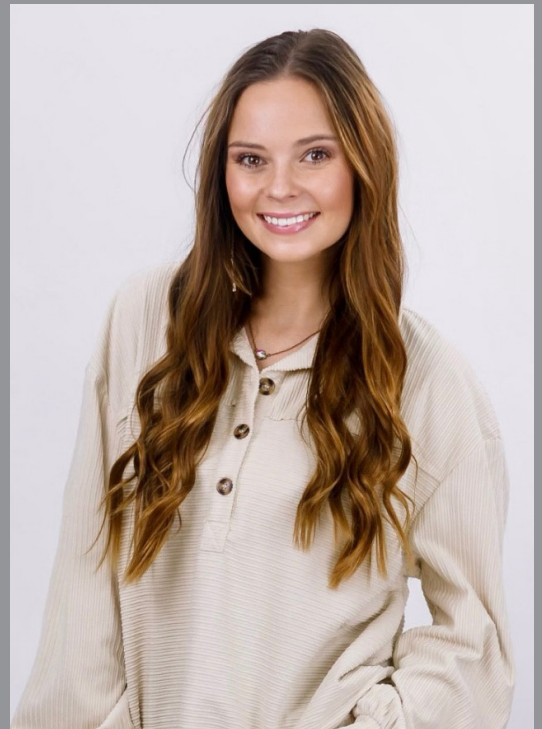
Currently, Cormier is Chairman of the Public Relations Committee for the American Association of Port Authorities, a member of the GNO Inc. NextGen Council, and a New Orleans Regional Leadership Institute Class of 2025 participant. He is also a certified Maritime Port Executive through the International Association of Maritime and Port Executives.

Micah Cormier

Abbey Michel To The Rescue

Abbey Michel, a full-time nursing student at Nicholls State University, is set to graduate in December with plans to work in Labor and Delivery. From a young age, Abbey developed a deep love for animals, leading her to found and serve as President of Bridge to Bridge Animal Rescue in St. James Parish. She actively collaborates with community leaders, including the St. James Parish Sheriff and Parish President, to expand support for animal rescue initiatives.

In addition to her advocacy work, Abbey works at Bead Bloom Boutique when time allows. She enjoys spending time outdoors and cherishes time with family and friends.



Kathrine Ferguson

Putting on a Clinic

Katherine Ferguson is the Regional Director of Clinics for Ochsner's River Region, where she fosters a culture of excellence, collaboration, and patient-centered care.

Leading by example, she inspires her team through strong communication, strategic decision-making, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

With a focus on empathy and innovation, Ferguson ensures the delivery of high-quality healthcare while empowering her team to reach their full potential.



James Singleton

Spreading Gods' Love



James Singleton is a New Iberia, Louisiana, native and a graduate of Pastors' University. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Biblical Studies at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. His mission is to empower and equip Christ-followers while helping others understand God's love through mercy, grace, and compassion.

Pastor James has been happily married for over 10 years to his wife, Elisha, whom he calls the rock of their family. Together, they have three children: Aleenah (16), an aspiring artist with her mother's energy; Le'Veannah (12), a lively spirit who shares her father's joy for making others smile; and Malakhi (5), a bundle of energy who loves to be heard.

Known for his creative thinking, problem-solving, and strong communication skills, Pastor James is a natural leader and team builder. He is also passionate about sports, especially baseball and basketball, and enjoys staying active whenever possible.

SJA celebrates 50 years of carnival ball tradition

Written by Monique Roth
Special to River Parishes Magazine



Junior Court of Krewe Jeanne d'Arc Carnival Ball

St. Joan of Arc Catholic School in LaPlace is steeped in tradition, with one of the longest standing traditions being the school's annual Krewe Jeanne d'Arc Carnival Ball.

This year that tradition turned 50 as Krewe Jeanne d'Arc L courts were presented. The school celebrated the junior court ball on February 14, and the senior court was presented on February 15.

"To my knowledge, the River Region is the only area that hosts a carnival ball for children," SJA

Principal Christine Creppel said. "Keeping this tradition alive is a special way for us to honor Mardi Gras tradition and cultivate a love for participating in Mardi Gras krewes so that as adults our students want to be a part of parading and carnival krewes for generations to come. Hosting a carnival ball each year teaches our students the importance of community events that foster appreciation for art, entertainment, serving the community, and coming together to celebrate each other."

Each year SJA families join together and sign up their children as couples to enter the carnival



Senior Prince Landon Tribe at the Krewe Jeanne d'Arc Carnival Ball

The advertisement for St. James Nursery features a large, vibrant image of red flowers at the top. Below this, the text "Give Your Garden The Love It Needs" is written in a white, serif font. The nursery's name, "ST. JAMES NURSERY", is prominently displayed in a green, serif font within a white rectangular frame. Below the frame, there are three smaller images: a view of the nursery's exterior with various plants and flowers, a close-up of a display of pink and white flowers, and a view of a nursery bed filled with small plants. At the bottom, the address "1501 N. Airline Hwy. • Gramercy" and phone number "225-869-5254" are listed, along with the operating hours "M-Sa 8:30am-5:00pm".

