



# REX FACT SHEET

MARDI GRAS  
MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2025

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## 2025 QUICK FACTS

### MARDI GRAS 2025

Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>

### REX PARADE

- **Mardi Gras Morning**  
10:30 AM CST

- **29 Floats**

#### Six iconic floats

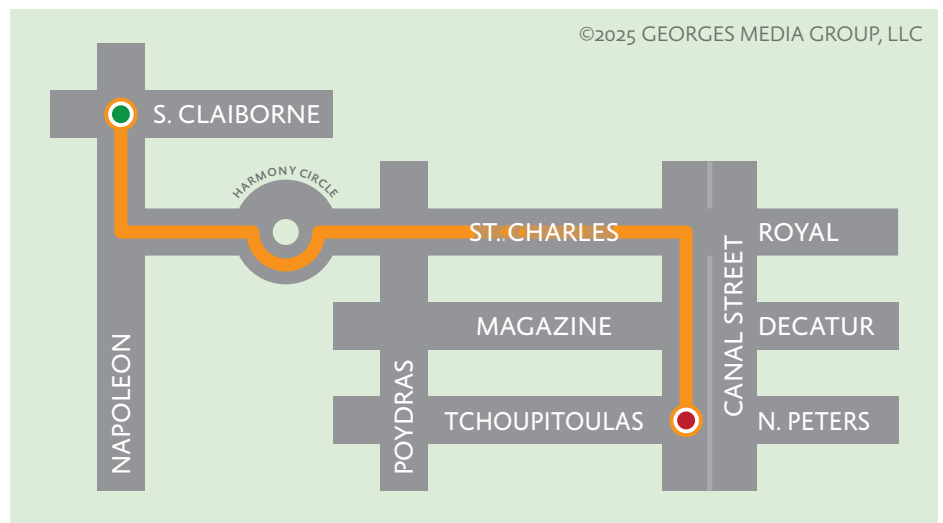
*King's Float, His Majesty's Bandwagon, King's Jesters, Boeuf Gras, Butterfly King, and Title Float*

#### Three permanent floats

*Streetcar Named Desire, Royal Barge, and His Majesty's Calliope*

**Twenty floats representing the 2025 theme**

- 450 Riders
- 33 Mounted Lieutenants



### REX PARADE ROUTE

The 2025 Rex Parade will commence at the corner of Claiborne Avenue and Napoleon Avenue; proceed on the Uptown side of Napoleon toward St. Charles Avenue; at St. Charles Avenue, turn left onto the river side of St. Charles Avenue; proceed on the river side of St. Charles Avenue toward Toledano Street; at Toledano Street, cross over to the lake side of St. Charles Avenue; proceed on the lake side of St. Charles Avenue to Jackson Avenue; at Jackson Avenue, cross over to the river side of St. Charles Avenue; proceed on the river side of St. Charles Avenue to Canal Street; at Canal Street, turn right onto the Uptown side of Canal Street; proceed on the Uptown side of Canal Street; conclude at the corner of Canal Street and Tchoupitoulas Street.

### REX 2025 PARADE THEME: "LA BELLE ÉPOQUE"

Coinciding with the origins of the Rex parade, *La Belle Époque*, spanning roughly 1871 to 1914, was not only a period of peace, cultural flourishing, and technological progress in France, but it also saw the advancement of political and social freedoms. With a very Parisian theme, Rex is delighted to present a beautiful procession featuring some of the greatest known works of art, astounding innovations, and many of the groundbreaking women who helped to define the "Beautiful Era." Hail Rex!

## THE KING OF CARNIVAL'S MONDAY REX ARRIVAL AND LUNDI GRAS FESTIVITIES

Rex, the King of Carnival, will arrive in his Capital City of New Orleans on Monday, March 3, 2025 at 6:00 PM CST. This year marks the 38th anniversary of the Lundi Gras Celebration. Again this year, Rex will continue his tradition of arriving via United States Coast Guard cutter at Spanish Plaza.

