New Orleans is more than Bourbon Street and the French Quarter. The city is made up of many distinct neighborhoods, each one of them full of fun things to see and do, where memorable meals, music, and unique shopping opportunities can be found with nominal effort. If you plan to come to the AALL Annual Meeting and Conference in New Orleans this July, consider coming a day early or staying a day later. It will be worth your time, and the city can definitely use the revenue as we continue to recover from Hurricane Katrina. And, if you want to make this a family vacation, the region around New Orleans is rich in sights to see.
Jeans

by Brian Huddleston
A Note on Getting around the City

Service has resumed on most bus lines in New Orleans, and streetcars are running again along the Riverfront and on Canal Street. Along the famous St. Charles Avenue route, streetcars only run an abbreviated loop around the Central Business District, but buses run the entire route, down St. Charles to the Riverbend neighborhood and up Carrollton to the line’s terminus at Claiborne Avenue. And please, don’t make the touristy mistake of calling them *trolleys*; they are streetcars. Have you ever heard of a play called “*A Trolley Named Desire*?” (The Desire streetcar line, alas, was discontinued in 1948, shortly after Tennessee Williams wrote his famous play.) Fares for the buses and streetcars are $1.25, and transfers are an additional quarter. A one-day *Visit* pass costs $5, or you can buy a three-day pass for $12. Cab fare will also be reasonable to any of the New Orleans attractions mentioned in this article.

Exploring the Garden District and Uptown

After the city of New Orleans began to grow beyond the historic confines of the French Quarter, new areas developed along the high ground adjacent to the banks of the Mississippi River. Today, the two main neighborhoods upriver from the Quarter are the Garden District and Uptown. Three primary thoroughfares extend upriver from the Quarter and run parallel to the Mississippi in decreasing echoes of the deep curve the river takes in its path along the city. In increasing distance from the river they are Tchoupitoulas (*chop-uh-TOO-lus*) Street, Magazine Street, and St. Charles Avenue. Any mode of transportation down these routes will return you to the Central Business District and the Meeting hotels or to the French Quarter.

*Magazine Street* is a series of shopping and residential areas along its entire corridor. Walking its full six miles in July is a feat for only the stout of heart and the extremely well-hydrated, so consider splitting a cab with friends or taking the Magazine Street bus (its route starts at Canal Street and runs parallel to the convention center a few blocks away from the river). Much of Magazine Street is full of great antique stores, art galleries, and boutique shops, and there are also plenty of restaurants, coffee shops, and bars along the way to help pace your explorations. Some of
the best sections of Magazine Street for shopping are the four blocks between Felicity Street and Jackson Avenue, the neighborhoods close to where Magazine is intersected by both Washington and Napoleon, and the first few blocks continuing uptown past Jefferson Avenue.

Starting at Jackson Avenue, Magazine Street is also the river-side boundary of the Garden District, one of the more elegant neighborhoods in New Orleans and a place where you can see many of the city’s most sumptuous mansions. So meander down the numeric side-streets—First, Second, etc.—to the smaller byways that run parallel between Magazine Street and St. Charles Avenue—Camp, Chestnut, Coliseum, and Prytania—and give yourself a walking tour of the Garden District. (You did bring your free map from the hotel, didn’t you?)

Notable places for a quick lunch or sandwich along Magazine Street are Joey K’s (3001 Magazine Street), Winnie’s (3454 Magazine Street), and the Magazine Poboys and Sandwich Shop (2368 Magazine Street). Just about any other of the small neighborhood-type places you encounter will also provide a good meal, and often even those run-down corner “quick stop” stores have a counter in the back where you can get some of the best sandwiches and plate lunches in town. For a more elegant dining experience, consider La Petite Grocery (4328 Magazine Street), Lilette (3637 Magazine Street), or the Flaming Torch (737 Octavia Street, one block off Magazine Street). Or plan ahead by making reservations and donning proper attire for what is perhaps New Orleans’ most famous restaurant, Commander’s Palace (1403 Washington Avenue, two blocks either way to Magazine Street or St. Charles Avenue). Located in the heart of the Garden District, Commander’s Palace is well-deserving of its reputation and its re-opening more than a year after Hurricane Katrina made news around the country.

