Get a leg up on La Fête Nationale des Acadiens

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Do not be confused. There is nothing wrong with your calendar.

La Fête Nationale des Acadiens — the National Day of Acadians — is Aug. 15. It has been that way since 1881.

Come Sunday, however, Acadian Culture Day will be celebrated at Vermilionville. It's free and everything.

There will be music in the Performance Center with The Huval Family Band and Robert Jardell; a Tintamarre parade, a Cajun Jam, boat tours and canoeing, a sharing circle on the birth of Cajun culture, film showings with Drew Landry, visual art by Robert Daford, a performance of Warren Perrin’s “Acadie à la Louisiane,” cooking demos with Poupard’s Kyle Robinson, kids’ crafts and games and demonstrations such as trapping, fiddle making and more.

“Vermilionville’s Acadian Culture Day always takes place on a Sunday,” according to Erin Segura, public relations and marketing coordinator at Vermilionville. “So we figured it would be better to start getting people in the

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spire for le 15 août a week early rather than a day late.”

And not only that, Segura said the day is part of a series that allows Vermilionville to focus on the three cultures in the area: Acadian, Creole and Native Americans.

“It’s great for bringing the community together,” Segura said. “It serves as an open forum for ideas and discussion, and it’s a way to sort of ‘check in’ on the culture yearly to see the different ways it progresses and evolves.”

Segura said she noticed at this year’s Creole Culture Day held in June just how many people were wearing Creole-themed clothing items like hats with the flag and family name; shirts that read “I’m Creole” and “ça fait chaud.”

“It’s interesting to see how being part of a French speaking culture was something that people once hid, and now we’re literally ‘wearing it on our sleeves,’” she said. “I’m looking forward to seeing the energy that people bring out for Acadian Culture Day.”

Acadian Culture Day theme is fraternal folklore and who but Barry Jean Ancelet comes to mind for the Acadian Cultural Preservation Award.

“Although he’s officially retiring from the University of Louisiana (at Lafayette) this year after more than 40 years of research on Louisiana’s indigenous cultures, anyone who knows him knows that he’s not calling it quits,” Segura said. “Barry’s work is timeless. He’s constantly digging up these old, sometimes unheard of traditions and stories, but making them relevant, interesting and important to inspire the young generation.”

Segura said Ancelet has made many contributions to the area, “but the creation of Festivals Acadiens et Créoles really stands out,” she said. “To think that someone so young had the forethought to create an event like that is impressive, but the fact that he’s stuck with it all this time is what’s really remarkable.”

“I’d imagine most people would have gotten the ball rolling and put in a few years’ work before passing it off onto someone else to take care of,” she said. “But, Barry’s heart and soul is in the festival — he’s not just sitting back and taking credit, he’s there doing the dirty work.”

The music, too, was chosen for similar reasons as Ancelet.

“Aside from being hugely talented as musicians, the Huval Family Band was an obvious choice for this day because they embody the theme of fraternal folklore,” said Segura. “The band is composed of brothers who grew up steeped in Cajun culture, raised by the late Doc Huval, a well-known and loved figure in the St. Martin Parish area, father to 14 children and grandfather to 19.

10-10:15 a.m. New signage unveiling and presentation (Pavilion, across from the Performance Center)
10-11 a.m. Tintamarre Parade (From the Chapel to the Performance Center)
10 a.m.-4 p.m. Community Booths: CODOFIL, Richard Guidry Fondation, Grand Revel Acadien, Acadian Memorial (In front of the Performance Center)
10 a.m.-5 p.m. Films by Drew Landry: “Pie Day” and “Solution to Pollution” (Conference Room), visual art by Philip Gould (Maison des Cultures), trapping demonstrations (grassy area), wood carving and fiddle-making demonstrations (Mouton), accordion making and Courir de Mardi Gras costumes (Boucvalt), Healer’s Garden Tours (Acadienne), Broussard House Tours
10:30 a.m. Boat Tour (Boat Dock)
10:50 a.m.-11:45 a.m. Award Ceremony and Interview with 2015 Honoree Dr. Barry Jean Ancelet (Performance Center)
11 a.m.-3 p.m. Canoeing (Chapel) and kids’ crafts: rag dolls, flag finger painting, porch streamers (Chapel)
11:30 a.m. Boat Tour (Boat Dock)
11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Warren Perrin’s Acadie à la Louisiane (Schoolhouse)
12:1-30 p.m. Croque monsieur and other béchamel dishes cooking demonstration with Kyle Robinson (Cooking School)
12:30-2:30 p.m. Robert Jardell (Performance Center)
1-2 p.m. Birth of Cajun Culture Sharing Circle (Schoolhouse)
1-4 p.m. Cajun Jam with Jimmy Breaux (Forge)
1:30 p.m. Boat Tour (Boat Dock)
2-3:30 p.m. Tarts and pies/with local fruits cooking demonstration with Patrick Poupart (Cooking School)
2:30 p.m. Boat Tour (Boat Dock)
3-5 p.m. Huval Family Band (Performance Center)
3:30 p.m. Boat Tour (Boat Dock)
3:30 p.m. Boat Tour (Boat Dock)