



*Les Amis de Marigny*

*Helping to make the Marigny a better place to live, work and play*

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**FEBRUARY**

Board Meeting • February 6  
6:30 PM • Location TBA

General Meeting • February 18  
6:30 Potluck • 7:15 Meeting  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church

**MARCH**

Board Meeting • March 5  
6:30 PM • Location TBA

General Meeting • March 17  
6:30 Potluck • 7:15 Meeting  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church

**APRIL**

Board Meeting • April 2  
6:30 PM • Location TBA

General Meeting • April 21  
6:30 Potluck • 7:15 Meeting  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!**

May 18th  
26th Annual Spring Home Tour  
and Art Market

**Meet the Neighbors**  
2nd TUESDAY • 6:30 - 8:30 PM  
3rd SATURDAY • 9 - 11 AM

**NONPAC MEETINGS**  
5TH District  
2nd Wednesday • 7 PM  
3500 St. Claude Avenue

8TH District  
2nd Thursday • 5:30 PM  
Omni Royal Hotel

**ST. CLAUDE URBAN MAIN STREET MEETINGS**  
2nd Wednesday, 9:00 PM  
4th Wednesday, 9:00 AM  
Green Project  
Marais and Press Streets

**EVERY SATURDAY**  
UPPER 9th WARD  
GREEN MARKET  
1 - 4 PM  
Holy Angels Convent  
3500 St. Claude

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT** — Chris Costello

Happy New Year! And Happy Mardi Gras! It is hard to believe that Fat Tuesday is around the corner but if you are like me I cannot wait. Krewe Du Vieux will kick off our Mardi Gras season with its satirical and highly irreverent parade which will roll through our neighborhood on Saturday (1/19). This year the parade route will be car free to make the journey for the revelers and floats easier. See page 12 for more details and parade route.

2007 was a great year for the organization. As we closed our last general meeting of the year we had accomplished so much (see page 8) but things just kept getting better. On December 13, 2007 the Internal Revenue Service officially gave us our 501(c)3 status which makes us an official nonprofit organization. This was a wonderful Christmas present and allows us to do more good for the neighborhood. If you have any ideas on projects we can do please let us know. (see page 2)

A big Thank You to Kellye Deel, our Caroling Queen, for putting on another memorable caroling event for the neighborhood. A good time was had by all and this year's event featured an acrobatic performance that was entertaining to all. I would also like to thank Roland from Marigny Brasserie for providing cookies and the refreshments for the event. He and his business are an asset to our community. Please remember to return the favor and support his business. (more on page 5)

Washington Square Park is a jewel in our neighborhood that we have taken care of since Katrina. Thank you to all our trash monitors that clean the park and take out the garbage every week and to Ace Hardware for donating the trash bags we use for the trash receptacles.

— continued pg. 2, col. 1

**CONTENTS**

President's Report  
Calendar of Events  
Meet the Neighbors  
Bylaws Addition  
We're a 501(c)3!  
St. Claude Main Street  
Polling the Neighborhoods

1 Plessy Park  
1 Playground Progress  
1 In Memory  
2 A Time to Renew (Dues)  
2 Orchids & Onions  
2 36th Annual Spring Home Tour  
3 A Magical Night in the Marigny  
3 Cooperative Natural Food Store

3 FMIA Accomplishments  
4 No More Blight  
4 LEJ's "Yours Truly"  
4 Meetings Info  
5 Advertising Information  
5 Alvar Arts  
5 Krewe du Vieux  
6 Meeting Minutes  
8  
8  
9  
12  
12  
12  
12  
13 - 15

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT** - *continued from page 1, column 2*

Another part of the caregiving to the park is to have the trees sprayed to fertilize them and rid them of the stinging buckmoth caterpillars to keep them healthy. We are again collecting donations for our Save Our Trees program to spray the trees this spring. Please consider making a donation (now tax deductible!) to help us keep our trees healthy.

The Main Street program, now a standalone program, is moving forward full steam ahead. In November they held their first event, Chalk It Up to St Claude, to raise awareness about our commercial corridor and get people thinking about St. Claude as a place to shop. They are sponsoring the Good Children Carnival Club to bring more awareness about the Main Street program. (see page 3) In addition to the Main Street program, St. Claude is getting a boost from the 5th District Police Station which has opened up temporary headquarters in the old universal building (riverside corner of St. Roch). A viable, services orientated commercial corridor is at our finger tips. I encourage you to get involved.

We have a great year ahead of us with a renewed spirit and increased opportunity to do more good. I hope I can count on you to be a part of our endeavors to continue our charge to make the Marigny a great place to live, work and play.



**MEET THE NEIGHBORS  
UPDATE**

What's the point of living in New Orleans if you can't enjoy your neighborhood or neighbors? Come meet your neighbors and socialize with your fellow Marigny residents at our Meet Your Neighbors night. This is the second year for this monthly social event and it keeps getting better.

Our next installment will be on February 12 at Cutters Bar, 706 Franklin Avenue (corner of Royal and Franklin), from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Delicious happy hour food will be provided.

Stop by and enjoy your neighborhood and neighbors!

***It's Official. We are a 501(c)3!***

With all that we accomplished in 2007, being granted our 501(c)3 status was both a surprise and the icing on the cake. The surprise was from the fact that application normally takes anywhere from 6 – 12 months to be process and ours took just over a month! This is a testament to both the thorough job done by Robert Rachal who put together the application and our good work over the last 35 years which demonstrated our non-profit actions. To add another layer of icing on an already wonderful cake, the Internal Revenue Service made our effective date of exemption back to our founding on August 30, 1972! This is an affirmation from them that we have been doing good for the neighborhood and New Orleans since we started and a pat on the back for all those that have helped the FMIA make the Marigny a great place to live, work and play. A big thank you to Robert and his firm, Proskauer Rose, for assisting us in this endeavor.