### 2025 REX PROCLAMATION

The 2025 Rex Proclamation, the work of New Orleans artist Cynthia Carriere Sewell, celebrates this year's Rex Parade theme, "*La Belle Époque.*" Please see the [Rex Proclamations](#) section below for more information on this year's edition.

### 2025 REX PARADE BULLETIN

The 2025 Rex Parade Bulletin features beautiful, original designs of the floats of the 2025 Rex Procession and includes all of the floats illustrating this year's theme as well as many iconic permanent floats.



REX WEBSITE

[www.rexorganization.com](http://www.rexorganization.com)



PRO BONO PUBLICO FOUNDATION WEBSITE

[www.probonopublicofoundation.org](http://www.probonopublicofoundation.org)

## ABOUT REX

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### **FOUNDING, INCORPORATED NAME AND MOTTO**

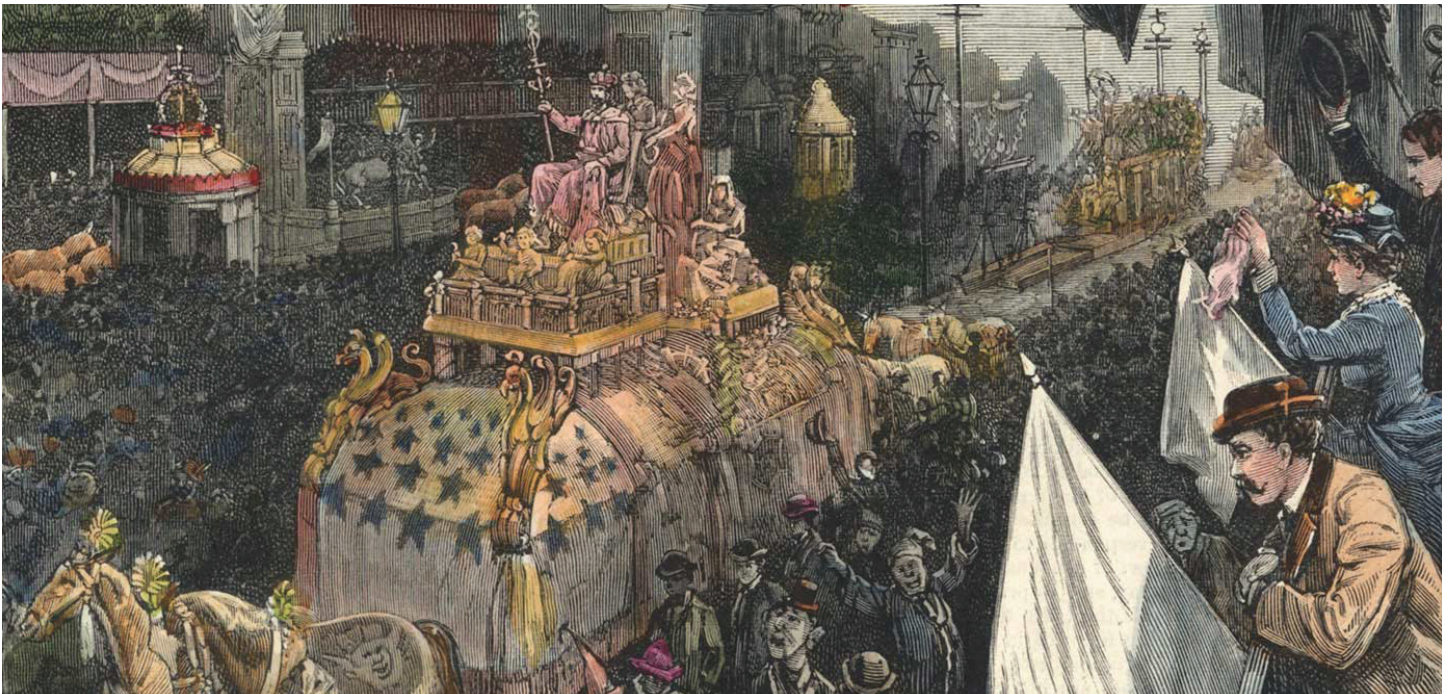
Rex first ruled over Carnival in New Orleans in 1872, 153 years ago. The incorporated name of the Rex Organization is the “School of Design,” but it is generally referred to as *Rex* or the *Rex Organization* (rather than “Krewe of Rex”). “Pro Bono Publico,” the Rex motto, means “for the public good” and appears on all official Rex documents. Rex places great emphasis on this motto and uses it as a basis for all of its policies, activities, and community initiatives, including the work of the Pro Bono Publico Foundation, formed in 2006. Rex lives its incorporated name through its focus on education and the arts.

