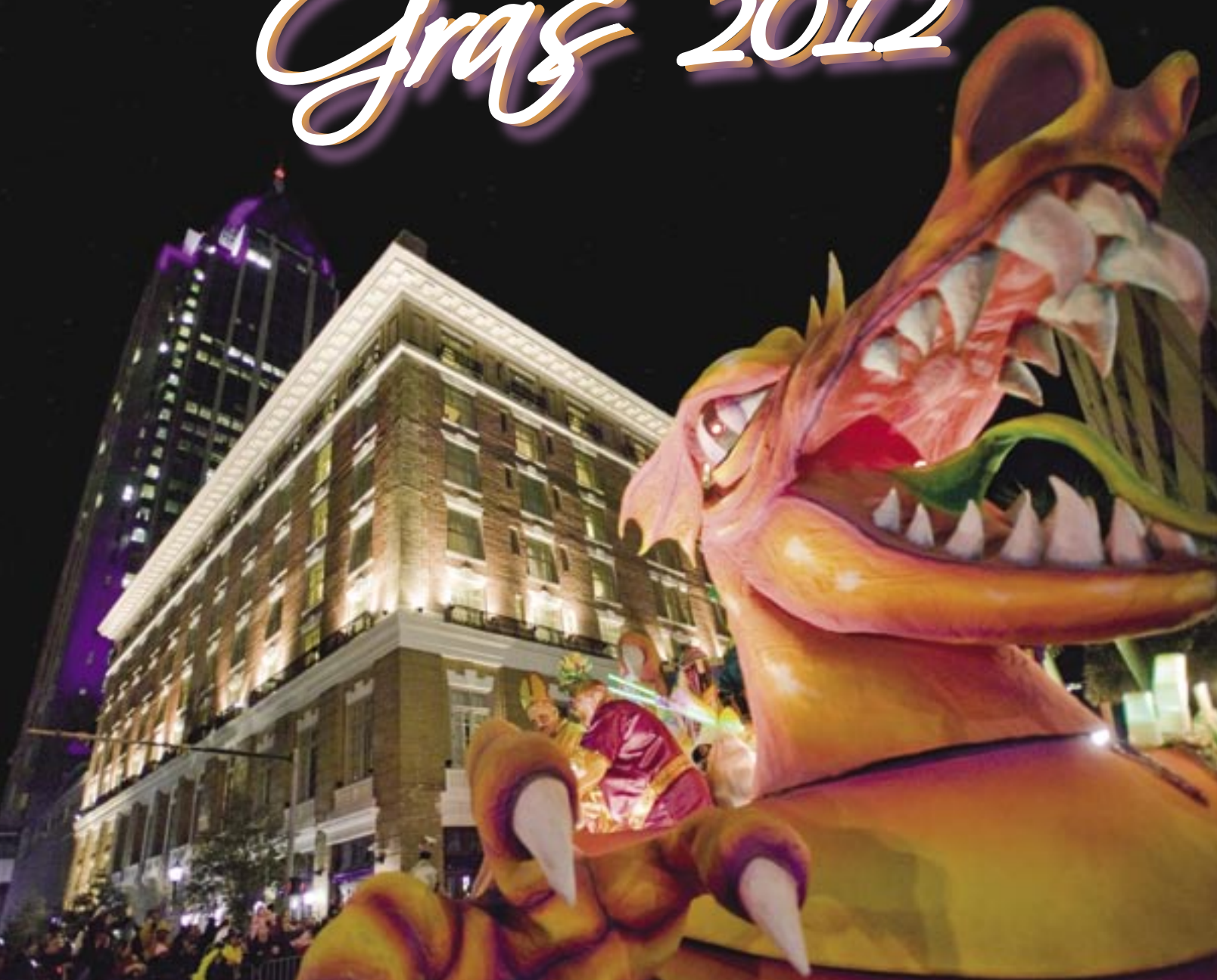


ALABAMA  
**coast**

*Mardi*  
*Gras 2012*



Your Guide to the Biggest Celebration on the Coast



Mardi Gras on the Alabama Coast is fun for the whole family

Welcome to Mobile – the Mother of Mystics. Despite urban legends to the contrary, every Mobilian can tell you with impunity the truth about how Mardi Gras came to be celebrated in its festive North American manner. Of course, Mobile is the Mother of Mardi Gras here; case closed, you'll hear.