Now what? Well, our new status affords us the opportunity to apply for grants to do projects in our neighborhood but more importantly it allows contributions to the organization to be tax deductible which includes donations to our Save Our Trees, Friends of Washington Square Park and the Playground Fund. This good news has already prompted a promise for a \$10,000 donation! More information to follow as on this as the details are firmed up. For those that made donations to any of our funds over 2007 you can use your letter for tax purposes. If you did not request a letter or misplaced yours please let us know and we can send another.

**BYLAWS ADDITION**

At our October Board Meeting the Board discussed a Conflict of Interest Policy that requires Board Members to recuse themselves from issues that they have a personal interest or stake in. This is a great step in transparency for the organization and will protect the organization from ill intentioned members who might use the Board to further their own agenda.

The Board unanimously voted to adopt the policy and to insure it is consistently implemented the Board voted to amend the Bylaws to provide a yearly audit. Additions to Article 10 are as follows:

- 2) A conflict of interest committee will be appointed by the President at least two months prior to the September membership meeting.
- 3) The organization shall be audited yearly by the Conflict of Interest Review Committee.

The proposed amendments will be voted on at the General Meeting on January 19, 2008.

## ST. CLAUDE AVENUE MAIN STREET



By Robyn Blanpied, Manger

St. Claude Avenue Main Street is an economic restructuring program that exists to promote and support an economic revival of the historic commercial district from Elysian Fields to Press Street. Its goal is to help local merchants develop strong sustainable businesses while preserving the historic and cultural character of the St. Claude corridor and its adjacent neighborhoods

To help spread the word about the program, St. Claude Avenue Main St. is sponsoring the Good Children Carnival Club. They held their first Ball at the HiHo lounge on January 5th (as close as they could get to 12th Night). They hope to hold a parade this year, modest, but a dry run for next year. The Club's purpose is to support the St. Claude Avenue businesses by attracting more people to the area. They also believe any reason to party and parade is good. Check the website at [www.goodchildrencarnivalclub.org](http://www.goodchildrencarnivalclub.org) for more information and to join.

Recently, St. Claude has not been a shopping destination of choice for many in the Marigny and Bywater. The St. Claude Avenue Main St. Program is working to change that, and help the area reach its potential as an asset to the surrounding neighborhoods. Some businesses are already back, and are worth your attention. The HiHo Lounge is beautifully renovated, and hosts music as well as theatre. The Kajun Pub offers great Sunday Bloody Mary's and reasonably priced pitchers of beer. The owner is completing renovation of the building next door and plans to open a restaurant soon. This is no threat to Henry's Bakery across the street...nothing beats his glazed donuts!!!

Along with the classic furniture stores: the Royal, the Imperial and Frankie & Johnnie's, there is used furniture to be found at Mr. T's and King Mattress. If you can't make the walk to Gator's, check out Super 10, next to the Universal Furniture/5th District Police Station.

Urban Hydroponics can be found on St. Claude, along with two Art Galleries – Barrister's and Farrington's. Several nail and hair salons have opened their doors, and Wayne's World is back!

We are actively seeking new businesses to open in the St. Claude Avenue Main St. corridor. St. Claude is recovering and has many properties available to people wishing to start a new business or add a location. These spaces range from 300 sq. ft. to large buildings. We would particularly like to find someone interested in

opening a business center/copy center, to replace KOPS. If you know someone who owns property on St. Claude Avenue but who hasn't returned, please have them contact us. We may be able to put them in touch with businesses seeking rental space.

Everyone wants to know what is happening with the St. Roch Market. The City is trying to put together a package that will ensure that the market is well-managed and sustainable. There have been no hard dates announced, but we're hoping for progress reports soon.

Recent items for discussion are:

- Having the Main St. area (St. Claude, St. Roch, Faubourg Marigny and Bywater) designated a cultural products and arts district by the city. The biggest impact would be getting access to state tax credits for preservation, but there are also benefits for artist.
- Refocusing St. Claude as a market basket destination. Plans are on the books for St. Roch market and a Healing center/food coop. But there may be an opportunity for becoming the city's go-to place for fresh produce, food, wine and hard to find food items. Local chefs and cooks would have a central location for their shopping, and the neighborhood would have easy access to fresh food.

If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact Robyn Blanpied at [robyn@stclaudemainstreet.org](mailto:robyn@stclaudemainstreet.org), (504) 616 7637, and visit the website for more info: [www.stclaudemainstreet.org](http://www.stclaudemainstreet.org).

### **We're Back! Polling Returns to the Neighborhood**

Congratulations to all those that helped in our effort, especially John Lucket, Dianne Lease and Dan Harris, to have our polling place returned to our neighborhood. All our hard work has paid off as new voter identification cards have recently been issued changing the polling place for all those who had been assigned to Arts Street location to St. Paul Lutheran Church. This is an important change as the old location had spotty public transportation and many felt the area was too dangerous due it being largely unpopulated.

### **Plessy Park Memorial/Park**

By Reggie Lawson

On Sat. Jan. 19th we will host a clean-up of the Plessy Park site @ the corner of Press & Royal Sts. With the assistance of the Transforma group we will start to present exhibits on the site as a precursor to a formal park. This clean-up will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. followed by a drum circle at Holy Angels.

