

NOTES AND ISSUES

PUBLISHED BY THE PARKVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

VOL. 1

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NO. 11

GENERAL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 20; GUESTS INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES FROM SPAYMART AND THE URBAN CONSERVANCY

The next quarterly meeting of the Association will be on Tuesday January 20 at 7:30 PM at Vincent Hall, 1324 Moss Street. An agenda for the meeting is included in the center of this issue of the newsletter.

The meeting is expected to last about 90 minutes. Refreshments, including wine, are always served.

The minutes from the October meeting can be found on Page 11.

Scheduled speakers for the meeting include Lynn Chiche of SpayMart, who will discuss the importance of spaying and neutering pets, as well as the maintenance of feral cat colonies; and Geoff Coates of The Urban Conservancy, who will discuss his organization's "Shop Local" campaign. The Association is a member of both SpayMart and The Urban Conservancy.

(continued at the top of page two.)



Photo by Andy Anderson

In early December the pelicans again showed up to make the Bayou their Winter home. The numbers though have been less than in previous years.

NEW PBS TV SERIES NEEDING HELP FROM PARKVIEW FOLKS

A new PBS series that will premier in June called "Simply Living," which will profile individuals who refuse to replace old objects just because they are old, will be in New Orleans on January 6 looking for people to feature in the show.

The open auditions will take place from 8 AM to 11 AM at the Fair Grinds Coffeehouse, next to Whole Foods at 3133 Ponce de Leon.

"We're looking for some 'things that refuse to die' to feature on our upcoming television series - interesting things with colorful histories that give viewers the idea that newer is not always better, that in many cases it's worthwhile to keep old (continued on page two.)

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(continued from page one.)



SpayMart is a 501(c) 3 non profit organization. According to SpayMart's website, www.spaymart.org, the mission statement is "to reduce the number of surplus and unwanted animals through aggressive spay/neuter and adoption initiatives and to educate the public regarding responsible pet ownership."

SpayMart has been operating feral cat clinics for over four years, utilizing existing veterinary clinics. During its first eighteen months in operation SpayMart sterilized over 2,000 feral (stray) cats. SpayMart operates completely through donations.



The Urban Conservancy is dedicated to research, education and advocacy that promote the wise stewardship of the urban built environment and local economies. According to its web site, www.urbanconservancy.com, the single greatest resource New Orleans possesses is the historic urban fabric of the city. This irreplaceable (but renewable) asset is the source of our unique culture, cuisine, music and celebrations. This urban fabric is what brings artists and tourists alike and it is what nourishes each during their stay.

The Urban Conservancy's current project is StayLocal, which will establish a local business alliance dedicated to working with and for locally owned and operated businesses in New Orleans.

(continued from page one.)

things in good repair rather than discarding them and clogging our landfills," said the producer.

Since Parkview was developed in the 1920's, a period of great industrial design in America, it is reasonable to assume that in many of the unrenovated kitchens and bathrooms of Parkview, people are still using objects that some would have thought extinct and would be fascinated to learn that such things are still in use. For more information on this interesting PBS program please contact Robert Thompson of The Fair Grinds Coffeehouse at 948-3222 or at rwt1@bellsouth.net.

"We've been told that New Orleans is an ideal location for our programs," says the producer. "I've been told the entire city qualifies as a thing that refuses to die."

PARKVIEW HISTORY

GULF STATION AT DUMAINE AND CARROLLTON SERVICED PARKVIEW FOR OVER 60 YEARS; NOW SITE OF FELLINI'S CAFÉ

GULF

Openings

Today, January 11, at
N. Carrollton Ave. and Dumaine St.
and
Canal and Scott Streets

OUR progressive policy of giving GULF SERVICE where and when it is needed is exemplified by the new and attractive Service Stations at the above locations.

The usual prompt and efficient GULF SERVICE will be offered to motorists by courteous attendants.