Well, I'm not going weigh in (there's a rather complete timeline of our history inside this issue.) Besides, we don't really have a problem with our cousins' version of our family celebration. We're quite comfortable welcoming those who visit, sharing with all our Alabama Coast hospitality.

After all, Mardi Gras in Mobile is truly a family celebration. The kids will have a great time as they are showered with candy, doubloons, stuffed animals, beads and – of course – Moon Pies. Parents and “kids of all ages” will enjoy the pageantry of the parades, the enthusiasm of the marching bands and will likely become caught up in the “battle for beads.” Everyone becomes immersed in the cacophony of sights and sounds that never seem to end. Frankly, it's just plain fun!

You'll also find that the spirit of Mardi Gras extends well beyond the parade routes. It's deep in the hearts and souls of us all. Respect for tradition, for family, for our values is, to borrow a phrase, “the fabric of our lives” down here. During this season of frivolity, we shake off a bit of the stresses of everyday life. We remember to smile, to laugh, and to not take ourselves or life too seriously. We remember funny stories of past Mardi Gras, renew our personal family traditions and start new ones. You'll find that we love Mardi Gras for reasons too simple and too complex to clearly explain. Most importantly, we love sharing Mardi Gras with you. Thank you for coming to play with us. Please make yourself at home because you're family too! Of course, we want you to be careful. A party this big can be a bit daunting at times. Keep an eye on the kids, pace yourselves and don't forget to take a time-out from Mardi Gras to experience some of the rest of what Alabama Coast has to offer. And as our favorite cousins to the west like to say: “Laissez les bon temps rouller!”

David Calametti



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# A Select Mardi Gras History Timeline



**1699** Pierre Le Moyne declares his camp "Pointe du Mardi Gras" (Mardi Gras Point), as Alabama's first European settlers entered the Mississippi/Alabama/Louisiana Delta Gulf Coast Region. This is considered the first U.S. celebration of Mardi Gras.

**1704** Mobile is formally made the capital of the French province of Louisiana. Masque De La Mobile celebrated until 1709. Societé de Saint Louise is founded by French soldiers at Fort Louis de la Mobile. Mardi Gras begins to become the holiday for French colonists to remember their homeland roots.

**1710** The Societé de Saint Louis hold their first "boeuf gras" (fatted ox) celebration on

Tuesday. Formation of the Boeuf Gras Society in Mobile, which held its first parade in 1711.

**1793** Mobile hosts a parade on "Twelfth Night", held by the Spanish Mystics.

**1835** Newspapers report Mobile's Cowbellion de Rakin Society parading through the streets of New Orleans. This may have been the first parade in New Orleans. It is certainly the earliest written reference.

**1840** The "Cowbellions" present their first tableau pageant – based on mythological themes with floats, bands and horses. It is the first time a theme is used as a guide to the set up and decoration of a New Year pageant.

**1842** A group of young upstarts branches out to form the Strikers Independent Society, Mobile's second Mystic Organization.

**1852** The Cowbellions stage their first ball. As other mystic societies form, the Carnival season is gradually expanded from only New Year's to include Mardi Gras parades.

**1857** A group of Cowbellions and Strikers help 13 New Orleanians form the Krewe of Comus, incidentally coining the word "Krewe."

