Welcome to The Fall Dewey Balba Cajun and Creole Heritage Week November 2-8, 2003 Chicot State Park

Louisiana Folk Roots: It’s coming to Chicot Park

By CAROLINE HERBERT

Local residents have a great opportunity right in their back yard with the first Fall Dewey Balba Cajun/Creole Heritage Week at Chicot State Park November 2-8. Residents can discover their heritage route by attending either a portion of the day camps, nightly dances or the Roots Heritage Day on Saturday, November 8. There are several reasons why this week will be appealing to local residents.

They include learning more about their heritage, having an opportunity to share a part of yourself with your children and grandchildren, and it will provide an avenue for one to experience their heritage through the eyes of a visitor.

Louisiana Folk Roots is a nonprofit organization dedicated to nurturing, encouraging, sharing and preserving traditional Louisiana folk culture, with an emphasis on Cajun and Creole heritage, through the teaching and presentation of the various types of related educational activities. This fall event is going to bring visitors from Sweden, Holland, Canada, Germany and several points in the United States including Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, South Carolina, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Texas, California, Washington. Many visitors from several communities in Louisiana will also be attending the series.

Think about it: If you've ever traveled or lived outside of Louisiana, you have a knowledge of how special this culture is to others. Louisiana natives often have heard the phrases, "they something again, I love the way you talk," or "Is it true you eat anything?"

Like her father, Christine Balba Powell, Louisiana Folk Roots executive director, she has a goal that involves preserving the rich culture here in Louisiana as well as sharing it with others. Powell's father, the renowned Cajun fiddler Dewey Balba, was often described as this state's folklorist and cultural ambassador. He once said, "A place to call your own, a place to call your family, and a place to know your roots." As a result, the Balba family provided the inspiration for the Balba Cajun and Creole Heritage Weeks.

Christine Balba Powell

Masters of Cajun and Creole prepare to share their knowledge

Along with receiving beginning to advanced instruction, students have ample opportunity for dancing with daily featured artists selected not only for their skill but also for their diverse interpretations of traditional dance forms. Both state parks, Chicot and Lake Fausse, are located in lyrical settings, and are perfect for quieting minds and providing a great opportunity to dance. Both parks are surrounded by a full kitchen. There are also many a la carte available for campers to prepare food and electricity. Primitive campers and groups are also available.

The Dewey Balba Cajun and Creole Heritage Weeks culminate in a full day of dances with music provided by top local bands and a range of workshops in Cajun and Creole music, crafts and culture. Held on Saturday, these activities are open to the public and include a youth program, offering a taste of the weeklong event to local and visitors of all ages. At the Dewey Balba Cajun and Creole Heritage Weeks, education, creativity, friendship, inspiration and old-fashioned good times combine to create a powerful and unforgettable experience. Please make plans to join us today!

The Masters Members of the full-time staff at this fall program include the following:

- Jason Frey will be teaching beginning accordion as well as playing for the Wednesday night dance and teaching an afternoon intermediate accordion workshop. Besides the accordion, Frey is a great fiddler.

- At the start of the 21st century, Frey decided to collaborate with Travis Matte on a CD that takes listeners back to a style of front porch playing which relies on the natural beauty of Cajun music. The work of Frey and Matte has not gone unrecognized. The CD received the Cajun French Music Association's Le Cajun Award as Best First Recording of the Year for 2000 and was also nominated for the Best Album/Cd of the Year Award. Frey, who previously played fiddler with Kenneth Thibodaux and Cajun Dance on an award-winning CD, received a nomination asAccordionist of the Year. "Avent c'est stop tard" ("Below It's Too Late"), a song written by Matte and Frey and performed on the CD, was nominated for the "Song of the Year Award. Other original songs on the CD by Matte and Frey include "Va atropsi man" and "La Maitre de la rue de Crowley." Frey also wrote an instrumental, "Two Step de Rougemont" which was released.

- Jeffery Bruseard will be teaching Zydeco accordion and performing with Zydeco Force. He is the son of the late Dalmion Bruseard, who led the Lafayette Playboys. He performs with Zydeco Force.

- Steve Riley is teaching intermediate accordion and performing with Steve Riley and the Mamou Playboys.

- Riley grew up in the prairie town of Mamou where French is spoken on the street, the national holiday is Marti Gras, and a neighborhood is one without a school or accordion player. He plays a single row diatonic instrument made by his cousin, former accordionist Marc Payve. Riley concentrated on Steve Riley's intricate style and the music of the Balba Brothers. At age 11, his mother informed him that he could not have a fiddle. Under the guidance of his father and grandfather, he grew as a performer and learning hundreds of French songs to sing them in Balba's original, harken-so-good style. He made his way to the fiddle.

- Schwarrow will be teaching fiddle. From scratch, fiddle player students will begin basic fiddling workshop and continue with the Saturday Balba Styles workshop.

