

## **The 2010 Rex Procession: “Fables of Fire and Flame”**

**Tuesday, February 16, 2010  
New Orleans, Louisiana**

**1. Rex, King of Carnival, Monarch of Merriment** Rex’s float carries the King of Carnival and his pages through the streets of New Orleans each Mardi Gras.

**2. His Majesty’s Bandwagon** From this traditional permanent float one of the Royal Bands provides lively music for Rex and for those who greet him on the parade route.

**3. The King’s Jesters** Even the Monarch of Merriment needs jesters in his court. Rex’s jesters dress in Mardi Gras colors—purple, green, and gold.

**4. The Boeuf Gras** This is one of the oldest traditions and images of Mardi Gras, symbolizing the great feast on the day before Lent begins.

**5. Title Float: “Fables of Fire and Flame”** Fire, one of the

four classical elements, has occupied a special place in human experience throughout history. Each culture has developed a mythology to explain its origins and its power to create and destroy. From these rich stories come images and symbols which have inspired the 2010 Rex Procession, the first with a fire theme. Along with traditional Carnival flowers, artists have created hundreds of flames to decorate the floats of this unique Rex Procession.

**6. Namibia** is the home of the Kung people, who tell the story of Kai Kini, the Firegiver. He was the only man who had fire, which he made from fire sticks, and he did not want to share the fire secret. Eventually Gaionina tricked Kai Kini into playing a game, and when Kai Kini was distracted he stole the fire sticks, broke them in pieces, and spread them everywhere, so everyone had fire.

<http://www.answers.com/topic/kai-kini-and-the-fire-sticks>

**7. Prometheus**, a Greek god, stole fire from the gods and gave it to mankind, against the wishes of Zeus. Zeus was furious, and chained Prometheus to a rock, where an eagle tormented him day after day. Prometheus was finally released from his eternal punishment by Hercules, who killed the eagle and freed Prometheus from his chains.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prometheus#The theft of fire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prometheus#The_theft_of_fire)

<http://www.theoi.com/Titan/TitanPrometheus.html>

**8. Vulcan**, the son of Jupiter and Juno, was the Roman god of fire. He was born small and weak, and his disappointed mother threw him into the ocean, where he was raised as a sea nymph. He eventually returned to Mount Olympus and married Venus. When he and Venus fought Vulcan would strike his anvil with such force that volcanoes would erupt.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulcan \(mythology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulcan_(mythology))

<http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Tr-Wa/Vulcan.html>

**9. Hueheteotl**, which translates roughly to “old god,” is an Aztec god often represented as an old, wrinkled and toothless man. He was known as the keeper of the hearth, and was associated with fire and with the sun. His association with the sun, coming and going each day, gave him his other name, “Lord of the Year.”

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hueheteotl>

<http://atheism.about.com/od/aztecgodsgoddesses/p/>

[Huehuetotl.htm](http://www.huehuetotl.com)

**10. St. John's Eve**, also known as Midsummer's Night Eve, marks the eve of the birth of St. John the Baptist, and is celebrated with fiery displays in many places and cultures. In Ireland the fires' ashes were spread in the fields to assure a good harvest. In New Orleans, St. John's Eve was associated with Voodoo--Marie Laveau was said to preside over Voodoo celebrations on Bayou St. John to mark St. John's Eve.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St\\_John's\\_Eve](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_John's_Eve)

<http://www.irishcultureandcustoms.com/ACalend/StJohnsEve.html>

**11. Pele**, goddess of fire and volcanoes, is one of the most prominent figures in Hawaiian mythology—not surprising since the Hawaiian Islands are formed from volcanoes. After quarreling with her father, it is said that Pele paddled to Hawaii in a great canoe, where she made her home deep within the crater of Kilauea, the largest volcano on the Big Island.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pele\\_\(deity\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pele_(deity))

[http://www.mythicalrealm.com/legends/\\_pele.html](http://www.mythicalrealm.com/legends/_pele.html)

**12. Navaho** legend tells of Hastsezini, the Fire God, who delights in destroying villages and settlements whose people do not leave him suitable sacrifices. He is often represented as a black figure with a hawk's head.

<http://www.planewalker.com/encyclopedia/hastsezini>

**13. Aurora Borealis**, named for Aurora, the Roman goddess of the dawn, these fiery celestial lights are visible in the night sky of many Northern regions. These vividly colored lights were often associated with fire-breathing dragons and other mythological creatures. Native Americans believed that the Northern lights represented a fire around which their ancestors danced.

<http://www.greenpacks.org/2008/12/14/10-stunning-images-legends-of-the-northern-lights-aurora-borealis/>

<http://alaydhien.blogspot.com/2007/02/aurora-borealis-northern-lights-in.html>

**14. The Streetcar Named Desire** This permanent float honors the most famous of all of New Orleans' streetcar

lines.

**The Royal Barge** Complete with Royal Gryphon, the Royal Barge is one of Rex's permanent floats. This float is the last remnant of the Royal Navy, boats carried on wagons that were part of the earliest Rex Processions.