### **REX, THE KING OF CARNIVAL**

One of the enduring legacies of Rex’s founders is the annual selection of a King to reign over not only the Rex Parade and Rex Ball but also to preside over the entire New Orleans Carnival celebration. He is referred to as the “King of Carnival” and the “Monarch of Merriment,” and his Queen is called the “Queen of Carnival,” rather than the “Queen of Rex.” “Rex” is the Latin word for “King,” so Rex is not called “King Rex,” as that would be redundant.

### **WHY WAS REX FOUNDED?**

The first Rex Parade in 1872 coincided with the visit of Russia’s Grand Duke Alexis. Many popular accounts suggest that the Rex Organization was formed for the purpose of honoring the Grand Duke with a parade. The Grand Duke did, in fact, review the first Rex Parade from the official stands at Gallier Hall. Contemporary research tells us, however, that Rex’s founders had a larger civic purpose in mind. They saw an opportunity to help the city by creating an exciting daytime parade, replacing disorderly street celebrations on Mardi Gras day. They also hoped this spectacle would attract visitors to New Orleans, build goodwill, and help to reestablish the strong commercial and cultural connections their city had long enjoyed. Their efforts were tremendously successful by any measure, and, within a few years, New Orleans and its Carnival became a favored destination for travelers.



# PRO BONO PUBLICO FOUNDATION

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Rex's founders intended not only to create a beautiful parade, but also to help their beloved city recover during the difficult years of Reconstruction. The motto they selected, "Pro Bono Publico," ("for the public good"), captured that intent. Rex members returning to New Orleans after Katrina's floods in 2005 saw similar needs and great opportunities to help the city's recovery. The Pro Bono Publico Foundation was created to raise funds, primarily from Rex members, and to make grants to support the city's rebuilding efforts. In 2025, the Foundation awarded grants totaling more than \$1,000,000 for the tenth consecutive year, primarily to support the renewal of New Orleans' public schools. Grants and commitments made since 2006 total more than \$15 million. More information, and profiles of grant recipients, can be found on the Foundation's website: [www.probonopublicofoundation.org](http://www.probonopublicofoundation.org).

## THE REX PARADE

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### THE FIRST PARADE

Rex first paraded on Mardi Gras, February 13, 1872. By today's standards it was an unorganized affair several miles long, with Rex leading the parade dressed in a borrowed costume and riding on a bay horse rather than a float. Rex was followed by a live *boeuf gras*, pronounced "buff-grah," or fatted ox, the oldest symbol of Carnival. Hundreds of decorated wagons and thousands of revelers joined the parade. Russia's Grand Duke Alexis, visiting New Orleans at the time, joined the Mayor at City Hall to view the parade, becoming Carnival's first, but not last, visiting royalty or celebrity guest.

