



What is your favorite New Orleans experience?

*The following responses are available on AALLNET only. For the responses published in the February 2007 issue of *AALL Spectrum*, please see the issue in its entirety.

“I was in New Orleans in October 2005, approximately one year before Katrina, and experienced the brunt of Tropical Storm Matthew. I learned firsthand how vulnerable and fragile New Orleans is. My best memory was taking the trolley from the French Quarter back to my hotel the day after Matthew left town. It turned into a beautiful, almost summer-like, afternoon. A couple of musicians sang and played guitars at the sunlit trolley stop. The young trolley driver continued the musical serenade by singing while driving the trolley route. Everyone was delivered to their respective hotels entertained and happy. It was a magical moment, and I remember thinking what a unique and special place this was. I can only hope that post-Katrina New Orleans survives and prospers.”

- *Laura A. Barber, law librarian at Hodgson Russ LLP in Albany, New York*

“In May of 2000, for my 50th birthday, my wife treated us to a trip to New Orleans by rail. At that time Amtrak’s price from Tuscaloosa to New Orleans (direct) was only \$17. We reclined in our seats and watched the countryside roll lazily by. We had a nice weekend stay at the Andrew Jackson Hotel in the French Quarter and enjoyed the Quarter’s sights, sounds, shops, restaurants, and street performers. A walk to a nearby park by the river was pleasant as well. In the hotel’s secluded courtyard we relaxed for a last quiet evening, which included a fine cigar for me, purchased at a nearby tobacconist’s. A meal in the Amtrak Crescent Dining Car on the way back was a treat rarely experienced in today’s hurried world of air travel.”

- *David C. Clark, law librarian at Lightfoot Franklin White LLC in Birmingham, Alabama*

“I didn’t go to New Orleans for the AALL Meeting, but I did go later with my husband for one of his meetings. My favorite part was the tourist stuff. Strolling up and down Bourbon Street at night, because there is nothing else like it, and I could tell you some stories! Taking the trolley through the Garden District. A driving tour of the antebellum plantation houses. The small town with the live alligator mascot in the town square!”

- *Anna Buhr Cole, head librarian at Miles Stockbridge PC in Baltimore*

“I live here, so my favorite New Orleans experience has to be getting back to the city in October of 2005 to find my house standing, unflooded, and unlooted. A 20-foot section of gutter was wrapped like a ribbon around the cable line on the street though.

“Other favorite experiences: Shortly after I moved to the house I now live in, I met one of my neighbors—a nice guy and a gay achondroplastic dwarf about my age—walking down the sidewalk wearing a turquoise spangly thong and flip-flops. And I was worried about looking gross in shorts and a tank top. I admired his courage and knew I had moved to the right New Orleans neighborhood.

“And then there was the guy walking a pygmy goat named Evangeline. Both guy and goat were very sociable.

“And then there’s the whole Mardi Gras vibe (except Bourbon Street, which is full of drunks and frat boys). Half a million people of every imaginable shape, size, age, color, sex, or economic status, cramming parade routes, filling up the French Quarter, and all getting along.”

- *Marie Erickson, head of public services at the Law Library of Louisiana in New Orleans*

Member to Member

“It has nothing to do with law libraries, but everything to do with entertainment. My usual desire is to locate the local newspaper, *Gambit Weekly*, and look for any location where any family member of the Neville Brothers is playing. It could be Charmaine Neville, Ivan Neville—or if luck would have it—the Neville Brothers themselves. Favorite tracks include ‘I Can See It in Your Eyes,’ ‘Yellow Moon,’ and ‘Wake Up.’ Favorite places include Tipitina’s, Snug Harbor Jazz Bistro, and House of Blues. Thus, anytime that I have had an opportunity to hear a Neville sing has been a favorite New Orleans experience.”

- *Philleatra Gaylor, library administrator at Smith Currie Hancock LLP in Atlanta*

“My most memorable New Orleans experience was taking the ferry across the river to Algiers—a world away from the touristy French Quarter. At a small grocery store I had a blue crab for 75 cents! It was the best blue crab I’d ever eaten.”