We are inviting all students, faculty and community members to join us in this effort

## A Time to Renew

Thank you to the following who answered our request to send in their dues before 2008 —

Anna Maria Adamo, Sylvia Ballard, Joan B. Bostick, Gene Cizek, Lloyd Sensat, Kathryn M. Boutwell, Kat & Tim Brennan, Elysian Fields Inn, Leigh & Jim Crawford, Evelyn Broders, Virginia Campbell, Roger Reynolds, A.P. Champagne Jr., Edward E. Cherrie Jr, Deveney Communication, John Deveney, Chris Costello, Simone Cifuentes, Jane Stubbs, Max Goldstein, Mrs. Charles E. Corso, Nancy & D. Bradley Davis, Russel Deroche Jr, Matt Easley, Deborah Oppenheim, Rick Fifield, Feelings Cafe, Ronnie Fredericks, Brian Frye, Andy & Lacy Gallagher, Joan M Guccione, Susan Hall, Marshall Greis, Joe Singlemann, David Haynik, Matthew Wahden, Shirley B. Hicks, Kim & Janet Jovanovich, Paul G. Killgore, Heidi Klee, Brian Johnson, Ed Kleppinger, Hazel R. Laborde, Doug Laine, Robert Brian Levy, Bonny MacDonald, Julie & Mark Malouse, Roy Newhouse, Dolores Nivera, James L. Pierce, Pamela J. Pilaroscia, Madeleine Koerner, Donald J. Richard, Creole Cottage, Robert Rickey, Hope & Michael Seaman, Ben Roberts, Andrea & Stanley Sherman, St. Paul Lutheran School, Patricia Sirois, Stephen Fowlkes, Larry Eagan, Samuel Spencer, Jenny Takakura, Mina Crais, Maureen & Tom Steffek, Reg Medellin, Ron Petty, Coccinelle, Joe & Joy Sunseri, George W Vie III, Tera Lam, Historic New Orleans Collection

We appreciate you helping us out with our request. For those who have not had the opportunity to send in their dues, please take a moment to do so. The process has been streamlined to make it even simpler to renew. How? We are asking members to renew by doing the following:

Simply cut out your mailing label, make any corrections to your name or address, write a contact telephone number and email address (or email addresses if you have a household membership) and return it to us with your dues by one of the methods below.

The 2008 dues rates are:

**Individual - \$15**  
**Individual Senior (65+) - \$5**  
**Household (2+ individuals) - \$20**  
**Senior Household (2+ seniors) - \$10**  
**Business - \$25**

You can mail your renewal to our post office box (listed below), drop it off in the mail slot at 2408 Chartres Street, 2817 Burgundy or 2101 Burgundy #1 or bring it to a general meeting. (The next one is 1/21.) We appreciate your support.

FMIA  
 PO Box 770080

## Playground PROGRESS –

If I had a penny for every time I was told...well, I'd be rich. With the holidays over our installers are ready to renovate the playground. In fact, by the mailing of this newsletter the playground should have been fenced in to prepare for its renewal.

The renovation will happen in 3 stages. First, the current playground equipment will be dismantled and taken away to be sandblasted and repainted leaving only the posts behind. Second, the paint will be removed from the posts, and they will be primed and repainted. Once the posts are dry, the playground surface will be pressure washed to prepare the area for the last stage. The last stage is to bring back the repainted, reusable parts as well as the new replacement parts and reassemble the equipment. This whole process should take about 2 weeks barring any bad weather and/or unforeseen issues. (If I had a penny!)

Be on the lookout for the progress of the renovation and if you have not made a donation it is not too late. We will be maintaining the fund to provide future repairs and maintenance for the equipment. Donations should be made out to FMIA with *Playground* in the memo field and send to:

FMIA  
 PO Box 770080  
 New Orleans LA 70177

Thank you to the follow donors to the Washington Square Park Playground Equipment Fund — Malcolm Willison, Wilson Bourg Lumber, Ravi Vadlamundi, Linda Swindle, Lisa Shattuck, Bettina Reutter, Sadie Gentry, David Pirner, John & Angele Crawford, Kim Pedersen & Ray Ruiz, Calvin Rice & Heidi Lee, Koch & Wilson Architects, Castle Rock Pavers, Bywater Woodworks, Dan & Karen Rabin, Dorian Bennett, Paul Hennes TV & Stereo, Russ & Angela Carll, Electric Ladyland Tattoo, American Aquatic Gardens, Monaghan Enterprises, Blankenhorn Photography, Mona's Cafe, Deveney Communication, St. Paul Lutheran Church, and Scott Aiges.



The Marigny lost a long time resident this past month. Our hearts go out to his family and friends during this difficult time.

*Carl Meyer*

# Orchids & ONIONS

## Orchids



To Gary de Leaumont for helping many people in need of caring for their post Katrina lawns. He's a kind and dear friend. (Marlene Hahn)



To Ron Petty for auditing the books and all the transition paperwork.



Caroling: Kellye Deel, Chris, Leigh, Lloyd Sensat as Papa Noel, and Bill Whiting



5th District Police Station, Pres Kabacoff and Universal Furniture



Thanks to all Volunteers, Tour Guides, and Organizers for Walking Tour

## ONIONS

To those who don't vote in elections.



To people who do not pick up after their dogs, or turn on their porch light(s) for safety.



To club owners who don't close their doors.



## 36th Annual Spring Home Tour & Art Market

Our Spring Home Tour will be on **May 18th**. We are in the process of locating homes and gardens and need your help. If you or someone you know would be interested in opening their home or garden, being part of the art market, helping out with the planning or volunteering the day of please contact Reg Medellin at (504) 940-4042.