### NUMBER OF PARADES

The 2025 Rex Parade on Mardi Gras, March 4, is the 145th parade in Rex's 153-year history. Rex did not parade in these years:

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| <b>1875</b> Political unrest in the city | <b>1951</b> Korean War     |
| <b>1918-1919</b> World War I             | <b>1979</b> Police Strike  |
| <b>1933</b> Inclement weather            | <b>2021</b> Covid Pandemic |
| <b>1942-1945</b> World War II            |                            |

### PARADE THEMES

For the first several years, Rex Parades consisted of loosely organized marching groups and decorated wagons but did not illustrate a theme. That changed in 1877 when Rex floats were designed as a "rolling tableaux" to illustrate the theme "*The Military Progress of the World*." That tradition continues to this day, with themes selected years in advance. Rex's floats are considered rolling works of art. Elegantly designed and decorated floats illustrate a theme drawn from the worlds of culture, history, mythology, literature, nature, geography, and the arts. The 2025 Rex Procession, entitled, "*La Belle Époque*," celebrates the "Beautiful Era" of peace, advancement, cultural flourishing, and technological progress during the period stretching from 1871 to 1914.

## **CAPTAIN AND LIEUTENANTS**

The year-round leader of the Rex Organization is the Captain, whose identity, by tradition, is not revealed. He is a familiar sight at the head of the Rex Parade astride his white horse. Rex Lieutenants, costumed in purple, gold, and green velvet costumes, ride in groups of three throughout the parade.



## **THROWS**

In 1960, Rex introduced the doubloon to Carnival. In 2013, Rex introduced a new throw: riders on each float threw unique beads bearing the likeness of the figures on that float. Look for colorful throws corresponding to 26 individual float designs.

Rex members will also throw close to one million doubloons this year, as well as countless Rex beads, cups, and other throws.

Beginning in 2020, Rex has made a major commitment to making Carnival more environmentally friendly and sustainable by partnering with ARC of New Orleans to include recycled beads in each rider's parade package. Metal cups, more likely to be saved and used, are also part of Rex's "green" initiative.

In addition to each float in the 2025 Rex Parade having its own collectable float-specific bead and sports towel, as it continues its focus on sustainability, Rex will throw stainless cups featuring the King's Float, the Boeuf Gras, and the Rex seal, as well as a number of Rex-branded sustainable throws from New Orleans non-profit Grounds Krewe, such as wildflower kits, bubble kits, glitter kits, coffee pouches, exfoliating hand soap, and fiber tote bags.



## **OFFICIAL REVIEWING STAND**

Beginning on Mardi Gras 2025, the Queen of Carnival and her royal court of eight Maids and eight Dukes will await the float bearing the King of Carnival and his Pages on the Rex Official Reviewing Stands located at Pascal's Manale Restaurant at the corner of Napoleon Avenue and Dryades Street, 11 blocks from the parade's start at the corner of Napoleon Avenue and Claiborne Avenue. Pascale's Manale is the classic 112-year-old institution now owned and operated by one of our city's acclaimed restaurateurs, the Dickie Brennan Restaurant Group. Locating the Rex Official Reviewing Stands at Pascale's Manale will, for the first time in a long time, allow the Rex Court to view the entire Rex Parade. This is a change that has been considered for some years that will result in an even better Mardi Gras day for future Rex Courts. In addition to allowing the Rex Court to view the entire Rex Parade, this is also an important step toward ensuring the Rex Parade is completed safely and timely in four hours, by 2:30 PM. This should help improve the parade experience for all involved, especially the truck float parades that follow the Rex Parade. While the location of the 2025 Rex Official Reviewing Stands may be new, old traditions will be honored, as Rex offers a special toast to the Queen of Carnival and recognizes the Rex Court.

## REX PARADE INNOVATIONS AND MILESTONES

Over the decades, Rex's leadership role as King of Carnival has led to many changes in parades as well as innovations that have become part of the entire Carnival celebration.

**1950** Tractors replace mules to pull Rex floats

**1958** Rex floats are animated with moving figures

**1959** *Boeuf Gras* returns to the Rex Parade

**1960** First Rex doubloon minted

**1964** Rex Bandwagon float added

**1969** His Majesty's Calliope float added

**1971** Rex Centennial and restaging of Rex's arrival by boat at the foot of Canal Street on the Monday before Carnival

**1980** Rex proclamation returns

**1987** Lundi Gras Celebration initiated, including Rex's arrival by boat at the foot of Poydras Street on the Monday before Carnival

