

**ORDER OF LaShe's
GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
October 21, 2025
The Locale**

Board Members Present:

Cindy Bishop, DD Payne, Donna Diaz, Tracey Taylor, Kendra Isenhower, Gabby Smith, Kanja Weldy, Nicolle Rayborn, Christine Bramlett, Melissa Davis

Board Members Excused:

Stacey Jessee

Meeting Called to Order 7:06 p.m.

New Members: Introduction by Lynlee Evans

New members pledged:

Jalynn Chance
Sarah Naramore

Rachel Dyar
Jamie Snow

Hannah Eddins
Sondra Wacker

Pledge-Kendra Isenhower

President Cindy honored members that are cancer survivors by asking them to step forward and presenting them with roses.

Reading of the Minutes: September 16, General Meeting

- Ashley Adams made a motion to dispense with the reading of minutes. Amy Coarsey seconded the motion. The majority voted in favor, one opposed, one abstained; motion passed.

Officer's Reports

- **Vice President-DD Payne:**
 - Member count: 300 Active, 2 Founder Emeritus, 8 Active Non-Riding, 30 Honorary, 24 Costume Honorary and 95 Associates.
 - We will vote on 5 new members tonight.
 - She is ready to take new applications. And she did get one tonight!
 - Raise your hand if you have sponsored one person into the organization. Keep your hands up if you sponsored two people, or 3 or 4 or 5 or more than 5. Give these ladies a round of applause. How many have made at least one new friends through recruiting by your fellow LaShe's. Not only do we put on a kick ass ball and parade, but we also develop lasting friendships.
 - New member orientation is on January 11, 2026, and it is mandatory.
 - Remember to check out the roster board in the back.

- **Treasurer-Stacey Jessee:**

- Stacey is out of town for work, so Cindy read her report.
- September 2025 balances:
 - Wells Fargo Operating-Beginning Balance \$98,709.74, Ending Balance \$104,583.52
 - Wells Fargo Savings- Beginning Balance \$230,706.03, Ending Balance \$230,707.92
 - MOOLs Trustmark Savings-Beginning Balance \$6,428.03, Ending Balance \$6,428.24
 - Trustmark Building Fund-Beginning Balance \$47,730.92, Ending Balance \$48,833.95
 - Trustmark Building CD-Beginning Balance \$178,375.57, Ending Balance \$179,043.67
 - PNC Operating-Beginning Balance \$0.00, Ending Balance \$100.00
 - PNC Savings-Beginning Balance \$0.00, Ending Balance \$100.00

- **Recording Secretary-Donna Diaz:**

- If you read your newsletter, you know that in September, 53% of our Active/ANR/FE, 46% of our Associates and 15% of our Honorary/Costume Honorary members attended our meeting. This is approximately 47% of our membership.
- If you have not signed in, please do so. This is the only way to get credit for your meetings. We only have three meeting left to attend to make your mandatory meetings. If you are not going to make your mandatory meetings, let President Cindy know so that you may be excused.
- Signing in determines our quorum. Do not sign in for other members.
- Do not forget your name tag, we are voting on new members tonight.

- **Corresponding Secretary-Tracey Taylor:**

- Please check the directory at the sign-in table and on the website. There are forms in the binder for you if you need to update anything or you can email Tracey.
- Do not forget to check out Hospitality. Paula has pizza and a specialty drink available. Thank you, Hospitality, for your hard work.
- Paula is selling Iron Bowl squares for \$35.00. She will also sale Gumbo from Stevie's Kitchen. For every quart that you buy, Stevie donates \$8.00 to the LaShe's.

- **Parliamentarian-Kendra Isenhower:**

- No report

- **Historian-Gabby Smith:**

- No report

- **Board Seat 1, Parade-Kanja Weldy:**

- She is catching up with all things Parade. Sara has been very accommodating with information. The committee will meet next week. The float builder is busy crafting our floats and we will put on the best parade in 112 days!
- Fun parade fact: Our parade has a specified order and only adjusts if we add a new permanent float. We currently have 16 floats. You can look at our lineup today and figure exactly where you were 5 years ago or where your float will be 5 years from now. Each float moves forward one position each year until they are our third permanent float in the parade only behind our Emblem and Board floats. The following year, they will drop to the last float in the line up and start making their way to the front again. This year the float order is:

- Emblem float
- Officer float
- D
- J
- L
- M
- E
- H
- B
- C
- K
- F
- I
- A
- N
- G

So E, who is the 7th this year, will be 6th next year. D who is at the front this year, will move to the end next year.