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# A Magical Night ...in the Marigny

By Kellye Deel

The 25th annual Christmas Caroling in Washington Square Park was a huge success. This year we added an Art Market which featured over 15 local artists to help residents and visitors find presents for their gift giving and Papa Noel showed up to take pictures with the kids. That night, over 500 carolers showed up to sing by candlelight. A festive acrobatic performance by Aurora Aerials and Whirly Bones kicked off this magical December night. The children seemed to especially enjoy the act while they munched on cookies and sipped hot chocolate and cider. The caroling event would not be the same without these wonderful treats from The Marigny Brassiere. We



are so grateful for their generosity each year. Thank you, Roland! We must also send a special thank you to Rocky Russo, of Russo Printing, who for many years has donated the programs.

The Christmas music was fantastic and lead by the talented Pfister Sisters'. They started with "Oh Holy Night," This first song was chosen by the children from Father Flannigan's Boy's and Girls' Town of Louisiana. Last year was the first year we partnered with the children and it was such a success we all came together again. A Big thanks must go to Germaine Mitchell from the Boys' Town, and all of her hard work. She was able to get us a much larger Christmas tree which we all enjoyed in the Park. We were proud to kick off this holiday season with such a successful event. We couldn't have done it without all of the volunteers and the neighbors who came together to share their time with us. We look forward to many more Caroling nights like this one! Thank YOU & Happy New Year!



## Sign Up And Bring Cooperative Natural Foods Store To The Marigny

By Anne Sobol

There are cooperative food stores in 47 states, but not yet in Louisiana. Shopping in a food co-op is positive and friendly. It is wonderful to walk into a store, past a bulletin board crammed with community notices, and to see fresh, healthy food, people you know, and people who know healthy food. If all goes well, next year, people in the Marigny, Bywater, and St. Roch neighborhoods will have their own cooperative grocery selling fresh, local produce, local seafood, local dairy, bulk and packaged natural foods, and whatever the membership asks for.

The plan is to open a cooperative natural foods store in the Healing Center slated for the Universal Furniture building at St. Claude and St. Roch. But this is going to require the concerted effort of many, many people.

Food co-ops are owned and operated by their members. The money to open a storefront grocery is raised first by enrolling founding members who contribute some of the necessary funds (similar to buying a share of stock). Armed with market and feasibility studies, the founding membership then seeks member loans from founding members. Once the member equity is in place, loans can be sought from local banks and from the National Co-operative Bank in Washington, D.C. In our case, public funding may be available for redevelopment of the St. Claude corridor.

At present, the New Orleans Food Community, Inc., the group working to open a food co-op, has 72 members. If we can sign up several hundred members by April or May, it will be a good indication that we can take our planning to the next level. In addition to Marigny, Bywater, and St. Roch, the cooperative store will attract shoppers from all over the City, in particular from the French Quarter, Treme, Esplanade Ridge and Bayou St. John. It is the intention of the current board to welcome all shoppers, not just co-op members. A practice of many successful food co-ops is to allocate some portion of profits (those not reinvested in making the store even better) to refunds for members based on the amounts they have spent in the store.

The Healing Center in the Universal Furniture Building at St. Claude and St. Roch, which is slated to open sometime in 2009, intends to include in addition to the cooperative natural foods grocery, a yoga studio, treatment space for alternative healers like massage therapists, a "street university" where neighborhood people can teach and learn, some small retail spaces, a natural foods cafe, a police sub-station and parking.

NOFC currently operates a monthly buying club where members place on-line orders which are delivered by a natural foods wholesaler from Arkansas.

The future looks positive, but really it's in the hands of the community whether the storefront gets opened. We all need to take a collective leap of faith, and make this happen. If there aren't enough people who step up to make it happen, there will be no cooperative store. It's up to us. Founding memberships are \$100 and may be paid for in installments. People on limited budgets may join for \$25, also payable in installments.

If you want to join, download a membership application from our website at [www.nolafoodcoop.org](http://www.nolafoodcoop.org), look for a food co-op brochure distributed in many places throughout the City, or call John Calhoun at 914-6936.

***NOW OPEN!***

## Habitat ReStore

2830 Royal Street 943.2240

Wed—Sat 9:30 - 5:00

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## 2007 FMIA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- FMIA members and residents raised the funds to spray the beautiful oaks in Washington Square Park to rid them of the buck moth caterpillars and fertilize them.
- Raised the \$12,000 needed to repair/restore the playground equipment in Washington Square Park.
- Maintained Washington Square Park for another year by coordinating clean up and weekly trash removal to keep our park open and beautiful.
- Coordinated events including Meet the Neighbors and the music series in the park to help bring sales to businesses and build community.
- Created programs to help with issues in the neighborhood such as Light up the Marigny, Marigny ReLeaf, Marigny Flowers and Whistle Alert: Eyes on the Street.

## NO MORE BLIGHT...

We will be sending our first set of letters out this month in an attempt to notify owners about the condition of their property so they can secure and repair the property.

We are keeping a running list of properties so if you know of a property that has visible damage and/or is vacant; please let us know so we may add them to the list. You can e-mail us at [blight@faubourgmarigny.org](mailto:blight@faubourgmarigny.org) with the address of the property, or call us at 888-321-0812 with the same information.

Besides the letters to the property owners, we will be forwarding our list to both the City Attorney's office as well as the HDLC to notify them of these properties.

We all want to live in a safe and healthy neighborhood. We are asking these neighbors to help us in rebuilding our neighborhood and our City by taking care of their property.