**2002** Rex Parade Bulletin returns

**2003** "Rex in the Classroom" Education Project launched

**2006** Pro Bono Publico Foundation founded

**2012** Butterfly King float added to parade lineup, first new iconic float in decades

**2013** Float-specific beads introduced

**2015** Rex arrives for Lundi Gras Celebration by vintage train car

**2020** Royal Artists' first Rex Parade, entitled "Omens and Auguries"

**2020** Rex goes "green" with recycled beads and stainless steel cups

**2022** Rex's Sesquicentennial celebrating 150 years since its founding; mule-drawn, riderless 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary float and Viareggio walking figures added to parade

**2025** Rex introduces sustainable throw packages from New Orleans non-profit Grounds Krewe

## THE REX BALL

Rex's Grand Ball is held annually at 8:00 PM on Mardi Gras evening. A private event for Rex members and invited guests, it is broadcast to the public live by local PBS affiliate WYES-TV. Underscoring the symbolic and traditional ties between Rex and the United States military, the ball begins with a stirring performance by the Marine Forces Reserve Band, followed by the presentation of Rex decorations to visiting U.S. military officials and other dignitaries. The highlight of the ball is the presentation and procession of Rex, the Queen of Carnival, and their Court, including eight Dukes, eight Maids, and two Pages. At 10:00 PM the Rex Court departs to visit the Comus Ball for the traditional "Meeting of the Courts," the official culmination of Carnival each year.

## REX CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

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### **BOEUF GRAS**

The *boeuf gras*, symbol of the last meat to be eaten before Lent, has been a symbol of Carnival (from the Latin "farewell to flesh") since the Middle Ages. A live *boeuf gras* was part of every Rex Parade from 1872 through 1900, when it was retired. In 1959, the *boeuf gras* reclaimed its place as a Mardi Gras icon, returning to the parade as a papier-mâché figure surrounded by white-coated butchers.

## REX FLAG AND COLORS

Rex founders chose the colors purple, gold, and green for the standard of the King of Carnival, and those colors have become, by tradition, the colors of the entire New Orleans Carnival. While many explanations for this choice have been offered, the design of the flag conforms to the rules of heraldry, appropriate for the Monarch of Merriment. The 1892 Rex Parade, entitled “*Symbolism of Colors*,” suggested other meanings: purple for justice, gold for power, and green for faith. The official Rex flag has a gold bar from upper-left to lower-right, in the center of which is a crown with the letter “R” superimposed. The portion above the gold band is green; the band below is purple. The official flag may be flown by former Kings of Carnival and Queens of Carnival during the Carnival season, and the year of their reigns appears in the banner’s corner.

## REX ANTHEM: “IF EVER I CEASE TO LOVE”

This charming song was popular at the time of Rex’s founding, and each band performed it as they passed the official reviewing stand at Gallier Hall. Lydia Thompson, a famous British singer, was visiting New Orleans at the time and often sang the song. She was also rumored to have enjoyed a romantic relationship with another Carnival visitor, the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia. While it now seems clear they did not enjoy each other’s company in 1872, they, and the song, will always be associated in Carnival lore.

“If Ever I Cease to Love” became the anthem both of Rex and of Carnival in New Orleans. “If Ever I Cease to Love” accompanies Rex on the parade route, and, arranged as a Grand March, is played as Rex and the Queen of Carnival lead the Rex Court into the Grand Ball.