If you continue all the way up Magazine Street, you will find yourself at Audubon Park. Originally the site of the 1884 World Cotton Centennial—an early World’s Fair—this 400-acre park has a golf course, a walking/biking path, and a lagoon full of wildlife, such as turtles and birds and the occasional alligator. Also located at the park is the Audubon Zoo, one of the best in the country and well known for its white tigers and the Louisiana Swamp exhibit. The Audubon Institute also runs a riverboat between the zoo and its sister institution, the Aquarium of the Americas, back on the edge of the French Quarter. So if you have the whole day, for a bargain you can get a package deal that includes the aquarium, the zoo, and a round-trip ride on the riverboat.

St. Charles Avenue will also take you “up town,” the direction, as well as through “Uptown,” the neighborhood. St. Charles is primarily a commercial district until Jackson Avenue. It has some fine antique stores and several great restaurants, including the casual St. Charles Tavern (1433 St. Charles Avenue) and the upscale Delmonico (1300 St. Charles Avenue), one of chef Emeril Lagasse’s several restaurants in New Orleans. Farther up St. Charles are some of the largest and most elaborate mansions in the city. One of them, The Columns (3811 St. Charles Avenue), is now a hotel, bar, and restaurant. Originally the home of a 19th century cigar magnate, it was used for the interior scenes of the bordello in Louis Malle’s Pretty Baby, and much of the present furniture and decor is recognizable from that movie.

Finding Some Great Music
If you are uptown late in the evening, you have plenty of options for good, live music. Le Bon Temps Roule (4801 Magazine) is a great neighborhood bar and music club. It has live music most nights of the week, usually with no cover charge. Another top New Orleans’ venue is Tipitina’s (501 Napoleon Avenue, on the corner of Tchoupitoulas Street). Tipitina’s was originally organized as a place for influential R&B pianist Professor Longhair to perform during his later years (the club is named for one of his songs). It regularly features New Orleans’ best musical acts, such as Dr. John, Anders Osbourne, and The Radiators, and through the years it has hosted a diverse range of groups, such as Parliament Funkadelic, Nine Inch Nails, and Wilco.

Other good places to catch music uptown include Jin Jean’s Restaurant and Lounge (1700 Louisiana Avenue, one block off St. Charles Avenue), Carrollton Station (8140 Willow Street), and the Maple Leaf Bar (8316 Oak Street). A final recommendation for music is the Mid-City Lanes Rock ‘N’ Bowl (4133 S. Carrollton Avenue). Yes, it’s both a bowling alley and a music club; the bowling facilities have kept their 1950s-era styling along with the rest of the decor. Live music most nights of the week presents an assortment of the city’s best acts, including a weekly Zydeco night that offers premiere examples of that style of music from all over Louisiana. (Rock ‘N’ Bowl is a bit more off the beaten path than the other venues mentioned above—best to take a taxi there and back.)

An Excursion into Mid-City
If you take the Canal Street streetcar line to its end, you will be at City Park and the New Orleans Museum of Art. The museum is noted for its French and American art, a strong collection of African and Japanese pieces, and a significant assemblage of Fabergé eggs. Two other worthwhile attractions are adjacent to the museum. The first is the Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden, with 55 works of contemporary and 20th century sculptors from throughout the world set around landscaped paths and fountains. The second is the New Orleans Botanical Garden, a lovely Art Deco public
The more peaceful aspects of life in Louisiana during the 19th century can be found by touring any of the many plantations upriver from New Orleans. Whitney, Oak Alley, San Francisco, and Laura plantations are all within an hour's drive of New Orleans. Several companies offer bus rides to and tours of these and other plantations: ask for more information at your hotel.

Venturing outside New Orleans

Interested in taking a short trip outside the city and learning about American history? The site of the Battle of New Orleans (immortalized by the Johnny Horton song; “In 1814 we took a little trip/Along with Colonel Jackson down the mighty Mississipi”) is located just a few miles downriver from New Orleans at the Chalmette Battlefield. It was here that the Americans, under the command of Andrew Jackson and with the aid of pirate Jean Lafitte’s privateers, repulsed the British advance and inflicted 2,000 enemy casualties while suffering only a few dozen among their own forces. Though it is correct that the treaty ending the War of 1812 had already been signed, it had not yet been ratified by the United States, so technically the war was not over when the battle was fought.