The advertisement for St. John The Baptist Parish features a blue background with a subtle pattern. On the left, the parish's seal is displayed, which includes the text "ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH", "UNION • JUSTICE", "CONFIDENCE", and "LOUISIANA". To the right of the seal, the text "ST. JOHN" is written in a large, white, serif font, with "THE BAPTIST PARISH" in a smaller, white, serif font below it. Further to the right, the name "JACLYN HOTARD" is written in a white, serif font, with "PARISH PRESIDENT" in a smaller, white, serif font below it. In the center, the text "STAY CONNECTED" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below this, a message encourages visitors to visit "sjbparish.com" or like St. John on Facebook and Instagram for the latest weather, hurricanes, emergencies, and more. At the bottom, there are four icons: the parish seal, a computer monitor with the website "WWW.SJBPARISH.GOV" below it, the Instagram logo, and the Facebook logo. To the right of these icons, a television set is shown, with the text "GOVERNMENT ACCESS CHANNEL" above it, and "CHANNEL 15 - RTC", "CHANNEL 99 - UVERSE", and "CHANNEL 191 OR 1098 - COMCAST" listed below. At the bottom right, a bell icon is shown next to the text "WEATHER ALERTS", "TEXT SJPWEATHER TO 888-777", and "FOR UPDATES!".

ball running. Families host fundraisers for their couples, and in the end the couple that brings in the most money reigns as King and Queen. The second highest grossing couple take the title of Prince and Princess, and then maids and dukes are ranked in order according to the most money brought in.

Aside from the presentation of the court, each carnival ball night is filled with entertainment numbers from SJA students, as well as performances by the school's cheerleaders, pep squad, and drumline. Every carnival ball is celebrated with a theme, and this year's theme was aptly dubbed and decorated as a Golden Celebration in marking the tradition's 50th anniversary.

Junior Court Krewe Jeanne d'Arc L was comprised of King Sawyer Edwards and Queen Emerson Cancienne, Prince Canon Kilburn and Princess Alexa Brister, First Duke and Maid Liam Lohfink and Grace Oubre, Second Duke and Maid Jace Monica and Charlie Roth, and Third Duke and Maid Connor Cancienne and Colette Haydel. King Cooper Cancienne and Queen Brooklyn Tregre reigned over Senior Court Krewe Jeanne d'Arc L, with Prince Landon Tribe and Princess Marley Mayeux also highlighted at the ball. Other court members included First Duke and Maid Drei Stein and Layla Cambre, Second Duke and Maid Kayden Levet and Caroline Gaubert, Third Duke and Maid Henry Cazenave and Adeline Michel, Fourth Duke and Maid Frank Juneau and Nadia Dunn, Fifth Duke and Maid Sawyer Foulon and Payton Monica, Sixth Duke and Maid Parker Edwards and Londyn Mayo, Seventh Duke and



Maid Cason Dufrene and Ava Coniglio, Eighth Duke and Maid Brayden Smith and Brooklyn Williams, and 9th Duke and Maid Lucas Jasmin and Mariah Anderson.

This year, SJA invited past Krewe Jeanne d'Arc royalty to a reception before the ball where they were able to reunite with past classmates and teachers. The returning royalty was also announced and presented to the packed gymnasium at the start of this year's event.

"Celebrating 50 years with past royalty and their guests gave us the opportunity to reminisce about how our carnival ball began and how it evolved into what it is today," Creppel said. "It was so touching to see past royalty share stories, greet old friends and teachers, and revel in the spotlight as they were presented to the audience and relive a moment that they may not have thought about in decades."

Emma Vicknair, who is SJA's Director of Curriculum and Academics, coordinates the ball each year. "Every carnival ball is special, because it brings together a new court, entertainment, and families to share in the traditions," she said. "The 50th was a great reminder of the unforgettable memories this event makes for so many and the gift of our amazing school community and alumni who support this event each year. The carnival ball committee puts in numerous hours of planning and decorating, and it all comes together for me in watching our families create memories." Vicknair said that one of her favorite aspects of the ball is that every student has the opportunity to participate in it as either a court member or entertainment.





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A wooden platter filled with various brunch items. In the center are several golden-brown scones and biscuits. To the left is a stack of sausage links. Above the scones is a small white bowl of dark jam with a butter knife. To the right is a small bowl of melted butter. In the bottom right corner are sliced bananas and strawberries. In the top right corner are slices of ham and a lemon wedge. A white pitcher with a red lid is partially visible on the left. The background is a red surface.

