

Mardi Gras menu inspired by Louisiana cuisine

WOONSOCKET — Cajun food, the authentic kind that smacks of Louisiana, is tough to find around New England, but there will be plenty served up at the 14th annual Mardi Gras on Feb. 2 at the CYO Center, Federal Street, sponsored by the Northern Rhode Island Council of the Arts.

Fine Catering by Russell Morin, based in Attleboro, promises a buffet featuring Cajun-styled dishes like as Chicken Big Mamou, Corn Maque Choux, meat pie and jambalaya.

The buffet will be served from 6:30 to 8 p.m., opening a night of festivities.

Participants are encouraged to attend in Mardi Gras costume; prizes will be awarded. But make sure your costume is comfortable enough to dance up a storm because two hot Zydeco bands will be performing.

Tickets for the event are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, and can be obtained by calling Lorraine Cloutier at (401) 762-9072.

Mardi Gras enthusiasts are urged to get their tickets as soon as possible. Unlike previous years, when the Mardi Gras was offered at several sites in Woonsocket, this year the event will be held only at the CYO Center, and the number of tickets is limited, stressed Mariana Hadady of the arts council, chairwoman

of the 2008 Mardi Gras.

"Last year, there were quite a number of people who were left out because they didn't buy their tickets until the very last minute, and we could not accommodate everyone," Hadady said.

This year's Mardi Gras menu, with explanations where needed, includes:

Mixed green salad with Louisiana French mustard vinaigrette; crusty French bread and whipped butter; Bayou meat pie, which is a traditional meat pie and a Morin catering specialty; Chicken Big Mamou on Pasta, which is peppers, onions, okra, chicken and sauce served on pasta.

Also on the menu are Tasso and Andouille Jambalaya, which is Louisiana ham and sausage served with rice; Corn Maque Choux, made with corn, onions, bell peppers, spices and tomato sauce; New Orleans bread pudding with lemon sauce and Chantilly cream; and French roast coffee.

Loosely based on the famous Mardi Gras celebrations of New Orleans, NRICA's Mardi Gras of the North has been held every year since 1995 and has attracted party-goers from all over New England, especially those devoted to Cajun food and Zydeco music.

This year's headliner band is Corey "Lil Pop" Ledet & The

Zydeco Band of Louisiana, a contemporary Cajun, Creole and Zydeco band. In 2007, Ledet released a new CD, "Don't Shut Me Out." Corey and his band will play from 9 p.m. to midnight.

And, as the opening act, coming back to the Mardi Gras by popular demand will be Slippery Sneakers, a high-energy Zydeco dance band from Rhode Island with a strong local and New England following. Slippery Sneakers will perform from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Doors will open at 6 p.m. and the celebrating will continue until midnight.

The traditional mystery monarch, King Jace, will be unmasked, and WNRI radio talk show host Jeff Gamache will be master of ceremonies.

Continuing another NRICA tradition, the Mardi Gras Children's Ball & Party will be held the same day, Feb. 2, at the Stadium Theatre, 28 Monument Square.

"Shrek The Third" will be shown at 2 p.m. Doors will open at 1:15 p.m. A costume parade and contest will take place at 1:45 p.m. and the winners will be announced after the movie. Children through age 12 are eligible to win. Admission is \$2. The children's ball is sponsored by USJB Catholic Family Life Insurance of Woonsocket.

For details, visit www.nrca.org.