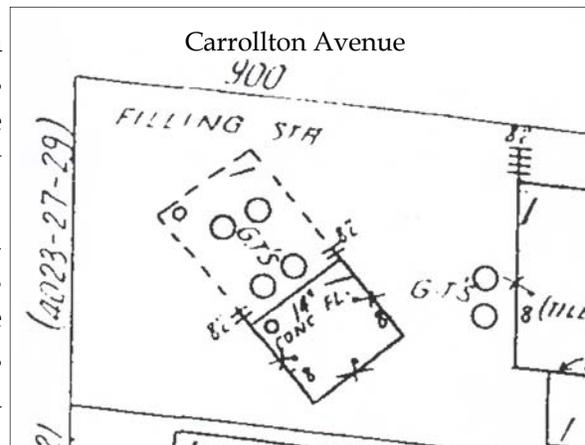
We cordially solicit the patronage of all Motorists

GULF REFINING CO.

On January 11, 1930 a Gulf station opened at the corner of Dumaine and Carrollton, and until Fellini's converted the site into a restaurant in the late 1990's, this station was the primary source of gasoline for those living in Parkview.

The station pictured at left in the drawing in the newspaper advertisement announcing the opening of the station was probably the generic model for a station at that time. However, in reviewing the 1940 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (below) we see that the station at Dumaine and Carrollton looked very similar to that pictured in the 1930 advertisement. The 1940 map shows a small building, used probably as an office, connected to a canopied larger area where the pumps could be found. "G.T.'s" indicated gas tanks so it appeared that four tanks were located under the canopy and two other tanks were located off to the side of the small building.

Cliff Wagner operated the station for many years in the 1970's and 1980's before Gene Cradic purchased the property in 1984 and opened the very popular Uncle Gene's Food Store and Deli. Fellini's Café, after undergoing a substantial renovation, began serving its Mediterranean cuisine in 2000. The site has now been so transformed that there is no obvious signs of it ever having been a gas station.



PARKVIEW OPINION

EDITORIAL

RISKING LIFE WALKING TO THE POST OFFICE

Anyone who has ever walked to the post office on Jefferson Davis is well aware of the inherent dangers of that short and otherwise pleasant stroll. A sidewalk does not exist on the side of Jefferson Davis that the post office is located. Therefore, a Parkview resident must walk along the bike path on the banks of the Bayou, and then very, very carefully cross Jeff Davis in front of the post office. For much of the day, with traffic as heavy as it is on Jeff Davis, this is risky business.

The City must either build a sidewalk along the post office side of Jeff Davis or erect a cross walk in front of the post office. Preferably, both should be done. In the past year four letters have been written to the City asking for some action to be taken. City Councilman Jay Batt has asked the Department of Public Works to address this problem but so far nothing has been done.

JACKSON DAY RACE DESERVES OUR SUPPORT

On Sunday morning January 4 the 97th running of the Jackson Day race will take place. The course will once again run along the Bayou, the runners passing through Parkview on their way to the French Quarter. Later in the year the Mardi Gras Marathon too will travel along that same stretch of Moss Street. In April the biggest race of the year, the Crescent City Classic, which regularly features some of the best runners in the world, will pass at the edge of Parkview, at Carrollton and the Bayou. Any Parkview resident needs to only walk two or three blocks to view all three of the most important road races on the New Orleans track calendar. Sadly, few do. Many actually complain about the races.

The minor inconveniences (mostly traffic problems) that these annual events bring to Parkview are far outweighed by the good publicity these races provide for the neighborhood. Thousands of New Orleans runners are experiencing what we all appreciate as one of the better neighborhoods in the City. Please take to the streets on January 4th and cheer on those five milers.

LETTERS

NO LETTERS WERE
RECEIVED THIS MONTH

Letters may either be e-mailed to mctullis@bellsouth.net or simply mailed to Parkview Neighborhood Association, P.O. Box 791577, New Orleans, LA 70179.

EDITOR'S NOTE: CONTRIBUTORS NEEDED

We are in need of contributors to the newsletter. We would like to find individuals who would be interested in contributing regular columns on the following subjects:

ARCHITECTURE
REAL ESTATE MARKET
GARDENING

Also, we would like to find someone who would be interested in writing art criticism.