Spring Brunch!

It's officially spring, which means we've entered the season with the most reasons to celebrate. Easter, Mother's Day, graduations, bridal and baby showers, to name just a few special events of spring – each one deserves a festive meal or at least, a sizable spread of appetizers and desserts. To feed guests inexpensively and easily on each of these special days, consider inviting guests to a springtime brunch.

Brunch is a wonderful midmorning repast that conveys just the right mood. Unlike breakfast or lunch, both of which require heavier meals, brunch can be simple and light, requiring less food and preparation time. And even better, a brunch table is usually pretty, filled with foods in lively spring colors like asparagus green, salmon pink, raspberry red and omelet yellow.

However, don't get the idea that serving simple food means sacrificing taste. The best food is about taking excellent-quality ingredients and cooking just enough to enhance them or serving delicious purchased food "as is" on your own platters. You can mix good-quality prepared food items like coffee cakes, muffins, scones and salads with a dish or two you've prepared yourself.

If your idea of cooking is assembling, you can arrange a delicious and filling buffet with items purchased from a local caterer, deli or bakery. If you plan to cook everything from scratch, prepare as much as you can in advance, leaving only last-minute heating or plating tasks for the day of the event.

Most simple brunches start with an assorted fruit tray filled with a variety of tossed cut-up or sliced fresh fruits such as pineapple, grapes, strawberries, peaches, nectarines

and raspberries. Any of your favorites can be served along with Creamy Fruit Dip or vanilla-flavored yogurt.

Main dishes may consist of a simple meat dish like meat-filled Brunch Tacos or Cheesy Bacon Turnovers.

Another way to feed a crowd is to assemble an assortment of fragrant breads like mini cinnamon rolls, muffins, bagels, biscuits and slices of gourmet breads in a variety of flavors. One of my favorite brunches featured a biscuit charcuterie board offering a variety of jellies, fruit spreads, meat and fruit.

A perfect partner to the bread is a platter of artisan cheeses. Include ones with different origins, textures and flavor profiles, along with an assortment of crackers and spicy mustards.

A beverage like Berry Good Iced Tea provides a special touch, especially when served in fancy wine or champagne glasses and topped off with a fresh berry or two.

Try these delicious brunch recipes that are perfect for any springtime celebration:

Berry Good Iced Tea

6 tea bags (wild berry or other berry flavor)
3 cups boiling water
Pineapple-orange-flavored or orange-flavored soft drink mix (1/2 of 1.2 ounce can or 1/4 of 1.5-ounce can)
5 cups cold water
Ice cubes

Place tea bags in a 2-quart

clear glass container. Pour boiling water over tea bags. Cover and let stand about 3 minutes. Remove tea bags; discard. Add drink mix, stirring to dissolve. Add cold water; stir. Serve over ice cubes.

Brunch Tacos

Nonstick cooking spray
1/2 cup chopped celery
1/2 cup chopped green sweet pepper
1 cup chopped cooked ham
1 8-ounce can crushed pineapple (juice pack), well drained, or
1/4 cup finely chopped apple
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese (4 ounces)
8 to 10 6-inch whole wheat or plain flour tortillas, warmed

Lightly coat a small nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Heat skillet over medium heat. Cook celery and sweet pepper in hot skillet until tender, stirring occasionally. Stir in ham and pineapple. Cook and stir until heated through. Remove from heat. Stir in cheese.

Spoon about 1/4 cup filling in the center of each warmed tortilla. Roll up tortillas. To warm: Wrap tortillas tightly in foil. Heat in a 350-degree oven about 10 minutes or until heated through.

Cheesy Bacon Turnovers

10-ounce package refrigerated pizza dough
2 tablespoons orange marmalade
1/4 cup chopped Canadian-style bacon or cooked ham

1/4 cup shredded Swiss cheese (3 ounces)
1/4 cup thinly sliced green onions
Freshly ground black pepper
1/8 cup of milk
Poppy seeds and/or sesame seeds (optional)

Line a baking sheet with foil; lightly spray foil with cooking spray. Set aside. Unroll pizza dough onto a lightly floured surface. Roll dough into a 12-inch square. Spread orange marmalade evenly over dough. Cut dough into nine 4-inch squares.

For filling, in a medium bowl stir together bacon, cheese, and green onions. Place about 3 tablespoons filling on each dough square. Sprinkle each lightly with pepper. Fold one corner of each dough square over filling to opposite corner. Use the tines of a fork to press edges to seal. Prick tops of turnovers with the fork.

Place turnovers on prepared baking sheet. Brush with milk and sprinkle with poppy seeds and/or sesame seeds (optional). Bake in a 400-degree oven for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden (filling will leak out slightly). Serve warm.

By Kara Kimbrough
Special to River Parishes Magazine

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