# Getting it **SOLD** in any market!



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131 N Murat



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931 Montegut



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Yours Truly in a Swamp  
by Leonard Earl Johnson

## O, What A Time It Was

"Back to the Caribbean again after New Orleans and all that it stands for. It is certainly one of the most beautiful cities in the world, although how the people who live there managed to make it so remains a mystery to me." ~ John Kennedy Toole, in a 1963 letter from San Juan, Puerto Rico, to Joel L. Fletcher, author of *KEN & THELMA*,

THE STORY OF A CONFEDERACY OF DUNCES (Pelican Publishing, 2005)

Crossing the great divide

Hurricane Katrina blew many of us out of New Orleans. It blew me clean across the Atchafalaya Basin to Lafayette.

The Atchafalaya Basin contains all that remains of a vast hardwood bottom forest that covered the Mississippi floodway when Thomas Jefferson purchased New Orleans - and Napoleon threw in the western United States for Lagniappe. (Lagniappe is a French-Louisiana word meaning a little something extra.)

Jefferson's real prize was the port of New Orleans. It still is. Without New Orleans there could be a Baton Rouge, a Memphis, a Saint Louis, a Minneapolis, but there could not be a United States of America. Not as we know it.

For eons the Mississippi River has regularly flooded and ever so slowly moved west. Yes, rivers move. As it shifted back and forth in its snake-like march, the Mississippi left oxbows, false rivers, and hardwood bottom forests. With river canalizations came the elimination of all but the most pent-up floods, and the sidewinder-shifting west slowed till the bottomlands all but disappeared. Today the Atchafalaya Basin contains all that is left.

The Atchafalaya is a large swamp, however, covering hundreds of miles. Once it held Acadiana and New Orleans far apart. Now hurricane winds and interstate highways slice through it like a hot knife in butter.

Crossing it by airplane there are no stops, hopefully, between New Orleans and Lafayette. By bus, there is a forty-minute rest stop at the depot in downtown Baton Rouge, whether one is tired or not. In a private automobile one can stop anywhere anytime. But no one ever does - except for gasoline and salty snacks.

The Fallen Monk

Hammond, Louisiana was our destination, in August, as Hurricane Katrina washed the road out behind us. Two weeks later, we drove away from Hammond, around Lake Pontchartrain, over The River, and across the Atchafalaya, bound for Lafayette - bypassing New Orleans altogether. At the helm navigating this exodus was our friend and personal savior from the storm, The Fallen Monk.

We stopped at a casino/gas station just over the Mississippi River Bridge from Baton Rouge. L. A. Norma dropped a few dollars into a shockingly ugly slot machine. In return, the house gave us free whiskey and beer. We expected little gratitude or personal growth from gambling, but this struck all three of us as a right joyous gain. We lavishly tipped our thinly attired waitress and smoked Norma's cigarettes through two more free beverages.

"You don't have to ask me twice for free libation," Norma observed between puffs of smoke.

"You don't have to ask me once," said the ex-monk.

We lifted our glass in agreement with both.

After the Second World War was won, President General Dwight D. Eisenhower built America what came to be known as Ike's Defense Highway System, of which Interstate 10 is a magnificent part. Ever-so-many miles it is required by law to have a stretch long and straight enough to land an airplane. The part that crosses the Atchafalaya is straight enough to land a flock of airplanes, a long freight train, and a hundred automobiles, buses and trucks.

It is an amazing achievement, a delight to engineer and eye, but it has never landed an airplane. Oh, sure, maybe some drunken Saturday night a Cajun boy landed a Piper Cub right down the middle and took off again before it hardly stopped rolling. But Ike never stepped from a fighter jet, onto its concrete deck, declaring his mission accomplished. No! Nor do Amtrak's trains yaw and pitch over railroad tracks hanging from Interstate-10 bridges, as they do clinging to the side of the old Huey P. Long Bridge, at New Orleans.

As you approach the Huey P. Long, the tallest steel railroad bridge in the world, Amtrak's conductors tell passengers to close their eyes if they suffer fear of heights. People on trains sometimes do. Far below, the port's traffic runs thick on The River.

The train takes "the bottom road," around the Atchafalaya Basin. It passes down through New Iberia and Houma (jumping off place for the humongous Louisiana offshore oil industry), then up to New Orleans. Riding on the train you can dream of dreamier times, cozy in posh day coach seats or private bedroom compartments. You can watch miles of sugarcane fields, and cypress knee forests kicking high from primeval waters. Lately you can see FEMA trailer parks and shredded blue-tarps streaming atop the roofs of embattled castles.

You can walk around on the train, bounce down the aisles to mediocre meals in the diner - or you can pack your lunch. In the observation car, full-vision glass bulkheads rise from the deck and fold overhead. Below is a bar with snacks, beer and booze.

You can converse with fellow travelers, or spot alligators too deaf to flee the train's thunderous approach. Last trip over, a man from

LEJ (cont'd.) —

southern California treated us to Mexican beers and told post-Katrina stories about organizing rebuilding crews, finding them housing, and wooing donors. He said he had done similar work in Peru, in the days before Interstate 10 cut its nose-thumbing swath through the heart of Atchafalaya.

Above the bottom road, and above the Interstate, there is a top road. It passes through Opelousas, New Roads (the hometown of Ernest Gaines, and his setting for *A LESSON BEFORE DYING*), on its way down to Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

A recent train I rode along the bottom route pulled into New Orleans' Union Station, on Loyola Avenue, fifteen hours and fifty-seven minutes late. Everyone aboard was very tense.