- In 1984, at the age of 11, Schwarrow was apprenticed to See Masters, Page 8
Dezzy Balfa to learn Cajun music. In 1992 he became a powerful presence in the band and with the Mamou Playboys providing his solid bass guitar foundation, and ever-growing skill, which was key for his twin fiddle performances. Also notable were his soaring three-octave tenor voice, which he displayed as his songwriting abilities.

In 1999 he left the band to attend business school and today he is in Austin as the business manager for the band Adelep at the Wheel.

"Courtney Grau will be teaching Beginning Fiddle and vocals and triangle workshop as well as performing with Balfa Toujours and conducting a Saturday Balfa Fiddle Styles workshop.

Grau, great-nephew of the well-known Balfa Brethren, is one of the most talented of the younger generation of Cajun musicians in Louisiana. Grau was born in 1992 and began playing the fiddle in the early 1990s. His soon to be a long-term goal and his current activity is the development and his eventual singing style earned him the chance to record on the Grammy-winning recording for Rounder Records at the age of 16. He is also a life-long member of the Cajun tradition, having had a musical influence and power that belief he has. He has since become a force with family members, Balfa Toujours, with whom he has created the Australian, Europe, and Hong Kong.

"Kevin Wimmer will be teaching Advanced Fiddle, teaching with Balfa Toujours, teaching an advanced fiddle workshop, an intermediate workshop, and conducting an advanced-level Fiddle Styles workshop.

Wimmer lead fiddler in Balfa Toujours has been nothing less than a fiddling legend since he first heard Dewey Balfa in 1984. He fell in love with the instrument and, through his extended stays with Dewey, he quickly became a master of it. Wimmer has since gone on to teach Cajun fiddle at workshops across the United States and Europe. Wimmer is known throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe with a fiddle-tapping, high-sounding brand of music that makes sitting still a chore. He has performed with some of the finest fiddlers in the United States, and has performed with some of the finest fiddlers in the United States. Wimmer is known as a fiddle player and music teacher.

Cajun music is a treasure that Wimmer has been teaching and spreading throughout his career. He has taught the Cajun music style to some of the finest fiddlers in the United States.

"Loft to right, Kevin Wimmer, Peter Schwartz, and Cameron Hargreave are performing together.

Kevin Wimmer was lead fiddler in Balfa Toujours has been teaching and spreading Cajun music for many years. He has also taught thousands of fiddle students in his career.

Continued From Page 1
Montgomerys are from Lake Charles. They will be on board to teach the Cowboy Jitterbug, the dance that’s taking local dancehalls by storm. Like many of Louisiana’s cultural traditions, we don’t know exactly how, where or when this new style originated. Groups of striking young men and women from the Lake Charles area, showed off their newfound leg strength and became the center of attention at local dances. Now, like Zddeco in recent years, these steps are quickly becoming favorites among both locals and visitors from out of state.

"Mona Wilson will be teaching Zydeco Dance. She is at the forefront of the recent craze in teaching Zydeco dance. She grew up in Cuba, learning the style as a youngster by dancing on the feet of her elders. She started teaching the older ways of dancing, the respectfulness and subtlety that are part of the tradition, and went on to use that foundation to create something all her own. She has brought her unique style around the country and made a dance video that was very well received. Her career has led her further to do instruction.

To Louisiana Folk Roots

Fall Dewey Balfa Cajun & Creole Heritage Week

Your Heritage is Our Heritage...
Marc and Ann Savoy will be performing

Don Fontenot and Les Amis de la Louisiane, left, will take the stage. On the right, a participant in the spring program learns to play the triangle.

LOOK WHO'S COMING TO CHICOT PARK • Monte Ardon, Jeff, and Geneva Delesonze, right, will be at this year's event.

MASTERS

tion on the Zydeco cruises that have become increasingly popular in the last few years. She has also developed a way of combining services and Zydeco dance to create something she calls "Zydeoléars." This innovative handling of her tradition has been very well received in the area and around the country. She is known not only as one of the best dancers in Louisiana, but also as one of the few teachers who can really get the style across to her students.

• Joey Barz will be teaching Zydeco Dance. Barz is a perfect compliment, both in dancing and instruction, to his partner, Mona Wilson. He grew up dancing and listening to Creole music at home and in the dancehalls of Louisiana. He is related to members of the classic group, the Lawill Playboys, who maintained a traditional and rhythmically captivating style during an era when others began to slick up the style. As a result, he learned, as Mona did, to stick to the basics before you get "fancy." After the time he took to get the dance into his system, Joey increased his dance moves, and he quickly became known as one of the best dancers in the area. Since that time, he and Mona have gone on to teach Zydeco dance around the country. Their classes have always met rave reviews and students have learned the real thing as a result of their efforts.

GUITAR TO BE RAFFLED • Christine Balza, Powell, left, and Gilbert "Winky" Aucoin, right, hold a guitar which will be raffled off during the Louisiana Folk Fests special at Chicot Park. For a chance to win this guitar call Winky at 363-2193. (Gazette photo by Carissa Hebert)