**1865** Cowbellions hold their last parade.

**1866** Joe Cain appears as fictional Slacabamorinico, chief of the Chickasaw from Wragg Swamp, riding a coal wagon through the streets on Shrove Tuesday. Beginning of the modern era of Mardi Gras in Mobile. Beginning with daytime activities on Fat Tuesday, the carnival season in Mobile has grown through the years.

**1868** The Infant Mystics' first parade.

**1883** Mobile's renowned Excelsior Band is formed and begins to follow Slacabamorinico (Old Slac for short) on his annual processions.

**1884** The Comic Cowboys, a satirical society, presents its first parade.

**1890** The first women's Mystic Society "Mobile Women Mystics," holds its first Mardi Gras Ball.

**1893** Mobile's first electric streetcar begins operation. Ethel Hodgson rules as the first queen of the Mobile Carnival.

**1894** The Order of the Doves, Mobile's first black Carnival society, holds its first Ball.

**1898** The second Carnival Association crowns King Felix II.



**1856** A group of Mobilians who had moved to New Orleans organize their own New Orleans Cowbellions, the first parading society in New Orleans, which, unlike the Mobile Cowbellions, parades on Mardi Gras.

# The People's Celebration



Hosea Lonon currently leads The Excelsior Band, formed in 1883.

Local author Julian Lee Rayford set out to honor Joe Cain for reviving Mardi Gras in Mobile. Rayford's first act commemorating the savior of Mobile's Mardi Gras tradition was to transport Cain's body from a cemetery in Bayou La Batre to the Church Street Graveyard in downtown Mobile. Cain was interred with all the pomp and revelry of a Mardi Gras parade, with a jazz-band procession and throngs of mourners. The burial and commemoration of Cain was so popular that Rayford and others decided to make it an annual event, held the Sunday before Fat Tuesday.

They instituted the Joe Cain Day Parade (also known as The People's Parade) to the Church Street Graveyard, led by a person dressed as Chief Slackabamarinico, and it quickly became one of the most popular Mardi Gras events. Thousands of spectators would gather in the old graveyard while Joe was memorialized and serenaded by Mobile's famed Excelsior

Band (founded in 1883 whose members paraded with Ole Slac and have been a part of Mardi Gras ever since). Joining in the ceremony were Cain's Merry Widows, dressed in heavy veils and mourning robes, crying aloud and lamenting his loss to the world. Joe Cain Day quickly outgrew the cemetery and now "the People's Parade" is the largest of all Mardi Gras processions during the season.

There is a waiting list to join the parade and family groups, neighbors and loosely formed "Krewes" have established their own parading identities and traditions. Old Joe Cain would be quite proud.



The Original "Chief Slackabamarinico"

**JOE CAIN CLASSIC**  
JOE CAIN CLASSIC

Need to run off a little King Cake or just looking for an excuse to start Joe Cain Day early? The gun goes off at 8am and the 5 kilometer race features one of the ugliest courses you'll ever run – taking you by the County Jail and a scenic scrap yard. However, most people don't mind the course, because all runners get to attend the awesome post-race party for which the Classic is famous. There's live music, dancing in the street, food and drink and a visit from Joe Cain's famous and lovely Merry Widows. For information and a registration form visit [www.bayarearunner.com](http://www.bayarearunner.com).

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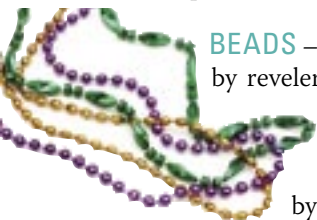
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## A SHORT GUIDE TO Mardi Gras Lingo

**BAL MASQUE** (*pronounced ball mask'*) – (*n.*) the formal masked ball of a mystic society featuring dramatic entertainment, music, dancing, food, and drinks. If the organization parades, the bal masque is usually held immediately after the annual parade, or if a day parade is held, later that evening.



**BEADS** – (*n.*) necklaces thrown from floats and worn by revelers and maskers alike. Beads vary widely in color, size, style, length, and quality. (*n.*) form of currency at a Carnival/Mardi Gras parade whose value mysteriously declines by Ash Wednesday.