"Tell me again they are not trying to discourage passenger traffic," L. A. Norma said, with a snort.

In front of the depot, we caught a cab to Elizabeth's Restaurant, rue Gallier at Chartres, for lunch. It was like the old days at Elizabeth's. There the levee is a tall green mound so docile you want to sit on it and stroke the clover. And the menu truthfully reads, "Real Food, Done Real Good."

I never gave up Squalor Heights, my garret apartment in Faubourg Marigny, though it has been mostly unlivable these past six months. I go back often to attend parties, and ten-cent martini lunches at Bacco. Recently I spent two weeks there, on assignment for Consumer Affairs.com (Christmas Among the Ruins).

New Orleans is still home, but now I teach a Writing Workshop for Project Heal, at the Acadiana Arts Council and last week I went to the Lafayette Public Library and took out a card. It is white with blue lettering and nestles in my wallet next to a gray and maroon one from the New Orleans Library.

A very special time

Those first days after the storm, had we realized we would not be going back soon - like crying men on the radio said - would we have gone mad and run up and down the road pulling our hair?

"Some long time, cher," my Lafayette barber says as he trims my beard. He keeps updated on how I have located - or not located - friends in New Orleans. He knows I visit my New Orleans barber's shop, on Rampart Street, every time I am in Town. He was elderly, worked alone, lived in a badly flooded neighborhood, and had a sister in Los Angeles. He has been my barber for over thirty years, but I don't know his last name.

"You only call your barber by their first name," my Lafayette barber says, smiling.

My New Orleans barber's first name is Jimmie, and his shop looks the same each time I visit. The door is always locked, and a little paper clock in the window says, "Open Tuesday to Saturday, 12 to 2." The heart beats on

Leah Chase sang at the Hotel Monteleone, at the release party for Rosemary James' edited, *MY NEW ORLEANS: BALLADS*

TO THE BIG EASY BY HER SONS, DAUGHTERS AND LOVERS. Leah Chase's mother is chef Leah Chase of Restaurant Dooky Chase (reopening soon). Chef Chase was one of the authors in attendance.

Diana Sullivan, president of RHINO, the oldest arts cooperative in Louisiana, e-mails about Canal Place, where RHINO has its gallery and where I used to work: "I wonder what you would make of it now? Everything there is covered in plastic but the ceilings. Including the Latinos working everywhere in those white space suits. (RHINO jeweler) Deborah Bommer-Morrissey and I have been over there working a lot. Some guy told her she works like a 'Latina gal.' We don't have a lot of RHINOs anymore, but they all work like 'Latinas.' We will reopen in February."

Flash:

Chris Rose, The Times-Picayune's popular, funny and sometimes profound columnist will be in Lafayette, February eleventh, for Second Saturday's Art Walk, an event where downtown art galleries, shops, cafes and bars coordinate their openings with a street party that goes on late into the night. No, it is not much like Bourbon Street, but Bootleggers, a charming watering hole, on Jefferson Street, sports a shingle outside that reads, "Got Hooch."

Rose will speak and sign his book of hurricane columns, at the Acadiana Arts Council's exhibition, "Sustained Winds - before - during - after, Gulf Coast Artists Respond." Please join us for art, sushi, boudin, and booze. After all, it is Carnival time in elegant exile.

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## FMIA BOARD MEETING AGENDA

December 12, 2007

Approvals by email –

1. Letter of support for Healing Center – Approved
2. Letter of support for 1019-1021 St. Anthony Subdivision - Approved

### OLD BUSINESS (*Active*)

- A. Approval of minutes from 11/7 Board Meeting & 11/19 General Meeting
- B. **Projects** –
  - a. Mandeville Fire Station – No Status
  - b. 1017 Touro (Friendly Touch Bar) No Status The bar has opened.
- C. **Releaf Marigny** – No Status - A master plan is needed for tree planning.
- D. **Neighbors 4 Neighbors** –A Chairperson is needed. Leigh has located the banner. Neighbors 4 Neighbors is for publicity and can attract new members. A suggestion was made to have flyers in coffee shops, newspaper (citydesk@tpmail.com 826-3007 ) , and lawn signs a few days before the event.
- E. **Playground Equipment** –All parts are in place and waiting for the dismantler to put us in the cue. We are at the mercy of the contractor.
- F. **501(c) 3 Status** – Chris got a letter in the mail and it is an acknowledgment letter - WE are IN and waiting for the final approval from the manager.
- G. **Visibility of Marigny:** Status - banners – good news There is a company Nomlar and they put up, have the brackets and take them down \$55 a pole and waiting for a design. Each Board Member is to come up with a design and 1805 is part of that design . MOTION: Each board member either to design or have someone to come up with a design by next board meeting. Second: Stephen Acclamation The point person is Marshal.
- H. **Historic Markers** –Gary found has contractor to put the pole in the ground \$800. The city requires having a license contractor. We are still looking for a contractor.
- I. **Blighted/Vacant Property** –A big thanks to Brian and Rick for checking all the properties. They took the list that Howard did and doubled checked it. All the properties in the triangles were correct and rectangle was updated and more properties were added. We are now at the stage to send the letter to include length of time. Letters will be sent and copies to the following: Carter HDLC Nagin and Safety and Permits. Ultimately the legal action is to be judged by the City. A comprehensive list is good for all! MOTION: Chris We accept the recommendations from Brian and Rick to send the letters to the home owner's registered mail. Second: Leigh VOTE: All in favor
- J. **ISSUES:**
  - a. 525 Frenchmen –Kimberly Parker has not been able to contact the owner. Chris spoke to Murphy Painter , ABO in BR . Chris will resend the letter with two legal causes notarized. We are requesting a meeting with Jackie Clarkson since she was the Councilperson during the onset of the Overlay
- K. **Insurance Policy** – No Status

L. **Office Space** – No Status

M. **T-shirts / Mugs** – Chris ordered the mugs. He dropped off 36 to the Cake Bakery and they want more!

N. **Caroling** – It was a beautiful evening and the Art Market went well in spite of the rain. Thank you letter was sent to those who participated. Leigh added the new artists to the art master list. Leigh Crawford and Chris Costello deserve a big thanks.