**15. Gibil (Atar)** was the son of An, the Sky God, and Ki, the Earth goddess. Gibil was the God of Fire and the wisest of the Gods worshiped by the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent (today's Iraq). His fires helped forge the metal in the swords carried by Sumerian soldiers, who believed Gibil represented both the helpful and the destructive elements of fire.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gibil>

<http://www.godchecker.com/pantheon/mesopotamian-mythology.php?deity=GIBIL>

**16. Pompeii** and its citizens lived a prosperous and peaceful life until 79 AD, when Mount Vesuvius erupted, burying the city in volcanic ash. Ironically, the eruption took place the day after the Vulcanalia, a festival honoring Vulcan, the Roman god of fire. Archeologists have subsequently uncovered the city and its inhabitants, preserved and frozen

in time.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pompeii>

<http://dsc.discovery.com/convergence/pompeii/pompeii.html>

**17. Hades** was the Greek god of the underworld, and gave his name to the destination to which all souls travel upon leaving the earth and entering the afterlife. Departing souls entered Hades via a fiery crater, and one of the five rivers they crossed to get to their destination was a river of fire known as the Phlegethon, thus the fiery images often associated with Hades.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hades>

<http://www.theoi.com/Khthonios/Haides.html>

**18. Vesta** was the Roman goddess of the hearth, the source of both food and warmth in every household. Romans honored Vesta by dropping offerings into kitchen fires, and the flames were watched to discern omens of things to come. Vestal shrines in temples held fires that were never allowed to go out, the ancient eternal flame.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vesta\\_\(mythology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vesta_(mythology))

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/626927/Vesta>

**19. The Phoenix** has been a recurring symbol of renewal and rebirth throughout history. The mythic creature, a bird with gold and scarlet plumage, erupted in fierce flames at the end of its thousand years of life, leaving only ashes. From these ashes a newly re-born phoenix would arise to begin another thousand years of life.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenix\\_\(mythology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenix_(mythology))

<http://www.mythicalrealm.com/creatures/phoenix.html>

**20. Twilight of the Gods**, an ancient Norse legend also known as the Ragnarok, tells the story of a terrible final battle between the gods. Jormungand, a fearsome dragon, led creatures from the underworld into the battle, spreading fire everywhere until all was scorched and dead. The earth was then renewed, and peace restored.



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ragnarök>

<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/r/ragnarok.html>

**21. The Fiery Furnace** In this Old Testament story Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were cast into the fiery furnace for defying an order of the Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar. The young men's prayers for deliverance were answered by an angel who saved them from the flames by blowing a cool wind into the furnace.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiery\\_furnace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiery_furnace)

<http://www.secta7.com/articles/bib3.html>

**22. Dragon's Breath** Dragons are described in the mythology of nearly every culture, but fire-breathing dragons are more typical of European traditions. Dragons were known to be destructive creatures, burning villages and fields when provoked. Chinese dragons, on the other hand, spouted water instead of fire.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon>

**23. Gods of the Kitchen** Zao Jun is the Chinese god of the kitchen, or the hearth. Every year Zao Jun travels from the family's kitchen to Heaven, to give a report to the Jade Emperor about whether that family has been good or bad. In order to ensure a favorable report, families smear the mouth of a cut-out figure of Zao Jun with honey. The figure is then burned on the stove, and replaced with a new one.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zao\\_Jun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zao_Jun)

<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/z/zao-jun.html>

**24. Nero** ruled as Emperor when the Great Fire of Rome consumed the city in 54 A.D. Forever remembered as an extravagant tyrant, Nero was rumored to have set the fire himself. He blamed it on the Christians, however, resulting in a long period of persecution. He loved to sing and play the lyre, but the legend of his playing while Rome burned is probably untrue.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nero#Great\\_Fire\\_of\\_Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nero#Great_Fire_of_Rome)

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/rome.htm>

**25. St. Elmo's Fire** is a weather phenomenon in which high electrical voltage affects gases in the air, creating a glowing energy field. The name comes from St. Erasmus of Formiae (also known as St. Elmo), the patron saint of sailors. The phenomenon was often seen on sailing ships, a glowing light dancing in the ship's rigging, interpreted by sailors as a divine omen.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_Elmo's\\_fire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Elmo's_fire)

<http://www.islandnet.com/~see/weather/elements/stelmo.htm>

**26. Siegfried and Brunhilde** are the central characters in an epic and tragic Norse legend, which was made into a grand opera cycle by Wagner. Through trickery, Siegfried, the dragon-slaying warrior, marries Brunhilde, an Icelandic queen, who in turn plots his death. Brunhilde orders a funeral pyre built for him, and then rides her horse into the fire, to be consumed in flames with Siegfried.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Götterdämmerung>.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brynhildr>

**27. His Majesty's Royal Calliope** The Calliope provides a lively and traditional musical counterpoint to the brilliant array of bands in the Rex Procession