Submissions of poetry are always invited.

**CITY PARK HISTORY 100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH;
MURDER UNDER THE OAKS – 1903 TRIAL**

Editor's Note: In the early 20th century the affairs of City Park were widely reported in the city's newspapers, most notably *The Daily Picayune* and *The Times-Democrat*. The City Beautiful movement was in full swing by this period, and its major tenets, particularly an appreciation of aesthetics, were most evident in New Orleans in the development of parks. Since the development of Parkview is so much linked with the development of the park, we are continuing with a series focusing on how activities at the park were reported a century ago. The following is from an article in *The Daily Picayune* from December 1903:

It took just one day to secure a conviction in the City Park murder, which was characterized as assassination at the time by the men who knew the circumstances which led to the killing under the oaks.

Summed up, and in a nutshell, the case of George Bollero, charged with the murder of John Ferrier, was presented yesterday in about the following shape, the story being adduced from the testimony of the witnesses heard, and presenting an excellent case from the standpoint of the prosecution.

The scene of the tragedy was the sidewalk in front of the City Park, near Murat Street. Lordly oaks, with thick foliage, overhung the banquette, the trunks of the trees standing within the limits of the park, while here and there along the sidewalk stood oaks and other shade trees. It was about 8:20 o'clock, on the 30th of March last, and the fact that the witnesses several time spoke of having overcoats with them indicated that the weather was raw and bracing. About three-quarters of a square distant is a saloon in which is a pool table, which is well patronized by the parties making a kind of meeting place or resort of it.

Quite a number of young men were in this place that night – some playing pool, some looking on – while another party stood waiting until the players had finished their game in order that they might occupy the table. A cab or coupe stood on the street, on the City Park Avenue side, and three parties had come out of the saloon, actuated by curiosity to see who the party was who had come out there in the coupe at that time in the evening. There was also another party of three standing outside at the time. These were the private watchman Arthur Charbonnet, employed by the scenic railway, which was at that time in course of construction; Conductor Eckenbrecht and Motorman Waldon, of the Orleans Street Railways. The crew of the car had just reached there, and the watchman was standing with them. (continued on next page.)

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(continued from page five.)

A shot was heard and the last three mentioned parties looked up. Then followed five shots in rapid succession and five flashes were seen darting from a weapon held about the height of a man's waist and apparently fired downward towards the ground. Charbonnet, the watchman, said he saw the form of a man standing in the place from which the five flashes were seen to emanate, and, never losing sight of the individual, he saw him walk along the sidewalk towards the entrance to the park, nearly opposite to where the party was playing pool in the saloon. The conductor, when the private watchman started over to where the man was walking on the sidewalk, followed and he saw the watchman take hold of the man, and it was George Bollero, the accused. He had a pistol in his hand, and a few moments afterward Mr. Paul Fourchy, the attorney who yesterday defended Bollero also reached the scene. Fourchy was one of the party of three who had been watching the coupe and its occupants, but they claimed they were not on the sidewalk when the six shots were fired but had returned to the saloon, and only came rushing out when the crowd came out. As Fourchy reached Bollero's side, Bollero addressed him in French, saying: "That's all right: that's all right. He has got them all." At least that's what the watchman said, and that's what Eckenbrecht said too.

Bollero handed Fourchy his revolver and then all parties repaired to the saloon in which the pool playing had been going on, and then Fourchy broke open the breech of the revolver and examined it. The police were telephoned for, and so also was the ambulance, the wounded man having in the meantime arrived in the same saloon.

While the private watchman and Eckenbrecht were nearing Bollero, Ernest Anseman, who was in the saloon, also approached from another direction and reached there, according to his testimony, almost as soon as did any of the others, and he claimed he was the first man to reach Bollero coming out of the saloon. He found Fourchy there already, and also heard Bollero say to Fourchy: "It's me, Paul: he's got 'em all." Charbonnet then asked Fourchy if he knew the man, and Fourchy replied that he did.