- Lastly, since I was not elected by you but appointed by the board due to vacancy, I want to assure you that I will do my absolute best to represent every member fairly and I will always try to vote and make decisions based upon the best interest of the society and the majority's desires. I am always open to questions, concerns, recommendations, even polite constructive criticism so feel free to bring it.

- **Board Seat 2, Ball-Nicolle Rayborn:**

- Contracts are signed, deposits are paid, and the ball is starting to come together.
- Bands for Ball are Journey 2 Mars and Lisa and the E-lusion. They will be alternating sets throughout the evening across the two stages near the main stage.
- We are planning to have food available in individual rooms during the ball. The details are being finalized. The committee is trying to make this ball reflect what our membership wants. Continue to share your ideas with Nicolle, the committee, or your recommendations rep-we are listening.
 - Nicolle was asked if we would have our bar in the rooms. The answer is no but this year there will be a mega bar outside of the rooms.
- OVG has an opening become available that will allow us to move our rehearsal date. The new date is Sunday, February 1, 2025, from 3:30pm to 5:00pm. By moving our rehearsal, the actual set up of

our ball will be in place. Nicolle will include this information in the newsletter and Tracey will update the calendar on the website.

- Nicolle was asked what the cost of the Convention Center is for the rehearsal. Nicolle responded that it is \$1,000.00. Nicolle did try to negotiate this amount, but they would not lower the cost. A member commented that instead of having rehearsal at the Locale where the cost is \$650.00, we are going to spend more and not have a party. Cindy expressed that the weekend rate for the Locale is \$3,800.00.
- Nicolle was asked if our escorts were allowed to attend. Cindy responded that we just received this information and need to work out the details.
- **Robin Brown-Invitations** is out of town. Nicolle shared that the committee has invitation forms available tonight. Completed forms are due December 16, 2025, at the General meeting. If you miss the deadline, your invitations will be issued according to your membership status. To purchase additional ball tickets, pay at the finance table and take your receipt to the Invitations committee for processing. Check your newsletter for additional information regarding invitations.
- **Board Seat 3, Ways and Means-Christine Bramlett:**
 - Christine has pre-order charm bracelets and a customized Order of LaShe's sweatshirt. Tonight is the last chance to order these items. Items will be available to pick up at the November General meeting.
 - Start your holiday shopping! From earrings to Dave & Buster's play cards.
 - The Top Golf fundraiser is on October 26, 2025, from 1:00 to 4:00pm. She has flyers if you need to get your team registered. There will be several competitions: Best score, Worst score, Longest Drive, Hole in One, and the Most Spirited Team award.
 - Everyone who is coming Sunday, please stand. Look around, this is your competition. Bring your A-Game!
 - Christine gave a heartfelt thank you to her hard working committee and the organization for supporting Ways & Means.
- **Past President & Queen-Melissa Davis:**
 - No report

Committee Reports

- **Roof-Kanja Weldy:**
 - Our roof is complete! It will be inspected on Monday. The total contract is \$115,000.00 which is \$500.00 less than quoted. EMR will sell the metal from the old roof so we will have a little income from that. We will contact our insurance company to inform them that we have a new roof, hopefully lowering our insurance rate. The roofer cleaned the gutters and replace the damage panel on the back wall at no additional cost. He will be back in one year to do a gutter clean The new sky lights will provide a lot of natural light in the barn. Our first loan payment will be due next month so members will have their \$37.00 assessment posted at that time.

- **Audit-Jan Barbato:**

- The second quarter audit is complete. Stacey had everything very organized and labeled. The committee had a few questions, and Stacey was extremely prompt at getting them answered. The audit team determined that all income and expenses were accounted for and recorded in the proper categories. Stacey is extremely organized, allowing for ease in auditing.