**CARNIVAL COLORS** – The official colors of Carnival are purple, green and gold. The colors represent justice (purple), faith (green) and power (gold).

**COSTUME DE RIGUEUR** – (*n.*) Required attire at a formal bal masque. Slight variations exist, but typically involve full-length evening gowns and white tie with tails for invited guests and masked costumes for society members.

**DOUBLOON** – (*n.*) coin tossed by riding maskers. At one time, some were made of wood, now they are aluminum. Most bear a Society's emblem on one side and the current parade theme on the other.

**EMBLEM FLOAT** – (*n.*) typically the first float in a parade, designed in the likeness of the society's emblem. These one-of-a-kind floats often carry society board members and sometimes feature the costumed persona of the mystic society itself.



**KING CAKE** – (*n.*) ring shaped pastry, a cross between a coffee cake and a French pastry, decorated with colored sugar, often with one or more fillings.

**KING FELIX III, KING ELEXIS I** – The two monarchs that rule over Carnival and Mardi Gras in Mobile. King Felix was first crowned in 1872. King Felix III has been crowned every year by the Mobile Carnival Association (MCA) since 1927. King Elexis I has been chosen each year by the Mobile Area Mardi Gras Association (MAMGA) since 1939.

**LAISSEZ LES BON TEMPS ROULER** – (*pronounced lay-zay lay bon ton role-ay*) French for one of the most spoken phrases in the Cajun speak of the land. It's almost risen to the level of a battle cry. Let the good times roll!

**MARDI GRAS** – (*n.*) literally, "Fat Tuesday." The last day of Carnival celebrated with numerous parades and balls. Though a misnomer, the term Mardi Gras is often used to describe the entire Carnival season. Always on a Tuesday, Shrove Tuesday falls the day before Ash Wednesday when the 40 day penitential season of Lent begins.



**MASKER** – (*n.*) a mystic society member appearing in mask and costume on a parade float. Maskers are required by their organization bylaws to be masked when appearing in public.

**MOON PIE** – (*n.*) The official throw of Mobile Mardi Gras since 1952. Marshmallow filling sandwiched between two chocolate covered cookies. Vanilla, banana, and other flavors are also common. These bear the trademark name Moon Pie and are baked by the Chattanooga Bakery. All others should be called Mardi Gras pies.



**MYSTIC SOCIETY** – (*n.*) a secret membership organization that presents parades, bal masque, and other activities for the revelry of members, invited guests, and the public.

**QUEEN** – (*n.*) Female sovereign who reigns over a parade, a bal masque, or both. Since 1893 a Queen has ruled over Mobile Mardi Gras beside King Felix III, while another Queen rules beside King Elexis I each year since 1939. The coronation of the queen is a highly anticipated annual event. Tickets may be purchased by the general public.



**REVELER** – (*n.*) festive merrymaker who participates in a Carnival/Mardi Gras parade en masse. Crowds at a parade who are more than spectators, they are participants.

**TABLEAUX** – (*n.*) an elaborate production or a series of scenes, skits, or dances linked by a theme. Often a tableaux is performed by mystic society members at costumed balls or bal masque.

**THROWS** – (*n.*) Any item tossed from a float to the crowds of revelers below by costumed maskers in the form of trinkets, candy, toys, novelties, doubloons or other emblem souvenirs; beads of all styles, sizes, and colors; and of course, Moon Pies.

**"THROW ME SOMETHING, MISTER!"** – The standard call for those on a parade route wanting to receive throws.





## NOT-SO-SECRET MYSTIC SOCIETIES Join the Fun

So, you'd like to join the fun? There are two Mardi Gras organizations that give all a chance to be a part of Mobile's Carnival...