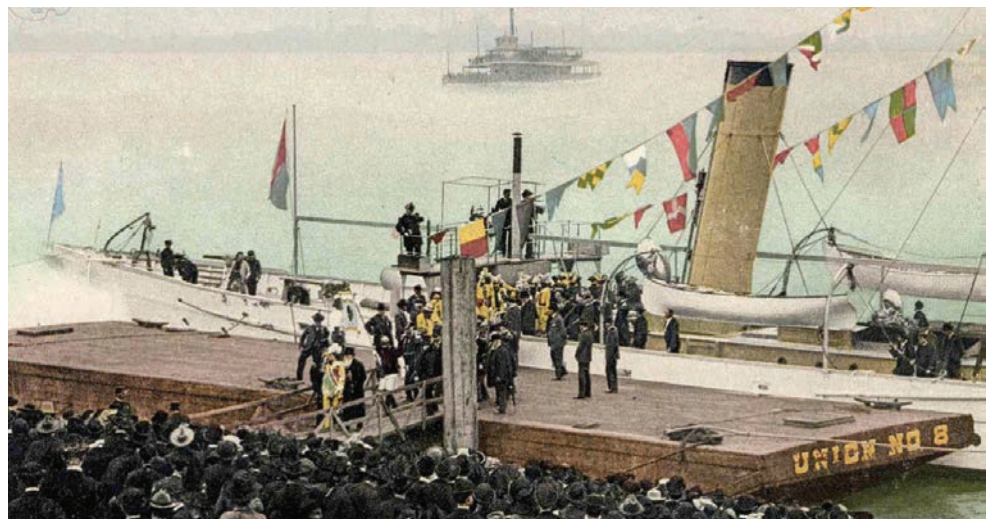
## LUNDI GRAS

Until World War I, Rex arrived in his “Capital City,” usually by river, on Monday, the day before Carnival, to be greeted by enthusiastic crowds gathered at the foot of Canal Street. Rex then led a shortened Monday parade to City Hall, where he proclaimed Carnival and received the Key to the City from the Mayor. In 1971, the Rex Monday Arrival was recreated one time in honor of the Rex Centennial.

Rex’s Monday Arrival is again a major celebration, called Lundi Gras. In 1987, Carnival historian Errol Laborde joined with Rex officials, business leaders, and tourism officials to create a new Monday Arrival celebration and named it after the French description of the day before Mardi Gras. On Monday, March 3, 2025, Rex will arrive at Spanish Plaza at 6:00 PM, greet the Mayor, the Zulu King, and other officials, receive the Key to the City, and proclaim Carnival to crowds

of revelers. This year marks the 38th anniversary of this special celebration.

In 2015, Rex revived an old tradition and arrived in a festively decorated antique Public Belt Railway passenger coach. In 2022, Rex returned to arriving via the Mississippi River aboard a Coast Guard cutter, Rex’s “Royal Yacht.” Rex will do so again in 2025.



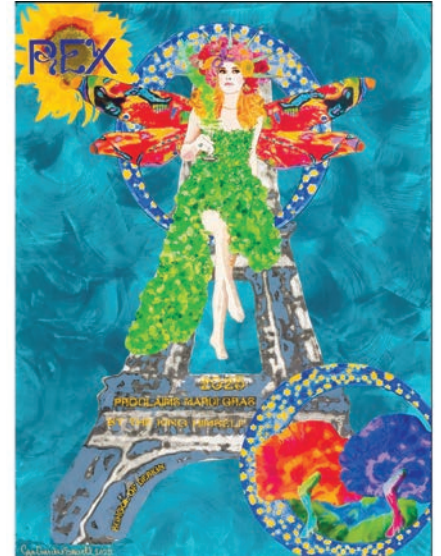
# REX ART, PUBLICATIONS, AND WEBSITES

## REX PROCLAMATIONS

Historically, Rex declared the date of the New Orleans Carnival through proclamations, drawing subjects to partake in the festivities and turning it into a major tourist destination with notices in train depots nationwide. This tradition ceased post-World War II, but in 1980, the Rex Organization revived it. Annually, an artist is chosen to craft an original Rex Proclamation art print, featuring the year's theme or iconic Carnival images. These collectibles, noted with “Rex Proclaims Carnival,” are highly sought after.

The Rex 2025 Proclamation is a mixed-media collage original by New Orleans artist Cynthia Carriere Sewell. Eleven years ago, she began creating mixed media art from her home studio in New Orleans. As a self-taught artist, she experiments with various mediums and is always pushing her artistic boundaries. Using acrylics, vintage photos, and images captured from all walks of life, she creates compelling narratives through texture, layers, and vibrant colors. She draws inspiration for her one-of-a-kind pieces from history, pop culture, and the human experience.