- **PR/Special Events-Lisa Bullock:**

- Donna gave the following report for Lisa as she is out of town The November spotlight organization will be the Ronald McDonald House of Mobile. The committee will “pass the hat” to collect donations to provide a Thanksgiving meal for the families residing in the House while their child is undergoing care at USA Children’s and Women’s. Any additional donations received over the cost of the Thanksgiving meal will be utilized by the House to stock their pantry.
- Tickets are now on sale for the Queen & Emblem party at the table in the back. The cost is \$55.00 and will include food, two glasses of Ballatore and access to the gardens. Tickets will soon be available for purchase through our website. All tickets must be purchased in advance-no tickets will be sold at the door.
- This month’s spotlight organization is Bras Across the Causeway. Donna turned it over to Kelli to tell the members a little bit about the organization.
 - The Bras Across the Causeway walk was this past weekend. They take donations throughout the year to focus on alleviating the financial strains that often accompany a breast cancer diagnosis. Things like childcare, transportation, everyday living expenses while going for treatments are funded by this organization. Tonight, we will “pass the hat” to collect for this cause.
 - Kelli relayed her journey with cancer. Kelli is a three times survivor of cancer. At thirteen, she was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. She underwent so much radiation that she was told she could never have another dose. In 2017, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. The doctors were fairly sure that the radiation caused the tumor in her chest. She underwent a double mastectomy and breast reconstruction. In 2017, she was diagnosed with an extremely aggressive thyroid cancer that resulted in her thyroid being removed. Today, she is healthy and has a miracle baby-doctors did not think that she would be able to have a child. She will be on medication for the rest of her life but is proud and thankful to be here because God has a plan for her. She asked that members please donate to this very worthy cause. It helps local families.

- **Costumes-Marissa McManus:**

- Marissa thanked the 316 ladies that got fitted for their costumes. When you get measured and come to the fitting it makes everything else go smoothly.
- For the ladies who either moved to Active Status or are expecting or gave birth recently, you will be contacted when your costume is ready.
- Accessories-be sure to get with your float captain to get those approved by the board.
- Marissa thanked Room 3 and Room 5 for the amazing Queen and Emblem parties. Marissa greatly appreciates the sisterhood!

Unfinished Business

- Cindy asked for any Unfinished Business (three times). No Unfinished Business.

New Business

- **Videography**-Chuck with Sound Associates will give us a copy of the video of our Tableau at no cost. We can obtain the News channel's video of the Parade; therefore, we see no need to spend \$1,600.00 if the membership has no objections.
- **Elections:**
 - **New Members vote**- Ballots distributed by committee, and members voted.
- **Meeting October 16, 2025**

Cindy announced to the membership that the Board was presented several questions, concerns, and accusations. We received this a few days ago and we are in process of reviewing and preparing a thorough response. Our official response will be shared as soon as possible via email, posted on our website, and made available on our Facebook page. Because this information requires careful consideration, we ask for your patience as we work to provide accurate and thoughtful answers. Although these questions were raised by a specific group, we want to assure all members that your voice matters. Any member that was not a part of this discussion is welcome to reach out with their own questions, concerns, or feedback. We encourage you to contact our recommendations committee with any suggestions or ideas. Or you may submit a letter directly to the Board. We do deeply value this organization and take the concerns of our members very seriously. Please know that every decision we make is with the intent of acting with the best interest of our society.

Cindy stated that Laura has copies of the questions for anybody that would like one. Cindy asked if Laura would like to add anything.

Laura addressed the membership with the following statement:

I would like to take a moment to address each of you regarding the recent meeting that was held with ten member of our Executive Board and forty-nine members of our Society. Some of you may have already heard about this meeting; its purpose was to discuss concerns that many of you have expressed, both openly and among one another.

As most of you know, our organization has faced some challenging times in recent years, and it has become increasingly clear that we need to come together to address them. I have been a member for thirty-two years, in which I have served as an Emblem, a board member for 6 years, which lead to serving as a Queen and for the first time, I truly feel that our organization is struggling in ways we have not experienced before.

I want to emphasize that this effort is not about revisiting the past or dividing our membership, it is about seeking honest answers to questions that many of you have raised. Over seventy members have reached out with concern, and I believe many others share these same sentiments. When a significant portion of our membership feels unheard or uncertain, it is important that we take notice and work toward clarity. Many have voiced that we are trying to provoke, divide, and continuously say it is not personal, and to each of you it is none of these, it is about running a business and following the constitutions, bylaws and standing rules. When this is done then we have a strong organization that leads to fun.