- *Mimi J. Greenwood, librarian at Modrall Sperling Roehl Harris Sisk PA in Albuquerque, New Mexico*

“One of the most memorable meals I ever had in my entire life I ate in the bed of a pick-up truck that was parked on the sidewalk in front of Jacques Imo’s Café (www.jacquesimoscafe.com). The table for two was fully-appointed with a tablecloth and a lovely vase of fresh roses; it was just located in the back of a small pick-up truck. My sister and I were curious about the set up and inquired if it was for diners when we gave our name to the restaurant host. He replied that it was just the luck of the draw; whoever’s name came up when the table was available would get to sit in the back of the truck. As luck would have it, my sister and I heard our name called and were escorted to the pick-up truck where we enjoyed a delicious meal that summed up the funky fun that many of us associate with N’awlins. We enjoyed the meal in April 2004. I’m assuming that Jacques Imo’s has returned (see its Web site). I highly recommend the shrimp and alligator sausage cheesecake and the blackened red fish with a crab shili hollandaise.”

- *Faye Hadley, Native American resources/reference law librarian at the University of Tulsa College of Law Mabee Legal Information Center in Tulsa*

“Perhaps having a beignet and chicory-coffee at Café du Monde. And touring the St. Louis cemetery. And getting an oyster po’ boy at any of the local eateries.”

- *Alan B. Johns, cataloging/collection management librarian at Covington Burling in Washington, D.C.*

“Last year in a support for the city, I attended the ALA convention instead of attending St. Louis. My very best memory was riding the ferry to Algiers (across the river) to attend a local yoga class. The entire experience of going, participating, and returning capped it.

“After attending a late afternoon ALA session, I raced to my hotel, changed, grabbed my yoga mat, and walked down Canal Street to the ferry dock. Most of the people were locals leaving work and going home. Once on Algiers, I walked several blocks to the studio (part of the teacher’s home) and was the only non-local. With Bayou spirit, a student offered me a lift back to the ferry. Absolutely over the top!”

- *Mary Ann Keeling, law librarian at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Information Resources Center in Washington, D.C.*

“I was lucky enough to attend the last AALL Annual Meeting held in New Orleans in 1991, and although there are many memorable moments from that visit—from the jazz in the French Quarter to beignets and chicory-flavored coffee for breakfast—the one that stands out most is the Opening Reception held at the New Orleans Aquarium of the Americas. Walking through the 30-foot-long Caribbean Reef tunnel and having the fishes swim around you as you walk is as close as you can get to snorkeling in the Caribbean without getting wet. After 15 years, I still get a thrill thinking about it!”

- *Roberta Laskowitz, technical services librarian for the New York County Lawyers’ Association in New York City*

“The first AALL Meeting I attended was in New Orleans in 1991. This Meeting and venue provided me with some of the richest travel experiences I have ever had—from jazz bands (complete with parasols and wonderful brass) to Cajun music to alligator on a stick (an hors d’oeuvre, not a taxidermist’s work) to views of the mighty Mississippi to old cemeteries to the feeling that you just wanted to go out and be naughty. I certainly hope to revisit this wonderful city at this year’s Meeting.”

- Brenna Louzin, library manager
at Heller Ehrman LLP in Seattle

“Dining at Paul Prudhomme’s restaurant, K-Paul’s Louisiana Kitchen, I found the atmosphere casual, the service superb in a down-home way, and the food out of this world. At the end of the evening, our waitress came by with a sheet of foil stars (such as the ones that teachers use to reward students.) She gave my boss a gold star for cleaning his plate, sticking the foil right on his cheek. She gave my co-worker a silver star for a ‘good try.’ She stuck a silver star on my cheek, then gave me green one, because I’d left a bite of broccoli. When I protested, stating that I’d eaten an entire forest of broccoli, she gave me a red star for complaining! My colleagues still tease me about my three-star night at K-Paul’s.”

- Mindy K. Maddrey, library director
at Collier Shannon Scott PLLC in Washington, D.C.

