Acadian Village sets
Fête des Acadiens

Plans are underway for the 12th annual Fête des Acadiens (Festival of the Acadians), August 12, at Acadian Village in Lafayette.

A.J. Letellier, Village director, said that this year's festival will honor the late Riven Reed, the Mamanuska educator, author and radio announcer.

"He was truly a catalyst in the movement to preserve our Cajun way of life," and Pascal Fuselier, a lifelong friend of Reed and co-founder of the Ville Platte Gazette and the Mamanuska Acadian Press.

Fuselier said that Reed was born in the community of Derald, southeast of Mamou, in 1917. He graduated from De La Salle High School in Lafayette and majored in English in college.

"We were together as Orphans during World War II," Fuselier said.

After the war, Reed returned to Mamou, where he taught at Mamou High School for 35 years.

Fuselier said that Reed's concern for the gradual disappearance of Cajun culture prompted him and Mamou attorney Paul Ture Sr., also deceased, to revive the Courir de Mardi Gras in 1955.

Other communities followed, and today the unique event is attended by tourists from around the world.

In the early 1960s, Reed began broadcasting a Saturday morning French music program on KEUN radio. After trying different locations, Reed started doing his show at Fred's Lounge in Mamou. The program continues today but is now broadcast by KVPK in Ville Platte.

Fuselier said that Reed and Ture brought Cajun music to the Newport Folk Festival in 1963. Cajun musicians Gladie Theriot and, on accordion, Gene Lejeune on fiddle, and Dewey Ball on guitar received a standing ovation.

In 1986, Reed and Ture were recipients of the prestigious Burl Ives Award for their encouragement in preserving Cajun music and culture. Fuselier said that Reed's book, "La vie en rondeau," first book written in Cajun French, was published in New York.

"In 1986, Reed's book, 'La vie en rondeau,' was published in New York. Reed also received a few recordings of Cajun folk music," Fuselier said.

The festivities at Acadian Village begin at 6 p.m. with a French meal in the little chapel. Letellier said there will be a joke-telling contest and Acadian music by Ladue Carville. The event is open to the public and admission is free. Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

For more information call Acadian Village at 931-2244.