Sewell's 2025 Rex Parade theme inspired her to create an artistic rendering of the dichotomies of *La Belle Époque*. Sewell stated at the 2025 Kings' Day Ceremony, “*La Fée Verte* (the Green Fairy), my muse, is symbolic of the intoxicating extravagance and social freedoms characteristic of the Beautiful Era. Her champagne glass emits the essence of Absinthe as her Tiffany dragonfly wings glow vibrantly. She is pensive, reflecting on the flourishing movements of the time, and she invites the observer to interpret her thoughts. Like the Parisians of *La Belle Époque*, she is seeking, wondering, partaking, and escaping ... all the while raising her glass *à la liberté*.”

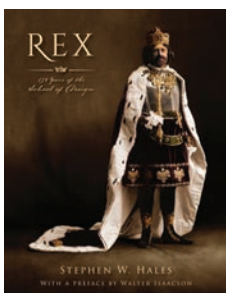


## REX EDICTS AND INVITATIONS

In 1872, the newly crowned King of Carnival first commanded his subjects to gather in New Orleans for Mardi Gras, issuing edicts published in newspapers nationwide. Since then, tens of millions have heeded this call, flocking to the Crescent City for Carnival festivities far grander than the Rex founders could have envisioned. In recent years, following requests from tourism officials, Rex has revived this early tradition of issuing a formal “Royal Edict.” This invitation calls everyone to New Orleans for the “Great Carnival Celebration.” Incorporating art and text from over a century ago, the edict now plays a key role in opening the Carnival season and is used by the tourism industry to warmly welcome visitors.

## REX PARADE BULLETINS

Revived in 2002 from an earlier era, the Rex Bulletin presents the entire colorful Rex float procession of each year's elaborately themed parade. In the past, local newspapers published the bulletin along with a detailed description of the parade theme and each float – these historical bulletins have become important resources in documenting early parades. Modern parade bulletins are also given to classrooms participating in the “Rex in the Classroom” education project.



## REX—150 YEARS OF THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Published in 2022 to celebrate the Rex Organization's 150th Anniversary, *Rex—150 Years of the School of Design* provides a decade-by-decade account of a century and a half of colorful Rex history. This limited-edition book, written by Rex Historian Emeritus Stephen Hales, with a preface by noted New Orleans author Walter Isaacson, is available for purchase on the [Rex website](#) and at select bookstores. It also accompanied a two-years-long exhibition at the Louisiana State Museum at the Presbytère celebrating 150 years of Rex artistry.



## REX AND THE MILITARY



From its founding, the Rex Organization has always honored the military. Rex arrives at the Lundi Gras Celebration via a Coast Guard cutter. Traditionally, prior to the parade, Rex conducts a flag raising ceremony with a military color guard and the Marine Forces Reserve Band during which veterans are honored. The participation of organized military units became an increasingly important part of both the Monday parade celebrating Rex's arrival and, of course, of his Grand Procession on Mardi Gras. Military bands and marching units have always played an essential and colorful role in the Rex Parade, and Navy and Coast Guard vessels regularly visit New Orleans during Carnival. Each year, military guests are invited to join Rex members on floats and to attend the Grand Ball, a highlight of which is the performance of the Marine Forces Reserve Band. Rex may also award special honors to his military guests.

### RECONCILIATION AND BANNERS

In 1881, in the spirit of reconciliation during the difficult Reconstruction years, Rex invited several military units from Northern states, including the New York National Guard regiment, to march in the Rex Parade. The visit was a great success – the former adversaries were received with great hospitality and enthusiasm. Prior to the NYNG regiment's departure, Rex officials presented a special commemorative banner to the unit's commanders. As part of the celebration of Rex's 150th Anniversary, that commemorative banner was recreated, a reminder of the power of Carnival to unite and heal.