While Charbonnet, Eckenbrecht and Waldon, the motorman, were speaking to Bollero at the gate of the park, Mellen, a dairyman, who resides on Park Avenue, saw a man staggering out from the sidewalk towards the car track and hearing someone say a man had been shot, he went towards this man, who was some distance away from the party at the gate. On nearing the man he saw it was a young man wearing a blue jumper, cut short, and exposing the pockets of his trousers to plain view. The man had no weapon in his hand, and Mellen saw none in any of his pockets. He assisted in supporting the man towards the saloon, assisted by another
(continued on next page.)

PROBLEMS REPORTED BY MEMBERS

NOTE: If you have a problem to report that you'd like for the Association to take action on, please let us know either at 483-0733 or mctullis@bellsouth.net

DATE PROBLEM REPORTED	DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM	STATUS OF RESOLUTION
Feb. 2003	Parking of vehicles on the banks of the Bayou, especially near the Magnolia Gardens/Harding Bridge.	Problem continues to grow worse. Parents who park on Bayou refuse to listen to Cabrini. City cannot commit parking officers to location. Other solutions needed.
March 2003	Roosevelt. Automobiles parked improperly make it difficult for large emergency vehicles to travel down the street.	Thoughts needed by members on how to address this problem. Another Roosevelt resident has recently brought this matter to the Association's attention.
July 2003	Moss at Carrollton. Bushes need to be trimmed.	RESOLVED. Bushes were significantly trimmed in mid December. The view of the Bayou is spectacular.
Oct. 2003	Near Post Office on Jeff Davis. There is significant brush growth between the post office and the Stone Center that causes serious obstruction of a driver's vision when traveling on Jeff Davis from the post office towards Canal Street. There is no side walk on the post office side of the street, so pedestrians must walk in the street, creating an even more dangerous situation at that curve in the road.	Letters have been sent to the City expressing concern about this situation. This may be one of those problems where nobody wants to take responsibility. The growth, weeds and grass may be on a railroad right of way. Councilman Jay Batt responded by sending a letter to the Department of Public Works asking for their attention to this matter.
Oct. 2003	Vehicles traveling down side streets at high rates of speed; endangering children and pets.	The problem may be a result of construction on Carrollton and may work itself out once this work is completed.

man, who held the wounded man up on the other side. When they reached the saloon the wounded man (Ferrier) was asked who had shot him and he said that Bollero, who had been confronted with him, was the man. The private watchman, however, made the words much stronger and testified that the wounded man had said: "Yes, that's the man who assassinated me." The wounded man had two holes in his body, and under the breast and the other in the back, near the shoulder.

The strongest witnesses for the state were the Private Watchman Charbonnet, who, however, was not present, he having left the city and is now in Texas, where (continued on page ten.)

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QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What is that race that passes along the Bayou each January? 97TH JACKSON DAY RACE ON JANUARY 4TH

On January 4th hundreds of New Orleans runners will take part in the Jackson Day Race, an event run each year since 1907 to commemorate General Andrew Jackson's defense of the City in 1815. As always the 5.6 mile course, which begins at the Spanish Fort, will run the length of Bayou St. John before turning down Orleans Avenue on its way to the French Quarter.

The race was organized in 1907 by the Young Men's Christian Association, and participation in the race was limited to members of the YMCA. This wasn't a concern as only 31 men entered the contest. There were two classes. The "A" grouping, for experienced runners, had fifteen participants. The "B" group had sixteen runners and started seventeen minutes before the speedsters in the "A" grouping. All those who finished the race received a medal. And that first year all 31 men did finish the race.

This year's race will probably receive no mention in *The Times-Picayune*. Channel 4 won't have a camera truck at the finish line. Unlike the Crescent City Classic, the Jackson Day Race lacks sex appeal, and of course big corporate sponsorship. In fact the present sponsors are the former owners and employees of Radiofone. But in 1907 the inaugural run of the Jackson Day Race was big news. Both morning papers, *The Daily Picayune* and *The Times-Democrat*, dedicated substantial coverage to the race. *The Daily Picayune* ran a drawn map of the course; *The Times-Democrat* showed photos of the winners.