Concerns have been voiced regarding how our bylaws and rules are being applied, about the resignation of board members, financial challenges, and recent changes that stray from our Society's long-standing traditions. These issues, whether recent or ongoing, deserve open discussion and honest responses. The recent news about our long-term banking relationship ending, combined with question about finances, reporting accuracy, and organizational consistency, understandably caused unease among members and are serious concerns.

At a recent room meeting, I volunteered to gather these concerns and present them to the Executive Board on behalf of our membership. I now have a compiled list of those questions and concerns, all of which have been presented to President Cindy and nine other board members. While I will not read each of them tonight, I do have copies available for anyone who would like to have them.

It was shared with the Board that these concerns did not arise solely under the current leadership but have built up over several years. Nevertheless, they deserve straightforward, factual answers so that we can move forward together.

We have requested that the Board provide written responses to all members via mail or email, ideally following their November board meeting. This will allow members to review the information, and if further clarification is needed, it can be addressed at our November General Meeting.

As I shared with the Board, our membership includes women from diverse professional backgrounds, and many of us understand the importance of accountability. Therefore, I encourage that all responses reflect what was actually done, not what might be assumed or intended. We are all human and mistakes are made; we address them and move on.

I urge each of you to not hesitate to ask questions or to engage. Review reports and minutes. If something seems off, bring it forward. We may not always agree and that's okay, but open dialogue and mutual respect are what make this Society strong.

Remember, while our Board is elected to lead and guide us, this organization should be run like a business and what ruins a business-financial issues and not following the rules. We need more members to consider stepping up and running for leadership positions. It is not an easy role, and those who serve deserve our support, but the more participation we have, the stronger our foundation becomes. Are mistakes made as a board member, absolutely, are any of us perfect, absolutely not, but each member of this society should be able to voice their opinion and offer their advice.

It is my sincere hope that once we receive responses and address any remaining concerns, we can move past this and become stronger, more united, and refocused on what truly matters, the sisterhood and spirit that brought us together in the first place. As Maxine reminded us last week, this Society is a sisterhood. Many of our closest and lifelong friendships began here, and that bond is worth protecting.

Let's continue to support one another, respect each other, and work together to uphold the traditions and values that make us the greatest female organization in Mardi Gras.

- **Lynlee Evans:**

Standing Rule 5, Section B: During the Tableau, each Active, Active Non-Riding and Costumed Honorary Member shall wear the style, type, and color shoes specified by the Costume Committee. At the conclusion of the Tableau and for the remainder of the Ball, all Members may change into appropriate shoes (no house shoes/slippers) of their choice of style, type, or color.

Lynlee would like to make a motion for Standing Rule 5, Section B, read: During the Tableau, each Active, Active Non-Riding, Costumed Honorary, and Associate Member shall wear the style, type, and color shoes specified by the Costume Committee. At the conclusion of the Tableau and for the remainder of the Ball, all Members may change into appropriate shoes (no house shoes/slippers) of their choice of style, type, or color. Danetta seconded the motion. Most in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained; motion passed.

Reason: Now that Associates are in costumes it makes it concise and allows for taking disciplinary action if they are included in this rule.

Cindy clarified that we are adding Associates to Standing Rule 5, Section B.

After discussion, Kendra was asked to read Standing Rule 5. Lynlee would like to add Associates to Standing Rule 5, Section B.

Cindy asked for further discussion (3 times). Cindy called for a standing vote.

- **Cindy** called for any more new business (3 times)

Cindy thanked Room 7 for the Bar Raffle prizes. She called for a break to conduct the raffle while the Election Committee counted the votes.

Break: 8:08 p.m.

Call to Order: 8:23 p.m.

Voting Results:

- **New Members:** There are 5 new members. The new members are:

Desiree Barbato
Payden Smith

Sarah Aloys Gaston
Kaylee Ann Wilkes

Madeline Isabela Hirst

Room Announcements:

- **Room 3:** Prudence announced that they were selling raffle tickets for their Cornucopia of Cheer. There is a table set up in the back with liquor and Thanksgiving decorations showing the items being raffled. Marilyn Anderson expanded on items being raffled. Tickets are \$5.00 for one ticket or five tickets for \$20.00. The drawing will be held at the November General meeting.
- **Room 11:** Please get your tickets for their New Orleans bus trip for this Saturday, October 25, 2025. The price is \$60.00 per seat.

Marilyn Anderson made a motion to adjourn. Gayle Bishop seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna Diaz
OOL Recording Secretary