## CARNIVAL'S POSITIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR NEW ORLEANS

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From 1872, when Rex was founded and first encouraged visitors to come to New Orleans, through today, Carnival has grown to have enormously positive economic and brand impacts for New Orleans that yield year-round dividends. The most recent study of the economic impacts of Carnival, conducted by Tulane University professor Toni Weiss in 2023, found its total impact – direct and indirect – on the New Orleans economy to be in excess of \$891 million. Professor Weiss’ study also found that, while the city incurred \$10.6 million in governmental expenditures attributable to Carnival, Carnival-related tax revenues flowing to city entities totaled \$28 million, which results in \$2.64 in tax revenue for every \$1.00 in governmental expenditure, a more than two-and-a-half-to-one return on investment for local government. Professor Weiss’s 2023 study also found, conservatively, \$14.3 million in revenues to the State of Louisiana from Carnival activity in Orleans Parish. Clearly, Carnival is a good investment for New Orleans and for Louisiana.

## REX IN THE CLASSROOM

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The “School of Design,” the incorporated name of the Rex Organization, highlights Rex’s commitment to education. Historically, the themes and individual float titles chosen for each year’s parade have been drawn from the worlds of culture, history, mythology, literature, nature, geography, and the arts. Each year’s Rex Parade brings to colorful life a wonderful and interesting world, a world that invites exploration and learning in our classrooms. Rex in the Classroom materials, including notes on each parade’s theme and float titles, can be found in the Education area of the Rex website. The Rex Organization also hosts school visits by appointment at the Rex Den, allowing hundreds of schoolchildren annually to see the Rex floats up close and learn about Rex and Carnival history.



# REX ON THE WEB

## REX WEBSITE

The official web site for Rex is found at [www.rexorganization.com](http://www.rexorganization.com). The web site contains beautiful photos of the Rex Parade and Grand Ball, images of the Rex Proclamation and Bulletin, and general information about the organization, its history and noteworthy traditions. Archives display images of past Rex Parades as well as documentation of past Rex Courts. The Rex website has also become a favorite resource for those wanting information about the history of Carnival in New Orleans. As New Orleans' oldest continuing parading organization, Rex is in a unique position to describe the early history and traditions of Carnival. A large Education Area is used by hundreds of classrooms worldwide as they participate in "Rex in the Classroom," the Rex education program. The website displays lesson plans, study materials, and archived student work from past years.

Member Login

Tradition | The Parade | Ball and Courts | Merchandise | Education | Foundation

# REX

**150TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK, PROCLAMATION AVAILABLE**  
Commemorating the Rex Organization's 150th Anniversary, Rex Historian Dr. Stephen Hales' book, *Rex: 150 Years of the School of Design* provides a decade-by-decade account of a century and a half of colorful Rex history. The 2022 Rex Proclamation art print, by Royal Lithographer Matthew Hales, is also available for sale to the public. [Purchase Now](#)

**CARNIVAL UPDATES** *All news...*  
**REX FOUNDATION AWARDS 2025 GRANTS**  
\$1.2 million in grants and commitments benefit New Orleans Schools ([Read All](#))  
**REX PROCLAIMS CARNIVAL**  
2025 Proclamation Unveiled at Mayor's Mardi Gras Kickoff Event ([Read All](#))

**S**INCE THE FOUNDING OF THE REX ORGANIZATION IN 1872 ITS TRADITIONS HAVE HELPED DEFINE MARDI GRAS. REX'S PROCLAMATION INVITES HIS SUBJECTS TO THE GRAND CELEBRATION OF CARNIVAL. HIS ROYAL COLORS OF PURPLE, GREEN, AND GOLD ARE TO THIS DAY THE COLORS OF MARDI GRAS, AND THE SONG PLAYED IN THE FIRST REX PARADE, "IF EVER I CEASE TO LOVE," HAS BECOME CARNIVAL'S ANTHEM. REX AND HIS QUEEN PRESIDE OVER THE REX BALL, CARNIVAL'S GLITTERING CONCLUSION.

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