Adjacent to the battlefield is the Chalmette National Cemetery, established during the Civil War and the final resting place of veterans from then through the Vietnam era (including four veterans of the War of 1812 who were disinterred and moved here, but only one of whom actually fought at the Battle of New Orleans).

If you enjoy touring classic American homes, Southern Living has called the Long Vue House and Gardens “one of the country’s finest city estates.” This national historic landmark is open for tours of its three-story, 20-room Classical Revival mansion and its large collection of American and European antiques and art pieces. The eight-acre gardens have a variety of flowers with something blooming nearly all year; the cannas lilies and plumeria should be at their peak in mid-July. (Long Vue is also off the beaten path; a taxi or tour bus may be the best way to get there—check with your hotel.)

Touring the Mississippi Gulf Coast

Just 90 miles east of New Orleans on Interstate 10 in Mississippi is Biloxi. Founded in 1699, Biloxi was the original capital of colonial French Louisiana. The French moved their headquarters to the recently settled and more strategically situated New Orleans in 1723. Today, Biloxi it is the epicenter of Mississippi’s Casino Gambling industry.

Though the Gulf Coast took a direct hit from Hurricane Katrina and the devastation was immense, Biloxi, Gulfport, and surrounding environs offer 11 casinos, all of which have rebuilt or relocated and reopened since Katrina. Even if gambling is not your passion, the casinos are also well known for the musical stars touring on the nostalgia circuit. To see who is playing where, your best bet is to run a restricted search by date and zip code (39533) at Ticketmaster.com. The Steve Miller Band, Willie Nelson, and Tony Bennett have all performed at Gulf Coast casinos recently.
An attraction in Biloxi of a “higher brow” is the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum of Art. George Ohr, the “Mad Potter of Biloxi,” is the father of modern pottery and was the primary force in transforming work in this media from craft to art. An innovator without peer, his pottery is known especially for its warped shapes, thin vessel walls, and vivid, multi-hued glazes. Only appreciated decades after his death, his work is now displayed in museums such as the New York Metropolitan and the Smithsonian Museum of American History. The local museum, co-named for Ohr and a former Biloxi mayor and his wife who are leading benefactors, is the first museum in the United States organized around the work of a single potter and will soon have a new building designed by Frank Gehry.

Another notable art museum is down the coast in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. The Walter Anderson Museum of Art showcases the paintings, drawings, and pottery of three brothers from New Orleans. It focuses on the work of Walter Anderson, who sought to evoke in his art the plants, animals, and scenery he saw on the Mississippi barrier islands while immersing himself there in solitude for weeks at a time.

Out to Acadiana
Rural south and central Louisiana is Cajun country, more formally known as Acadiana. Cajuns are descendants of French colonists forcibly expelled from present-day Nova Scotia by the British in the mid-18th century during what is known as *le Grand Dérangement*. Many towns in south-central Louisiana, such as Lafayette, Breax Bridge, Opelousas, and New Iberia offer a variety of ways to sample the music, food, and art of Cajun culture. Lafayette’s Vermillionville, a recreated 18th century Acadian village, is just one of many options. Outside New Iberia is the Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site, which commemorates Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s epic poem “Evangeline,” the story of lovers tragically separated by the Acadian diaspora.

One of Acadiana’s must-sees is Avery Island, home to the McIlhenny Company, maker of Tabasco sauce. Avery Island rests on one of five major salt domes spread in a 30-mile line along the central coast of Louisiana. The origin of these unique geological formations began when salt was deposited as an ancient ocean withdrew from present-day central Louisiana. The salt was less dense than the decaying vegetable matter and soil. As millennia of pressure from subsequent layers of sediment and rotting plants formed the salt into subterranean columns, the pressure at points was strong enough to force the columns into protuberances that lifted the topsoil above it into islands around the otherwise flat and

New Orleans Needs You
The Annual Meeting Local Advisory Committee needs volunteers for a variety of activities at the Annual Meeting. Won’t you join the wonderful group of dedicated people volunteering their time to help make the 2007 AALL Annual Meeting in New Orleans a success?