The course was said to be six miles, and was described in *The Daily Picayune* in the words of a reporter who presumably was in one of the lead vehicles that ran just ahead of the lead pack of runners:

"They struck out along the Levee until the shell road was reached, and stuck to this road until the toll gate was passed. There they again took the Levee into Claiborne Street, following the bayou all the way. From the Claiborne bridge the course ran down Claiborne to Orleans and out through the market and Beauregard square, and then out Orleans Alley to the open gate of the square and up the walk to the iron railing."

"Iron railing?" No finish line for this race. Instead you apparently had to

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literally come to a dead stop and touch the railing that surrounded the equestrian statue of General Jackson.

Today's Jackson Day Race is a morning event, the race often over before many of those who live on the Bayou even wake up. In 1907, though, the race was run in the afternoon, just past three. The reason was because of activities leading up to the race. The Ford Motor Company had only started mass producing automobiles four years earlier and those lucky (or rich) enough to own an automobile liked nothing better than to line them up and have a procession. Ten automobiles gathered at the YMCA's headquarters on St. Charles near Julia Street at two o'clock for the parade to Spanish Fort. All 31 runners jumped on board of the vehicles for the ride to the starting line.

The lead car forming the procession was driven by Sam Meyer and held Colonel J.D. Hill, President of the YMCA, Dr. George Kornegay, the surgeon on duty during the race, and a bugler. The only women involved in this event, the wives of the organizers, occupied the second car. The rest of the automobiles were full of runners. When the bugle sounded the parade proceeded out Canal Street.

When the procession arrived at Spanish Fort the runners had to be surprised to find the starting line to actually be in the ruins of the old fort. For authenticity purposes a professor was involved, and Professor Ward did his best to pick the exact spot where Lafitte's pirates were sitting when they received the message from Jackson to join him in battle. When the pistol sounded the men had to descend from the fort by way of crumbling brick steps, before crossing a bridge over the Bayou about where Robert E. Lee Blvd is today. Now on the Holy Rosary side of the Bayou, the runners sprinted alongside the Bayou for the first three miles.

Judges were posted along the route to make sure that none of the men cheated. In the second edition of the race, in 1908, one of the judges, Dunbar Groves, was stationed at Claiborne Avenue and as each runner passed he handed that runner a check that had to be turned in at the race's conclusion, guaranteeing that the runner didn't take any shortcuts. The winner of the 1908 race received a "silver-base medal mounted with gold wings and a foot, and the inscription '1815-1908.'" The runner's winning time was inscribed on the back of the medal.

F.A. Hammatt, a plumber from Boston, won the inaugural running of the race with a time of 40 minutes. A time limit of eighty minutes was put on the course, and all of the men finished within that limit. In last place was the 250 pound secretary of the YMCA who needed an hour to complete the course. Each man was briefly examined by a physician before returning to the club for a well deserved (continued at top of next page.)

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massage. Not a single man became sick during the race, and it was pointed out that none of the top three finishers had ever run a race of that long of a distance.

According to an article in *The Times-Democrat* "the runners were greeted by great crowds of people all along the course, and in some places they were so large that they interfered with the progress of the athletes, especially from Claiborne in. Over this last stretch of the race it was necessary to call for the help of the police in order to keep a lane open for the athletes to pass through."

The leaders of the YMCA were so happy with the results of the race that they vowed to make the race an annual event. These same leaders also vowed to keep the race open only to members of the YMCA. This apparently didn't sit well with the YMCA's rival the Young Men's Gymnastic Club, which organized the next year its own seven mile race, calling it "The Jackson Day Road Race." The Young Men's Gymnastic Club's race was an open field event with top runners from LSU and the Pink S & A Club. The course chosen for this race was a loop that ran up Esplanade from the French Quarter to City Park Avenue, turning down Canal at the cemeteries to return back to downtown. Both races started within a half hour of each other and the courses actually crossed each other at Esplanade and Moss.

