

NEW HAVEN REGISTER

Local Mardi Gras doings serve up plenty of Cajun music, food and fun

By Mark Zaretsky, *New Haven Register*

Posted: 02/15/15, 12:47 PM EST

So another icy February has rolled around, and you still have not been able to pull it together to get your bones down to New Orleans for Mardi Gras.

Tsk, tsk – but not to worry.

There's plenty of Louisiana and Louisiana-style music right around here this Fat Tuesday.

Attractions including Buckwheat Zydeco up at Infinity Hall Hartford – preceded by Infinity's own Mardis Gras – Leon Russell out at Fairfield Theatre Company's StageOne, River City Slim & the Zydeco Hogs at Blackeyed Sally's in Hartford and Shaka & the Soulshakers at Two Boots in Bridgeport.

Who are these guys?

- Stanley “Buckwheat” Dural is one of the biggest stars in Louisiana zydeco, the music of the French-influenced African-American Creole people of southern Louisiana. He has toured the world many times over and always puts on a great show. His show at Infinity Hall begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20 and \$44. Infinity Hall will have its own Mardi Gras beginning at 4 p.m. Call 860-560-7757.
- Leon Russell, raised in Louisiana, is a keyboard-playing member of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame who has played over a long career with the likes of George Harrison, Bob Dylan, Joe Cocker, Elton John, Jerry Lee Lewis, Willie Nelson, Eric Clapton and the Rolling Stones, to name a few. Showtime at FTC is 7:45 p.m. Tickets are \$85, available in advance at www.fairfieldtheatre.org or 203-259-1036
- River City Slim & the Zydeco Hogs, led by drummer and blues and roots radio DJ Peter Rost, is Connecticut's leading zydeco band. The band plays at 7:30 p.m., \$5 cover. Blackeyed Sally's also will have an all-you-can-eat Southern lunch buffet from 11:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and a Mardi Gras happy hour from 4:30-6:30 p.m.
- Shaka & the Soulshakers, fronted by New Orleans post-Katrina transplant Bill Sciacca, is one of Connecticut's better blues bands. In 2011 and 2013, the SwampShaka Duo won the Connecticut Blues Challenge, representing the state at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis. They play from 6-10 p.m., but Two Boots will have free beads and masks all day, along with plenty of jambalaya and other Cajun specialties on the menu.
- And for those of you who want to stay even closer to home, there also is the New Haven Free Public Library's Mardi Gras Masquerade Madness 2015 gala, from 5:30-9:30 p.m. in the main library, 133 Elm St. Tickets are \$75. The library will be closed during the gala. Call 203-946-8130 for more.
- The biggest Mardi Gras party in New England doesn't take place until Feb. 28, when the 23rd annual Cajun & Zydeco Mardi Gras Ball unfolds at the Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet Ballroom in Cranston, R.I., featuring BeauSoleil avec Michael Doucet, Steve Riley & the Mamou Playboys and Corey Ledet & His Zydeco Band. Call 401-783-3926.

*Those of us who just can't get off the couch can check out EarthCam's live webcams in New Orleans – located on Bourbon Street and inside Cat's Meow Karaoke – at www.earthcam.com/events/mardigras/.

