



The Rolling Elvi, the Pussyfooters, the Merry Antoinettes and dozens of other organic marching Mardi Gras groups are just the latest version of a Mardi Gras that has always required crowd participation. “It’s the most diverse and democratic celebration on the planet,” says Mardi Gras expert Arthur Hardy. Hardy says the first Mardi Gras “parades” were people in costumes walking to a masked ball on Mardi Gras. Organized parades took the celebration to

The Society of St. Anne started in 1969 as a response to a city ordinance that restricted Mardi Gras parades in the French Quarter.



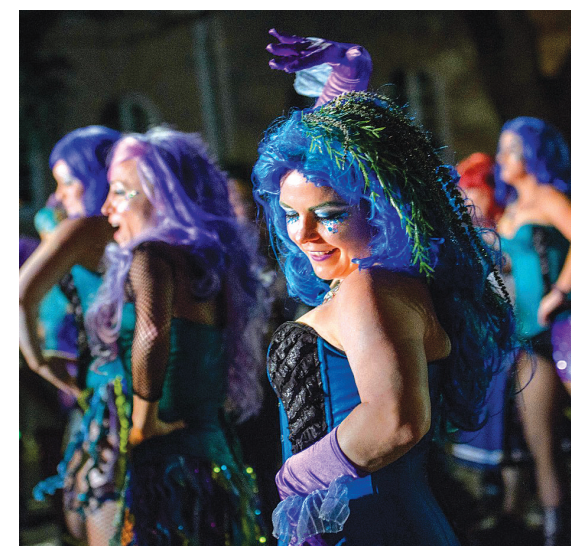
The Rolling Elvi were founded in 2003 to honor Elvis.

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The Pussyfooters marching group has more than 100 members and participate in nearly 50 parades and events each year.

the streets, but groups off the beaten parade route have persisted, keeping the celebration open for all. Today, the Society of St. Anne, the Red Bean Parade, Krewe du Vieux and Chewbacchus are just a few of the groups that mingle with the crowds and welcome all comers. The marching groups that march within established parade routes, like the Muff-a-Lottas, Sirens and Fleurs, have sprung up largely since 2001 when Muses first paraded. The marching groups give people of all ages and income a chance to march. The Pussyfooters don’t allow any members younger than 30. And each year, the number of the participatory groups grow.



The Sirens, which started in 2010, as well as many other marching groups, raise money and awareness for community groups and charities.