Longtime Parkview resident Louis DeLassus (1915-1989), who lived on Wilson Drive for most of his adult life, won the Jackson Day race five consecutive years from 1938-1942. The trophy now given to the winner of the race is named in his honor, and his wife, Jane DeLassus, is usually on hand at Jackson Square to present this trophy.

(continued from page seven.)

he secured employment; Ernest Anseman; Eckenbrecht the conductor, and Waldon, the motorneur, while Mr. Sahuque, Officer Uhde, Sergeant Clifton, Armand Revere, Mr. Beaufort, Ferrier's employer and several others testified corroborative of their testimony. The defense was weak in a sense, but served to prove that Attorney Paul Fourchy was not, as the testimony of some of the State witnesses tended to show, an accessory before or after the fact. Bollero himself took the stand.

When the Jury went upstairs, after considering the case a few minutes, a vote was taken, the result being that two jurors were for acquittal, one was for guilty as charged, and the rest divided between guilty without capital punishment and manslaughter. On the fourth vote a decision was reached with a unanimous vote for guilty without capital punishment. Bollero was remanded for sentence.

There can be only one sentence, and that is imprisonment for life, which however really only means fifteen years in the Penitentiary.

**MINUTES OF SECOND MEETING
OF
THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
OF
THE PARKVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

The second meeting of The General Membership of The Parkview Neighborhood Association was held on Tuesday October 7, 2003 at 7:30 PM at Vincent Hall at Holy Rosary, 1324 Moss Street.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The following Board Members were present: Anderson, Austin, Bishop, Main, Tullis.

The following Members were present: Deena Bedigian, Sid Chrestia, A.J. Lionnet, Joyce Lionnet, William Peltier, Tom Cloke, Ulla Cloke, Amos Deinard, Ronald Plaisance, Michael Wesley, Elaine Jones, Elizabeth Hahn.

The following guests were present: State Representative Peppi Bruneau, Robert Jackson of the Sewage and Water Board, Curry Miller of the Parking Division for the City.

II. FINANCIAL REPORT

Charlie Bishop, Treasurer, reported that the Association's account has a balance of \$982. Mr. Bishop said that all funds on hand are from membership dues. He added that so far all expenses of the Association have been covered by donations.

III. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

It was reported that there are currently 51 paid members of the Association. This includes 26 family memberships, 23 individual memberships, and two business memberships (Fellini's Café and Parkview Tavern).

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. VACANCY ON THE BOARD

It was announced that owing to original Board member Donald Boudreaux's

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resignation there was a vacancy on the Board. Only one nomination to the Board was presented. Therefore, the Board of Directors at their last meeting elected Andy Anderson to fill the unexpired term of office.

B. PARKING ON THE BAYOU

Mark Tullis read a letter he had received from Cabrini High School President Frances Tarantino, who said that the school has hired a police officer and that the police officer has been asked to monitor parking on the Bayou. She also said that the hiring of the officer is permanent.

Curry Miller, Director of Parking for the City, addressed the group regarding the continuing problem of parking on the Bayou. He said that he has sent his ticket writing officers to the location. He said that the first time at the scene they tried to speak with the offenders.

Mr. Miller said that he will try to send officers to the scene as often as possible, but that he was restricted by available manpower. He asked that neighbors call his office when the offenses take place. Members pointed out to Mr. Miller that the cars park on the Bayou the same time each day, as they are usually there to pick up students at Cabrini.

Members discussed other measures that could be taken to protect the Bayou and the trees. It was mentioned that City Park has had the same problem and finally put up protective barriers, wooden posts that prevented access to cars.

Also, a recent city ordinance in Baton Rouge that prohibited parking on one's lawn was discussed.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. SEWAGE AND DRAINAGE PROBLEMS

Robert Jackson of the Sewage and Water Board addressed the group on issues regarding sewage, including current work on Carrollton Avenue. Many of the questions had to do with drainage.

John Shires of the Department of Public Works wrote in a communication that his office was in the process of purchasing two pump trucks that would be used to clean storm drains. Mr. Shires asked that anyone who had a problem with their storm drains to let him know. Members came forward to

put their names on a list.