### LE KREWE DE BIENVILLE

Mobile, Alabama's only civic Mardi Gras organization, Le Krewe de Bienville was founded in 1961 for the purpose of promoting Mobile Alabama as the birthplace of Mardi Gras in the United States. To this end, members of the Krewe travel to festivals throughout the U.S. to tell the story of Mobile's Mardi Gras and invite visitors to our Carnival.

In 2011, in celebration of its fiftieth year, the Krewe voted to include men and women into active membership, so any person 21 years of age or older is now eligible to join and enjoy the fun and good times. The Krewe de Bienville holds its parade and ball on the evening of Joe Cain Day. They offer a special "seasonal" membership for visitors who want to be a part of the ball or parade. Visit [www.krewedebienville.com](http://www.krewedebienville.com) for details.

### CONDÉ EXPLORERS

Organized in 2004 under the banner of "Making History in Mobile's Mardi Gras," the Condé Explorers became the first Mardi Gras society to open its membership to all – regardless of race or gender. Henry Callaway, who joined the Conde Explorers in 2009 explains: "I wanted to be part of a group that demonstrated to Mobile's children that we are all one people and that we can laugh and play and celebrate Mardi Gras together. I've enjoyed making new friends in the Condé Explorers and have had a great time participating in the parade and ball." Memberships in the society are open right up until parade day (Saturday, Feb 4). Their website is [www.condeexplorers.org](http://www.condeexplorers.org).



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At the parades, don't forget the "official" Mardi Gras shout: "Throw something TOO-mey!"

# Mardi Gras 2012



## SATURDAY, JANUARY 21

1:00 pm .....Krewe De La Dauphine Parade (*Dauphin Island*)

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 28

1:00 pm .....Island Mystics Parade (*Dauphin Island*)

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3

6:30 pm .....Condé Cavalier Parade

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4

2:30 pm .....Bayport Parading Society

6:30 pm .....Pharaoh's Mystic Society Parade

7:00 pm .....Condé Explorers Parade

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

1:30pm .....Orange Beach Parade (*Orange Beach*)

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9

6:30 pm .....Order of the Polka Dots Parade

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10

11:00am .....Krewe of Wrecks' Kritter Krawl & Kids Parade (*Daphne*)

6:30 pm .....Order of the Inca Parade

6:45 pm .....Apollo's Mystic Ladies Mardi Gras Parade (*Daphne*)

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11

2:00 pm .....Mobile Mystics Parade

2:30 pm .....Mobile Mystical Revelers Parade

3:30pm .....The Haven's Mystic Mutt of Revelry (*Fairhope*)

6:30 pm .....Maids of Mirth Parade

7:00 pm .....Order of Butterfly Maidens Parade

7:00pm .....Knights of Ecor Rouge (*Fairhope*)

7:30 pm .....Krewe of Marry Mates

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

6:30 pm .....Neptune's Daughters Parade

7:00 pm .....Order of Isis Parade

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13

6:30 pm .....Mobile Mystical Ladies Parade

7:00 pm .....Order of Venus Parade

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

6:30 pm .....Order of LaShe Parade

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16

6:30 pm .....Mystic Strippers Parade

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17

6:30 pm .....Crewe of Columbus Parade

6:30pm .....Maids of Jubilee (*Fairhope*)

6:45pm .....Mystic Order of Persephone (*Daphne*)

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18

10:00am .....Krewe of Les Beau Geste's (*Foley*)

12:00 noon .....Floral Parade

12:00 noon .....Mystic Revelers (*Bay Minette*)

12:30 pm .....Knights of Mobile Parade

1:00 pm .....Order of Angels Parade

2:00pm .....Krewe of Mullet Mates (*Point Clear*)

4:00pm .....Mystic Order of Shadow Barons (*Daphne*)

5:30pm .....Mystics of Pleasure (*Orange Beach*)

6:00 pm .....Mystics of Time Parade

6:30 pm .....Coronation of Queen to King Felix III (*Mobile Convention Center*)

