

On My Mind

from the publisher

Lisa Blossman



Fleur-de-lis king cake updates an old favorite

In our office people like to eat sweet snacks. One morning I heard an unusual amount of oohing and aahing over a king cake. When I saw what all the fuss was about, I joined in. None of us had ever seen or thought of

a fleur-de-lis-shaped king cake.

Randazzo's Camellia City Bakery in Slidell has added a new, creative twist to the traditional king cake.

The fleur-de-lis king cake doesn't just look good; it is one of the best-tasting ones I've had. It is moist and evenly cooked with silky sweet icing. Another co-worker and I are known for getting the baby most of the time, which should substantiate my ability to critique king cakes.

Randazzo's Camellia City Bakery has been in Slidell 10 years. Owners Tricia and

Louis Zornes have lived in Slidell for 26 years. Tricia Zornes' father, Manuel Randazzo, started the Randazzo family bakery in Chalmette and has since retired. Her brother owns Manny Randazzo King Cakes in Metairie.

Tricia Zornes came up with the idea of a fleur-de-lis king cake while Christmas shopping. She has always loved the fleur-de-lis symbol and wanted to do something to help with the rebirth

of New Orleans. Baker

Louis Zornes created the design and perfected the king cake in about one day. Tricia Zornes

shared the idea with her brother, and they hope to make the fleur-de-lis king cake a Randazzo tradition.

The Zorneses are committed to Slidell. After the storm they bought the 4,000-square-foot building on Pontchartrain Drive where the bakery is

located and were able to temporarily open for the 2006 Mardi Gras season. Then they closed and continued with renovations on their business until the full service bakery opened Dec. 18. They were simultaneously renovating their flooded home.

The fleur-de-lis king cakes will be available year-round. Lots of people have ordered them with black-and-gold colors for the New Orleans Saints.

Tricia Zornes' favorite part of Mardi Gras is making people happy with the king cakes.

"It's a wonderful feeling ... to be able to still do something that we learned from my dad," she said. "Randazzo king cakes are made with love from beginning to end."

Happy Mardi Gras!•

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guest perspective

Marty Mayer



Affordable commercial insurance critical

As the Gulf Coast region adapts to the challenges of the rebuilding process, many factors will play into our successful recovery.

Much discussion continues on the insurance situation we face in the wake of the disaster.

Although the industry is sometimes complex and difficult for most people to understand, everyone can agree the availability and affordability of commercial property insurance is critical to our region's recovery.

Immediately after the storm, insurance companies and reinsurance companies left the market, canceled policies or quickly sold their limited capacity in this region. This left few alternatives for commercial property owner. Almost a year and a half later, with the passing of an uneventful hurricane season, availability is slowly beginning to increase, depending on the project, location and type of construction.

However, those who qualify for insurance still face limited coverage and higher deductibles at tremendously increased premiums. Many property owners find themselves with no alternative but to go without insurance, risking possible viola-

tion of loan agreements and serious economic loss if an uninsured property is damaged or destroyed.

The North Shore, particularly above Interstate 12, is in a better position than other coastal areas. The insurance supply is increasing but it is still limited and expensive. Unlike other affected areas, the decrease in insurance availability is not hindering commercial development.

The recent decision by St. Paul Travelers, Louisiana's largest commercial insurance provider, to retain 60 percent of its business in the area rather than drop nearly all of its commercial property coverage in south Louisiana is encouraging.

No silver bullet will change the situation overnight. The debate has started on state and federal levels to formulate long-term strategies to address the issue.

On the state level, members of business, industry and the community are asking elected officials to introduce policies that make Louisiana's climate more attractive to increase supply to our area.

This includes elimination of the politically appointed insurance rating commission, ethics reform and implementation and

enforcement of the statewide building code. During the upcoming legislative session, we must watch carefully for any proposed law that would make our state more hostile to insurance and reinsurance companies and thereby further choking off supply.

Federal intervention may also be necessary. There has been debate about a national catastrophic backstop for natural disaster coverage similar to what was done after 9/11 with respect to terrorism insurance. This politically charged battle will play out for months if not years. As the 110th Congress convenes, new legislation will likely be filed on this issue.

Commercial policyholders must get involved and communicate their experiences to elected officials on all levels to force positive change on this issue. If commercial property owners and developers continue to engage in the discussion, the chance of creating a better business environment for our region will be great. •

Marty Mayer is past chairman of the St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce and president and CEO of Stirling Properties in Covington.



where to write

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Correction:

In the story "Emerging power" on Supriya Jindal in the January issue of North Shore Report, the last line of text was cut short. The last line should have read as follows: Supriya Jindal turns 35 this month and she has several wishes for the New Year: That her children flourish in school, that their personalities continue to develop and "if we do decide to run for governor, that we have success." North Shore Report regrets the error.