B. WISNER BIKE PATH

The final plan of the bike path was discussed and the results are satisfactory to most of the membership, although one member did oppose the plan, arguing that to run a bike path in the street on Moss would be dangerous. The choices were to run the bike path either in the street or on the levee of the Bayou. It wasn't clear when construction would commence.

C. COMMENTS BY STATE REPRESENTATIVE PEPPI BRUNEAU

Mr. Bruneau mentioned some recent legislation that was of interest to the membership. He also answered questions.

D. CRIME REPORTS

Members reported on damage to automobiles and car thefts. One member reported a recent incident at his home with a stranger that resulted in police involvement.

During the discussion Mr. Bruneau said that Parkview may wish to consider forming a special crime prevention district. He said that prior to Lakeview enacting its crime prevention district it had many of the same type of crimes (car thefts, property crimes, etc.) as Parkview has now. Now, however, with the special crime prevention district in place and with constant NOPD patrols, the level of crime, especially property crimes, has been greatly reduced.

Mr. Bruneau said that he would be available to assist the neighborhood if it chose to pursue legislation enacting a special taxing district.

E. STREETS AND PUBLIC WORKS

A number of problems relative to drainage were reported and would be included in the report to the Department of Public Works.

F. DATE OF NEXT GENERAL MEETING

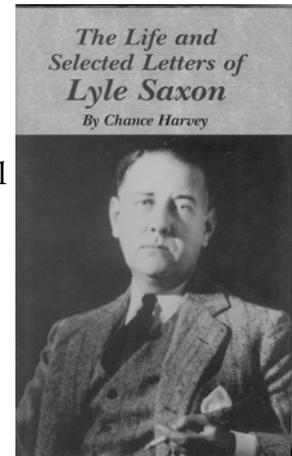
The next general meeting would be in January.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

BOOK REVIEW

NEW BIOGRAPHY OF MR. MARDI GRAS LYLE SAXON

To those living in 1920's New Orleans Lyle Saxon would have appeared to have been the perfect *bon vivant* living the ultimate bachelor life. After all he was a feature writer for the largest newspaper in the city, covered Mardi Gras and society, lived in the French Quarter and was so well off that he had a full time butler. He also counted among his friends Sherwood Anderson, Edmund Wilson and William Faulkner. He traveled regularly to New York City. Often he would spend long periods of time with other writers at the Melrose plantation where he would write, and, when opportunity permitted, amuse himself with the servants.



Yet, according to Chance Harvey's *The Life and Selected Letters of Lyle Saxon* (Pelican; 2003), we find a man who lived a sad, unhappy life, often penniless, with a manufactured past, no family and just as often no friends. He may very well have been New Orleans' own John O'Hara, a man who also was able to control the myth of his own greatness only so far as the grave.

Saxon was never comfortable with his early years and did his very best to alter his biography. For example, Harvey points out that while Saxon was born in Washington State, he preferred to pass himself off as a native of Louisiana. Likewise, Saxon implied that he graduated from LSU while LSU's records don't reflect that he graduated. When someone is dishonest about where one was born and whether one graduated from college it is difficult to take such a character seriously about any other evidence he can offer about his life. Unfortunately, seeing that the subject of Harvey's book is a selection of letters, which is nothing more than anecdotes anyway, you have to wonder if Saxon is making stories up just to be interesting. After reading the 60 pages of letters included in this volume I can tell you that even if Saxon was lying about everything that occurred in these letters, you'd still believe that he led a boring, uninteresting life.

It isn't as if Saxon cast himself amongst dullards. He was a full fledged member of the often talked about French Quarter Writer's Colony that produced Sherwood Anderson and Faulkner. William Spratling, in recalling that golden time, wrote, "There were casual parties with wonderful conversation and with plenty of grand, or later to be grand people." It is presumed that Saxon was at many of these parties, but the wonderful conversation that Spratling mentioned never found its way into Saxon's letters.