O. **Coffee Table Book** - Gene - he wants to do this. Stephen has volunteered to assist.

### OLD BUSINESS (*In-active*)

- A. **Riverfront Alliance** – No Status
- B. **Bellsouth and the Digital Loop Carriers** 2601 Burgundy – No new information
- C. **ISSUES:**
  - a. 2100 Burgundy (Fred Morgan)
- D. **PROJECTS:**
  - 801 Frenchmen No Status
  - 839 Elysian Fields – Status? Project on Hold per owner

### NEW BUSINESS

- A. Next Board Meeting Where? Reg at Jan 9th 6:30 pm
- B. **AIDS Memorial** – Guest: Tim Hornback The sculpture has been made. They want to put it in Washington Sq. Park. Chris met with them and will be in touch. FMIA has not seen the designs and will have Mark Thomas present them. A letter was sent to Park and Parkways regarding the need for a study of the designs.
- C. **LA Creole Research Society** – Guest: Pat Schexnayder 985-641-1854 cell 504-296-7184 pmschex@hotmail.com and Lolita Cherrie The organization is three years old and they have 220 members. Yearly they have a National Conference. Pat Schexnayder said: We are a genealogy organization and the focus is the Creoles of color of NO. They want to put together a tour of historic homes. They want to identify them and establish a working tour of these homes. Long range goals: Establish a Creole Museum - The plan is to start very small and grow. The only place that they have close contact with is Jean Lafitte National Headquarters. What is a Cajun and what is a Creole? Many locals are confused. Programs can answer these questions which would be open to the public. They want to have genealogy workshops. FMIA talked about our cultural tourism in the neighborhood. We are trying to see how to work together. Deborah will talk to Helen Regis, PhD in anthropology at LSU. Keith Medley is an excellent resource. Don has the Rochon House and an introduction could be arranged. We discussed the possibility of joining our Walking Tour. The next step for them is to establish a committee and develop a tour.
- D. **Conflict of Interest Policy** – Marshall will review.
- E. **Yearly Agenda** - Meeting Dec 17at Deveney at 6:30 pm
- F. **ISSUES:**
  - a. 2705-7 Decatur demo - Chris spoke to the owner and promise to work with HDLC. C of A to restore - HDLC - LETTER The Board discussed a strategy that an ordinance be introduced that if someone wants to demolish a building that they put it up for sell for fair market value. As a historic district, illegal demolition



should have consequences. The owner should lose the right to tear it down if it could be put back into commerce and not invite crime, fire, drug activities besides destroying a valued building.

**G. PROJECTS**

- a. Mardi Gras Zone Rezoning - The owner wants to sell alcohol. At this stage he needs to bring his building up to code before he gets an alcohol license which will be 24 hrs. Leigh will write a letter to City Council HDLC Safety and Permits and Zoning.

**H. Committee Reports:**

- Treasurer – CD - Brian close out CD with capital one and place in Whitney and then to ING which is fluid.
- I. Subscription for the National Trust - No
- J. **UNO** - Associate Professor has a political survey and Chris will do it.
- L. **Errol Williams** - Assessor – he is appealing the appeal
- M. **Green Light New Orleans** - Andi Hoffmann 324-2429 andihoffmann@greenlightneworleans.org will be asked to speak at a meeting.
- N. **5th District** – sign and/or banner to advertise their presence on St. Claude.

Newsletter – Ideas for newsletter. Orchids/Onions

Carl Meyer passed away - Carl was a Board Member and donated lots to FMIA and he will be missed.

Onions: Graffiti

Orchids:

Ron Petty for auditing the books and all the transition paperwork

Caroling: Kellye Deel, Chris, Leigh, Lloyd Sensat as Papa Noel, Bill Whiting

5th District Police Station and Pres Kabracoff Universal Furniture

Ended 9 pm

Submitted by Deborah Oppenheim

**FMIA BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

November 7, 2007

Approvals by email

- 1. Opposition to 525 Frenchmen Street to ATC does not fit with the Frenchmen St. Overlay. Kimberly Parker with James Carter's office is trying to contact Caf<sup>2</sup> Brazil

**OLD BUSINESS** *(Active)*

A. Approval of minutes from 10/3 Board Meeting & 10/15 General Meeting. Item no 6 change to chalk drawings otherwise approved by consensus

**B. PROJECTS** –

- a. Mandeville Fire Station – Status Have not heard anything from them, no status.

C. **Releaf Marigny** – No Status Jeff Johnson

D. **Neighbors 4 Neighbors** – Next one at JohnPauls. Need new Chair. Deborah suggested that Heidi might be interested.

**E. ISSUES:**

- a. Frenchmen - complaints about Blue Nile - the people who live behind have the issue. Noise issue and they wrote a letter to James Carter. Reg suggested a letter with all information and write the protocol : police if there is a noise complaint, discuss with owner, letter and petition with others who have the same complaint. We also need a letter to the businesses – we instructed the people to contact you to resolve their issues. Then we would have a record.

