

Local chefs take cue from New Orleans for Mardi Gras

By KATHIE RALEIGH

Lifestyle Editor

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WOONSOCKET — It takes more than colored beads and costumes the make a Mardi Gras celebration. You need some jambalaya, ribs and a dash of Cajun seasoning.

That's just a sample of the New Orleans-inspired cuisine that will be served Feb. 7 as Woonsocket hosts its Mardi Gras of the North.

The festivities will take place at three sites in the city and a fourth in Bellingham, and dinner will be served from 6 to 8 p.m. at each site. Patrons choose one place to eat, but starting at 8 p.m. they may travel by free shuttle among all four sites. An admission button, which costs \$28, covers dinner and all the music and dancing you can handle.

■ If its jambalaya you want, make your dinner reservations at the CYO

Center, Federal Street. Russell Morin will cater the buffet which includes tossed salad with a French mustard dressing mini corn muffins and Parisienne bread, seafood jambalaya, baked ham, white rice pilaf, meat pie, roasted chicken, Red Bliss potatoes with caramelized onions, and a zucchini and yellow squash casserole.

Dessert will be New Orleans bread pudding, served with coffee, tea and herbal teas.

■ The Catering Collaborative will hold forth at the Holiday Inn Express, Fortin Drive, with a buffet of wild mixed greens with herb vinaigrette dressing, crisp French bread and assorted rolls, roasted chicken thighs with a French Dijon and honey glaze, New Orleans southern-roasted pork loin with wild mushroom demiglace, fresh New England cod fillets topped with Cajun-seasoned bread crumbs, long grain and wild rice pilaf with fresh herbs and butter, and roasted seasoned Red

Bliss potatoes.

If you have room for dessert, it's French Quarter-style warm bread pudding with a honey-cinnamon whipped cream, coffee and herbal teas.

■ The Coachmen's Lodge, 273 Wrentham Road, Bellingham, will serve its own specialties. Dinner will start with a tossed salad with house dressing and French Quarter rolls. Then comes the chicken New Orleans with peppers and onions in a wine sauce, scrod Creole with peppers and onions in a light tomato sauce, dirty rice, cheese tortellini in a light cream sauce with cracked peppercorns and scallions.

Dessert will be Bourbon Street bread pudding with a bourbon-style sauce.

■ At the Elks Hall, 380 Social St., Uncle Ronnie's Fine Catering of Manville will focus on barbecue. There will be barbecued baby back ribs, barbecued chicken, Uncle

Ronnie's famous oven-roasted potatoes, vegetables and a tossed salad with homemade dressing.

Patrons will sample several desserts from the dessert bar, accompanied by coffee and tea.

Revelers at the CYO Center can dance off the calories to the music of the Slippery Sneakers Zydeco Band and the Roy Carrier Zydeco Band of Louisiana. At the Holiday Inn Express, the Ray Gonzalez Orquesta, an 11-piece Latin band, will entertain.

The Regents of New York will make their third appearance at this year's Mardi Gras, playing at the Coachmen's Lodge. Magnolia, a local Cajun group, and the Steve Lefleur Cajun Band of Louisiana will perform at the Elks Club.

The evening events are the heart of the Mardi Gras celebration, but there also will be a children's ball on Feb. 7 from 1 to 3 p.m. at St. Ann Arts and Cultural Center,

Cumberland Street. Activities include a costume contest, prizes, food and games. The event is open to the public; admission is \$2.

The precursor to it all is the Queen's Coronation this Sunday from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Elks Hall. The queen and two princesses will be announced, chosen on the basis of the number of fund-raising tickets they have sold. Admission of \$10 includes entertainment, refreshments, a costume contest (the theme is Country Western), raffles and door prizes.

Tickets for the coronation are on sale at radio stations WOON at One Social Street, and WNRI on Diamond Hill Road, at Harlequins Costumes on Main Street, or by calling Sue Tessier MacKenzie at (401) 762-6564.

Admission buttons for the Mardi Gras balls are \$28 in advance by calling (401) 762-9072 or \$30 at the door.