

Trip 2 – Episode #53: Nawlins

We didn't just go to New Orleans. We went to New Orleans when they were hosting the Final Four Weekend! (For those of you who aren't sports fans, the Final Four Weekend is the culmination of NCAA Basketball's March Madness.) (For those who know even less about sports, NCAA is the National Collegiate Athletic Association and every March, 68 college teams vie for the championship.)

We didn't plan it that way, because as usual, we didn't plan. We just went ahead and drove to New Orleans. We expected it to be crowded, because if there isn't a pandemic or a hurricane, New Orleans is always crowded. But the weekend we were there, it was just crazy.

So what did we do? We drove Charles through the French Quarter. Which started off looking like this:



Then this:



But as we got deeper into the Quarter, it looked like this:



It took about five minutes to get through this intersection.



As quickly as we could, we got out of that neighbourhood and parked Charles in an RV park outside of town. From then on, we Ubered into and out of the downtown area, sparing Charles (and us) the challenge of competing with thousands of basketball fans who were either celebrating or drowning their sorrows.

Our friend Karen Rappa had told us about Frenchmen Street, an area of New Orleans that was more fun and less crowded than the French Quarter. Karen is also the one who insisted we try an Aperol Spritz when we were going to Venice years ago, so we're already eternally grateful to her, and we naturally listen to all her advice.

Once again, Karen was right. Frenchmen Street was actually its own community, with restaurants and bars and shops.



But for us, the main draw was music, and this was where all the best musicians were.

During our two days there, we were able to listen to 6 different groups of musicians, most of which were just great.



This little trio was good fun and their upbeat tunes got people up dancing.



This septet, squeezed into a tiny space in the Spotted Cat, was fantastic. We especially enjoyed the young woman playing the sax. We found out her name was Aurora Nealand, and if you ever get to New Orleans, find her.



The next day she was playing with a totally different group at another spot on Frenchmen Street, so we made sure we were there. We thoroughly enjoyed her again, and we discovered that along with playing sax, soprano sax and clarinet, she was also a lovely singer.



Of course, Nawlins is not just about music. There's so much more to see and absorb in this amazing town. Like the unique character of its buildings and streets.







And the colour. Everywhere. There's no such thing as subtlety here.





Lots of art everywhere you looked.









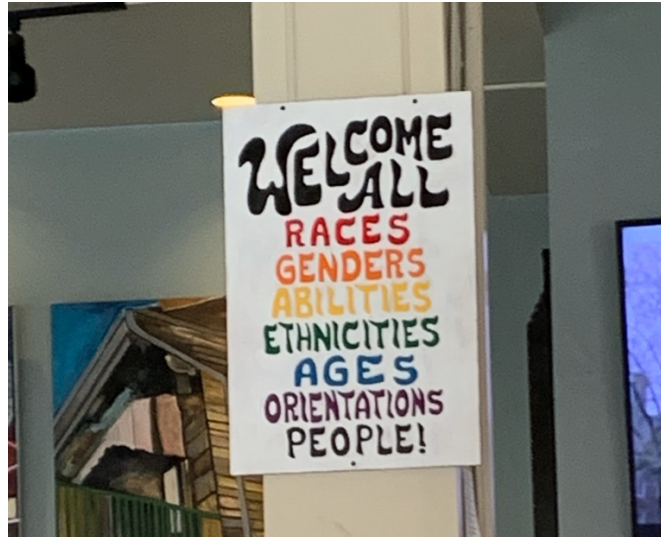
We resisted
the
temptation
to buy one
of these
jackets.



If you look closely,
you'll see that these
necklaces are made
from zippers!



All kinds of fun and interesting signs.







I don't know if New Orleans spawns interesting characters or attracts them. I suspect it's both. But people watching is a fulltime occupation here.





Yes, this guy his walking his kid. (As in baby goat.)



This young poet would write a poem for you for \$5.



And this guy, (who's on the other side of this booth, so you can't see him) was trying to take on any Democrats who happened to be walking by.

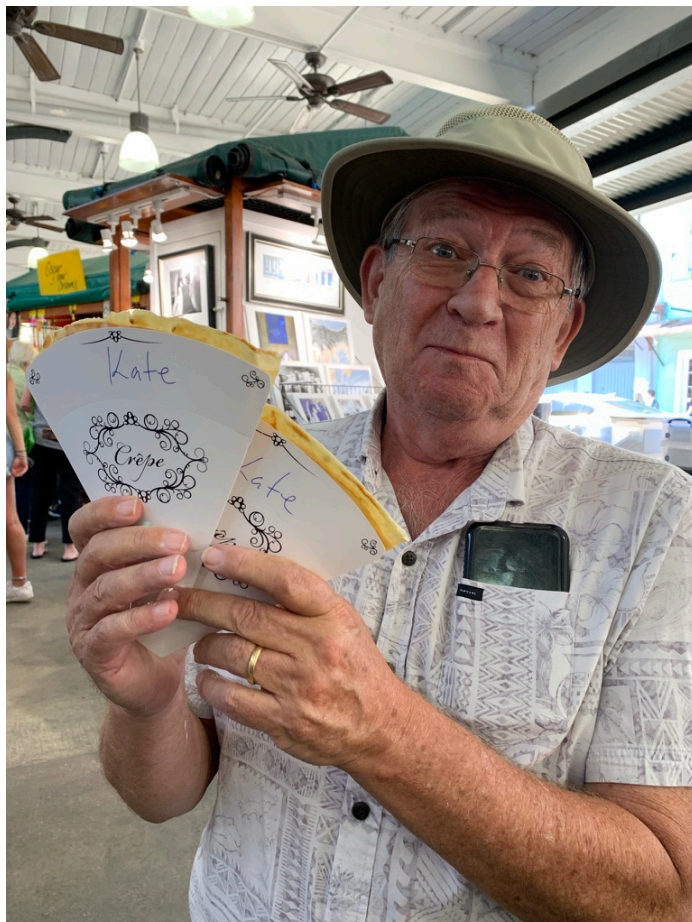


And of course, there was lots of food, and great places to eat and drink.





But in answer to the question everybody is going to ask, no we did not go to Café Du Monde. Well, we went there, but the line-up was so long, we would've spent at least an hour waiting to get in, so this is as close as we got.



Sadly, by the time we got to a place that served real beignets, they were sold out. So these "beignet crepes" are the closest we got to beignets on this trip.

Not to worry, we'd both been to Café du Monde before.

And we did manage to find these. Which helped us get over our disappointment about not having beignets.

(We can hear your collective sighs of relief.)



And then, there are some things that don't really fit into any category, except maybe "things you'll only ever see in New Orleans".





And my personal favourite:



This is what I've always said about New Orleans:
"If you don't want to have fun, don't go there."
Still true.