'Cajun Bon Vivants' Set For Gala Crawfish Festival

'Cajun' bon vivants from Breaux Bridge are preparing for their biggest, most gala celebration ever, as the time approaches for the 1968 Crawfish Festival.

Not to be out-done by past festivities, the Louisiana Crawfish Festival Association plans to recreate the flamboyant era of the Gay Nineties and depict the parallel of that period to the present decade in affluence, laissez-faire and exuberance.

This most unique and gay festival takes its roots from the Bayou Teche town's Centennial Celebration of 1959, when by legislative decree, Breaux Bridge was proclaimed "La Capitale Mondiale Des Ecrevisses," or Crawfish Capital of the World.

The celebration, which heralds the arrival of crawfish season, is scheduled for May 3-5, and during the three days of carnival-type merriment, M'sieu le crawfish will reign supreme over the loyal subjects of his Acadian realm... earning all the adulation accorded a "folk-hero."

Three schoolgrounds will be available for campers during the weekend of the festival, and trailers and campers are expected to take advantage of the campsites. A cooking bee will get activities under way at 2 p.m. Friday, May 3. This event always produces imaginative, delectable dishes.

A religious mass, two "fais-do-dos" (French street dances) and a crawfish-eating contest is determined not only by the quantity consumed but also by the dexterity with which he obtains the meat from the tasty crustaceans. Current titleholder is Andrew Thevenet, a local gourmand who has devoured 33 1/2 pounds at one sitting.

And... for the piece de resistance, preliminary crawfish races will kick off Saturday activities at 9 a.m., followed by bingo games, a horse-and-buggy parade, an afternoon parade, a spectacular bayou parade, a boisterous "fais-do-do" and an elegant coronation ball.

Sunday's schedule begins with the finals in the crawfish races at 10:30 a.m. However, it will be an empty victory for the winner. The little shell creatures are skillfully trained and proudly display the colorful silks of their owners, but the one who reaches the finish line first will only be rewarded by mounting and preservation for posterity.

Other delightful entertainment planned for the final day includes bingo games, parachute jumps, an archery exhibition, a mammoth crawfish dinner, an "old settler" costume contest and the enchanting Queen's Parade, featuring a court of love.