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

2:00 pm .....Arrival of King Elexis I (*at foot of Government Street*)

2:30 pm .....Joe Cain Parade

4:00 pm .....Loyal Order of the Firetruck (*Daphne*)

5:00 pm .....Le Krewe de Bienville Parade

5:30 pm .....Les Femmes Cassettes Parade

8:15 pm .....Coronation of King Elexis (*Mobile Civic Center*)

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20

11:00 am .....Arrival of King Felix III (*at foot of Government Street*)

12:00 Noon .....King's Parade and Floral Parade

3:00 pm .....MLK Business & Civic Organization Parade (*Route D*)

3:30 pm .....MLK Monday Mystics Parade (*Route D*)

4:00 pm .....Northside Merchants Parade (*Route D*)

6:30 pm .....Infant Mystics Parade

6:45pm .....Order of Mystic Magnolias (*Fairhope*)

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21 MARDI GRAS DAY (FAT TUESDAY!)

10 am .....Gulf Shores Parade (*Gulf Shores*)

10:30 am .....Order of Athena Parade

12:00 noon .....Krewe of Kroc (*Fish River*)

12:00 noon .....Krewe of Kroc (*Fish River*)

12:30 pm .....Knights of Revelry Parade

1:00 pm .....King Felix Parade

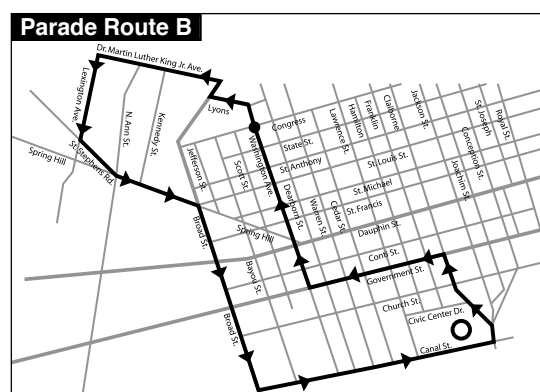
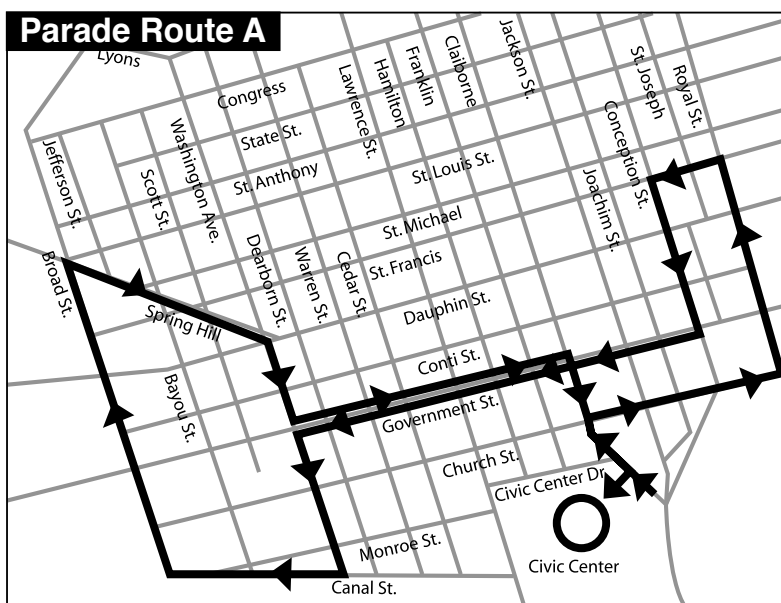
1:30 pm .....Comic Cowboys Parade

2:00 pm .....Mobile Area Mardi Gras Association (*Route B*)

2:00 pm .....Orange Beach Parade (*Orange Beach*)

3:00 pm .....LuLu's Homeport Marina Boat Parade

6:30 pm .....Order of Myths Parade (*Route C*)



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# Be consumed.



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