“In 1972 my family took a day trip to New Orleans from Biloxi, Mississippi, where my brother-in-law was stationed. I was an English major at Providence College and deeply immersed in Tennessee Williams plays, particularly *A Streetcar Named Desire*. My favorite line in the play was Blanche Dubois’ symbolic rendition of how she arrived at Stella’s house. I was still unaware of the intent to which Williams used actual New Orleans place names in his work. Our family was strolling up the street on the way to the zoo. Suddenly, I saw a bus idling by with the sign, ‘Desire,’ and let out a cry of surprise. The others thought I had seen a ghost. Years later, I read with a twinge of sadness that the streetcar no longer goes to Desire.”

- Anne McDonald, law library coordinator at Rhode Island Department of Attorney General in Providence

“I’ve been to NOLA several times, but one of my biggest memories is from the last time AALL was held there, in July 1991. It was my first AALL Convention, and I was seven months pregnant with my first child. For many reasons, New Orleans in July is not the place to be when you’re that pregnant ... no Pat O’Brien’s Hurricanes, no oysters, and too hot! I remember walking around the French Quarter one morning with a co-worker, and I shared with her some family problems I was experiencing at the time. It was the first time I’d openly talked about them, and my friend listened, gave me some suggestions, and listened some more. Fifteen years later, my son is a freshman in high school, I’m still sharing problems with my friend, and she’s still listening.”

- Beth A. Mrkvicka, reference librarian
at Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP in Chicago

“My favorite New Orleans experience was when I was in second grade. My mother had designed and constructed a model for the Carrier Corporation, which they paid her handsomely to transport and set up at a trade show in Dallas. She and my dad pulled all three of us kids (me, my brother Bernie, and sister Alex) out of school, packed up a large van with the model, some tools, us three kids, our luggage, etc. We traveled from Syracuse, New York, down the coast, visiting many great cities along the way, including New Orleans and San Antonio, before heading north to Dallas. While in New Orleans, we walked through the French Quarter and visited Jackson Square. I remember being in Jackson Square, where an older man taught us kids how to feed pigeons in our hands. As the pictures attest, I did learn—or endure—to feed the pigeons. However, my most memorable experience was watching as one of the pigeons decided my sister’s head made the perfect spot!”

- Andrea R. Rabbia, technical services librarian
at Syracuse University College of Law H. Douglas
Barclay Law Library



Member to Member

“About 1976 I was a law student at Tulane when my visiting father-in-law, a native of the city, took us to visit one his older cousins living in New Orleans. The cousin still had a case of liqueur that my father-in-law’s French great-grandfather had manufactured in New Orleans before Prohibition started in 1920. The cousin generously offered to give each of us a dram of the prunelle liqueur. The stuff was certainly as potent, and probably more so, than the day it was distilled at least 56 years before!”

- *Paul Richert, law librarian and professor of law at the University of Akron Law Library in Akron, Ohio*

“This takes just a very few words—French Quarter, chickory coffee, and beignets—and in that order.”

- *Carol N. Rogers, manager of information resources-libraries at Latham Watkins LLP in Los Angeles*

“I visited New Orleans in 1975 and have not returned. However, there were several memorable experiences. The slower pace was one, although, from living in New York, I did find myself thinking, ‘Come on, come on.’ The food was great: po’ boys, jambalaya, and also beignets, accompanied by coffee with chicory, at the Cafe Du Monde. I loved taking the Charles Street trolley just to sight-see the neighborhoods—some very wealthy ones, too. I visited historical Jackson Square and also the Voodoo Museum and the above-ground cemeteries. While I did not get to hear jazz, that was the year of the Audubon Zoo song ‘where they all asked for you.’ Finally, I enjoyed a boat trip on the Mississippi River where you could see logs on the coasts that turned out to be alligators. From what I’ve read about the rebuilding of New Orleans after Katrina, the food, music, and architecture have remained much the same since my trip there in the ’70s.”

- *Phoebe Ruiz-Valera, technical services librarian at Cleary Gottlieb Steen Hamilton LLP in New York*

“A debris sandwich at Mother’s Restaurant (401 Poydras Street).”

- *Wanita Scroggs, international law librarian at Stetson University College of Law in Gulfport, Florida*

“I have been to New Orleans at least 12 times since 1990. It’s always been and continues to be one of my favorite cities ... the food, the culture, the food, the people, the food, the music ... oh, did I mention the food? But one of my favorite memories of New Orleans was June 2006, when I attended the ALA annual meeting. It was the first major convention held in New Orleans post-Katrina, and many people were very nervous about attending ... would the city be ready, would it be safe?”