Leigh - with huge crowds on Frenchmen St. and the street needs to be close. This is a safety issue. We need speak to Captain Hosli of the 8th district to see about closing the street a couple times a year for events like Halloween.

F. **PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT** – Status. The parts are here and the installer is checking to see if all the parts are here to begin the project.

G. **501(c) 3 Status.** – Delivered to the Federal Government. We are asking for definitive ruling.

H. **Riverfront Alliance** –Working to get UNOP Plan process back up. It is on hiatus – waiting to see Reinventing the Crescent and working to get UNOP back up.

I. **FMIA's 35th Birthday** – Status? Honoring at the Caroling event. Historic markers need to get up. Need to get acclamation from City Hall.

- Caroling - Binders for cupcake for b-day or cookies with 35 on them. Try to get Media event:

1. Santa Claus Suit – Lloyd
2. Photos for the hood
3. Real media blitz
4. Kellye
5. Accomplishments for the last 35 years - from the PRC
6. Raffle 3 stockings - Kevin Wu restaurants businesses mugs t-shirts rent a bike aquatic gardens

J. **District 7 CDC** – On Hold

K. **Visibility of Marigny:** Banners – Status - found someone to put them up \$55 per pole hardware and banner and swap the banner and put another up. Need design. Chris will look into.

L. **Historic Markers** – Status. Chris has a licensed contractor to do this. Waiting for price. Motion to accept bid if it is \$500 or less. Approved by acclamation

M. **Blighted/Vacant Property** – Status - Finalizing the list of properties Gene and Brian are doing the triangle. Stephen will help in the rectangle. Motion: To spend the money to send letters by certified mail. Leigh second Approved by acclamation

**N. ISSUES:**

- a. 525 Frenchmen – Status?

O. **Insurance Policy** – No Status

P. **Office Space** – Status – We need to get office space. Stephen will check with Julian Muter

Q. **FMIA Computer** – Chris has loaned a computer to Ron Petty to use for accounting.

R. **Walking Tour** – Status - Suggestions: The brochure needs to be improved. They need the route, more data – a lot of work done - tour should have been in the brochure We need to check the Saints' schedule .



**OLD BUSINESS** (*In-active*)

- A. Bellsouth and the Digital Loop Carriers, 2601 Burgundy – No new information
- B. **ISSUES:**
  - A. 2100 Burgundy (Fred Morgan)
  - B. 1017 Touro (Friendly Touch Bar) No Status
  - C. 839 Elysian Fields – Status? Project on Hold per owner

**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Next Board Meeting? Deborah
- B. **Caroling** – Art Market? Kellye Deel Chris will send a list to the artists asking - No art market  
Status - complaints last year more structure and organization and talent - someone that can sing Charmine Neville? Maybe go to Snug Harbor and ask? Pfisters Sisters, Nora Marsh, and we need a MC - creative respect for the tradition of the caroling event - Need MORE lights food Ask Del Forno? Create poster from image on front of the brochure. Need ASAP. Decorate the park Dec. 1st – Put in TP - check TIME LINE kdeel@dcc.edu 504-615-9467 Motion by Chris: To budget \$750 for caroling Approved by acclamation.
- C. **Yearly Agenda** - Meet again Nov 13 6:30 pm order food from Del Forno.
- D. **Graffiti** - it is everywhere , trash cans, stop signs, Brian to e-mail Officer Jones
- F. **T-shirts / Mugs** Cake Caf<sup>2</sup> wants to use our mugs for his business. Motion by Chris: To purchase case (144) with Marigny logo  
T-shirts - Need to order more with colored shirts. Colors: red, blue, green, and white with black lettering and black with white lettering. Use same image with Faubourg Marigny New Orleans Motion by Chris to order more.  
Second: Gene. Approved by acclamation
- G. **Document the events** FMIA hosts through photos – Brian things now - List of events catalog our neighborhood now We need a plan what we need- Brian and Gene will see if they have money. Coffee table book with other people help - Gene and Stephen Preservation students.
- H. Go through **committee reports:**
  - Treasurer – CD Status Brian has not closed out the account.
  - Newsletter – Ideas for newsletter. Orchids/Onions
  - Orchids:
    - Thanks to all for Walking Tour
    - Volunteers
    - Tour Guides
    - Organizers
    - Voters
  - Onions:
    - Clubs closing their doors
    - those who did not vote

Ended at 8:24 pm

Submitted by Deborah Oppenheim

**BOARD MEMBERS**

- Chris Costello, President  
ccostello@deveney.com
- Reg Medellin, Vice President  
rm.nola@cox.net
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- Leigh Crawford, Corresponding Secretary  
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**COMMITTEES**

- Advertising – Angela Carll  
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- Blight – Howard Allen  
blight@faubourgmarigny.org
- Bylaws – Gary deLeaumont
- Caroling – Kellye Deel  
kellyedeel@msn.com
- Community Outreach – Marshall Greis
- Crime - Kerrie Ramsdell
- Education/Frenchman – Deborah Oppenheim
- Home Tour –  
Reg Medellin & Deborah Oppenheim
- Hospitality – Gary deLeaumont
- Membership – Gary deLeaumont
- Neighborhood Development – Brian Frye
- HDLC – Rick Fifield  
opprik@gmail.com
- Newsletter Editor - Ron Budenich  
fmianews@aol.com
- Special Projects – Gary deLeaumont
- Washington Square Park – Chris Costello
- Web Site – Chris Costello
- Zoning - Robyn Blanpied



**General Meeting, Monday, 1/21**

**Next General Meeting, Monday, 2/18/2008**

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