BOOK REVIEW

According to some of Saxon's friends, including George Healy, Saxon was an outsider even in many of the groups that Saxon is best identified with, such as the *Double Dealer* crowd. Moreover Saxon made the strategic error of picking Baton Rouge as the place of his birth, not realizing at the time that in the eyes of his soon to be friends Baton Rouge was despised. Ironically, had he been honest and said he was from Washington State, he probably would have been considered exotic.

Other lesser known writers are mentioned in the book – sometimes by Harvey and other times in Saxon's letters. However, a mention was usually about all the writer got. Ada Jack Carver, a splendid female short story writer who was born in Natchitoches in 1890, is a terribly underappreciated Louisiana writer, who, while well known in Saxon's day, is now out of print and is considered obscure. Carver was a member of Saxon's Melrose Plantation community, and while Harvey did include with the book a photo of Carver with Saxon at the plantation, Harvey neglected to include basic biographical information about Carver that would have perhaps properly introduced her to some of the readers.

Saxon is remembered by many as a preservationist and early champion of saving the French Quarter. Some of his better letters show that side of him, such as this one in 1926 when he writes of the recent suicide of William Irby, who Saxon calls "the good fairy of Frenchtown:"

It was Irby, you know, that gave the money to restore the Cathedral, and who owns the Patio Royal and the Arts and Crafts Club, as well as one of the Pontalba buildings on Jackson Square. Poor old man! A victim of depression the Picayune said. I know all about depression, I think, and I feel sorry for him. The thing I don't understand is why more people don't commit suicide.

There is not much else to say about the remaining letters. Harvey republishes a few dozen of Saxon's letters, and seeing how uninteresting so many of the letters turn out to be, you have to wonder what Harvey had to work with before she picked these letters as the ones to put in her book.

Combining a biography and collected letters into one book is always a difficult task for an editor. As a primary source material in biographical writing, letters need to be weighty, full of local color and most of all plentiful. Unfortunately for Chance Harvey, Saxon's letters were none of these.

Many of Saxon's books, most of which are interesting histories and vignettes, are re-published by Pelican. To Pelican's credit it is fair to say that if it wasn't for Pelican's efforts here Saxon would now be out of print.

RESTAURANTS

PARKWAY BAKERY OPENS UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP; JAY NIX SAVES NEIGHBORHOOD LANDMARK

Everyone has a story to tell about Parkway Bakery. Jean Wilkinson, who lived on Cleveland Street, recently recalled the role “the Parkway” played in her childhood in the late 1930’s:



Parkway Bakery
Hagan and Toulouse
New Orleans, LA 70119

“As kids we hopped on our bikes when it was time for the hot French bread to come out of the oven. We each had a stick of butter with us, and we melted it on each of our loaves of bread.”

Roast Beef is the po-boy that people remember most, mentioning the gravy, the mayonnaise, and of course, always the bread. It seems that for many over 50 years of age Parkway is remembered as a working bakery, one that produced brioche and donuts. The younger set missed the bakery end of the business and recalls Parkway only as a free standing po-boy shop, something that is all but extinct now in the City.

In 1985, after being run by the Timothy family since 1922, the Parkway shut its old screen doors for the last time. Jay Nix, who lived down the street, bought the place the next year. He soon erected a sign saying, “We’re Saving Parkway.” While many found the sign charming, few really believed Parkway would ever re-open.

Mr. Nix had faith in not only Parkway’s

legendary name but in the neighborhood too. It is obvious that Mr. Nix’s faith extended deeply into his checkbook. The renovation is as fine and well done as any major restaurant project in the City.

Bill Grady of *The Times-Picayune* was one of many local writers who championed Parkway and pined for its return. In a column he wrote in 2000 it is mentioned that Nix sold 20,000 bricks from the old bakery ovens to help finance the project. Nix kept a few though. They are now cemented into the floor of the patio.

PLEASE JOIN AND SUPPORT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

If you haven't joined the Parkview Neighborhood Association and would like to do so please call 483-0733 or e-mail mctullis@bellsouth.net. You can also join by visiting the Association’s website at www.parkviewneighborhood.com. Your support is needed.

Annual dues are \$15 for individuals and \$25 for families.