“The answer to both worries was YES! Walking into shops and restaurants or taking cabs, the locals would ask if we were ‘with the librarians.’ Everyone was so appreciative of our being in New Orleans and helping to bring NOLA back to its well-deserved glory. Whenever possible I would tell them that AALL would be coming this summer and that we were all looking forward to a great time in a great city. So, despite my many visits, unforgettable meals, fun shopping, wonderful ambiance, and neighborhoods, one of my most memorable experiences was witnessing the resilience of a city and its people as they worked to bring New Orleans back to its vibrant, laissez-les-bon-temps-roulez life!”

- *Merle J. Slyhoff, collection development and document delivery librarian at the University of Pennsylvania Law School Biddle Law Library in Philadelphia*

“When I return to New Orleans, I look forward to riding the historic St. Charles streetcar. I catch it on Canal Street and hope to get a window seat. It lumbers up through the Garden District slowly enough to get a good look at all the beautiful houses. The round trip ride takes about an hour and a half and is the perfect way to spend a lazy afternoon.”

- *Julie Tessmer, deputy law librarian at the Wisconsin State Law Library in Madison*

“The Big Easy is such a remarkable city! I’m very pleased that my AALL committed itself early to holding its Annual Meeting as scheduled in New Orleans, that the hurricane and its aftermath did not deter us. Indeed, AALL’s resolve shows the community and the nation that all of us will do what we can to help rejuvenate this wonderful city.

“It would surely take me more than a paragraph to share my affections for New Orleans and its citizens. But aside from sipping a beverage in Laffite’s Blacksmith Shop, or stopping to listen to some great local-and-live music in the French Quarter, or viewing the city from a St. Charles streetcar, the best I could recommend to my colleagues would be to simply walk. Walk and explore and enjoy what you come across.

“N’Awlins is extremely walk-able. And that’s the fun part—that you will always encounter something different, even in the space of just a few blocks. On one block you’ll pass by taverns with live music, the next will bring you to a gallery of art and/or antiques. Keep exploring, and soon enough you can come across the historic Napoleon House and indulge in a scrumptious po’ boy or etouffee. A few more paces might bring you across the House of the Rising Son (rock fans will know it) or the St. Louis Cemetery.

“And always, with every step you take, the people. From the down-and-out to the up-and-coming, from palm readers to booksellers, from rockers to art dealers and antiquarians, from students to grizzled (and not-so grizzled) locals, first-time visitors to New Orleans will not be at all disappointed in their hosts. I have always found the citizens of New Orleans to be nothing but friendly, gregarious and helpful, in love with, and knowledgeable of, their city. They’ve taken some knocks from nature and government, but their spirit won’t be broken.

“That’s what makes for a great city, and that’s what I have missed the most in the three years since I’ve visited—the folks.”

- *Brian A. Stiglmeier, serials/records and briefs librarian at the U.S. Supreme Court Library in Washington, D.C.*

“I’ve been to New Orleans just once, in late March 2005. It was our departure city for a wonderful Caribbean cruise my husband’s whole family went on. We arrived a day early in order to do some sightseeing, and we packed in as much as we could.

“We did all the normal touristy things: French Quarter, Café du Monde, cemetery visit, etc. But my favorite experience—besides my very own tour of the Law Library of Louisiana, led by former Associate Director Cathy Lemann—was having lunch at the Camellia Grill (www.atneworleans.com/body/camelliagrill.htm).

“To get there we rode the St. Charles Avenue streetcar and saw the beautiful homes, gardens, and stately trees in the Garden District—a treat in itself. Lunch was terrific. A favorite among locals, the Camellia Grill is an old-fashioned diner with good food, great atmosphere, and entertaining waitstaff—not to mention white cloth napkins. I understand from various Web sources that it closed after Katrina, is now under new ownership, and is to reopen soon, if it hasn’t already. I’ve also read that the new owner intends to keep it much the same; if that’s true, then I highly recommend it.”

- *Connie Von Der Heide, director of reference and outreach services at the Wisconsin State Law Library in Madison*