Meet new people and reconnect with old friends while working at the registration desk. Write articles for the Second Line, the daily Conference newspaper. Collect tickets and seat people at the Closing Banquet. Or, if you will be in New Orleans early, help stuff the Conference tote bags on Friday, July 13, or visit with attendees’ children during the Family Social Hour on Saturday, July 14. You could also show attendees some New Orleans hospitality by organizing a dine-around on Saturday evening.

Volunteers make the Conference run smoothly, and they have fun. For volunteer opportunities at the New Orleans AALL Annual Meeting, complete the volunteer form available on the AALL Web site at www.aallnet.org/events/07_volunteers.asp. Or fax or mail the completed volunteer opportunities registration form from the Conference Preliminary Program by June 8 to:

Miriam Childs, Volunteer Chair
Law Library of Louisiana
Louisiana Supreme Court
400 Royal Street
New Orleans, LA 70130-2104
504/310-2403
Fax: 504/310-2419
E-mail: mchilds@lasc.org.
marshy swamps. These salt domes rise more than 150 feet in elevation and are two to three miles in diameter.

Because the easily-mined salt was a valuable commodity, Avery Island was originally a vital source of the mineral for the Confederacy during the Civil War. Salt is one of the two ingredients that the McIlhenny family needed to produce its hot sauce, the other being the hot peppers that were well suited for the climate and soil here. Most of the peppers are now grown elsewhere, but it is still on Avery Island that Tabasco is produced in much the same way it was 140 years ago. The combination visitor center and bottling plant is open for tours, and the gift shop offers numerous Tabasco-related products, even Tabasco ice cream!

Edward McIlhenny, one of the sons of the original McIlhenny Company founder, was an ardent conservationist and set aside a large part of Avery Island as a nature preserve. When oil was discovered and drilling began in the 1940s, on his order the impact on the island was kept to a minimum, even to the extent of requiring that any of the visible pipes that couldn’t be buried had to be painted dark green to blend in with the gardens and woods.

Today, the Avery Island Jungle Gardens is lushly landscaped with many varieties of azaleas, camellias, and other flowers; it also has dozens of alligators in its lagoons and serves as a spring home for thousands of snowy white egrets that migrate up from Mexico each year.

A few miles west of Avery Island and also situated upon a salt dome are Rip Van Winkle Gardens. The gardens are part of Jefferson Island, the winter home of one of the most famous actors of the 19th century, Joseph Jefferson, who performed his own stage adaptation of Washington Irving’s Rip Van Winkle more than 4,500 times during his life. The rolling beds of camellias, roses, lilies, and other flowers meander through the massive oaks and are populated by geese, pelicans, and peacocks. At the center of the gardens and atop the island’s high point is the Joseph Jefferson Mansion, a 22-room plantation-style mansion furnished with period antiques and artwork. Both the gardens and the mansion are open to the public.

Something for Everyone

Whether you have only a couple of free hours at the Annual Meeting, or a few extra days to do some serious sightseeing, there is plenty to see and do in and around New Orleans. It may be a quick walk through the historic French Quarter (see last month’s Spectrum) or a meal in one of the many great restaurants New Orleans has to offer. Maybe it’s a day trip to any of the excursions described in this article, or the many other things you can find through the Web sites mentioned in “Sight-Seeing Specifics” on this page below. Either way, start planning your trip to the Annual Meeting today and enjoy everything that New Orleans and the surrounding region has to offer. 

Brian Huddleston (bhuddle@loyno.edu) is senior reference librarian at Loyola University New Orleans Law Library.

Captions:

1. Oak Alley plantation in Louisiana.
2. Courtyard Fountain.
3. Audubon Park Fountain.
5. Commander’s Palace jazz lunch.
7. Biloxi Lighthouse at night.

Sight-Seeing Specifics

General Tourism Resources
Louisiana Office of Tourism
www.louisianatravel.com

Mississippi Gulf Coast Information
www.gulfcoast.org

Acadiana Information
www.centralacadianaturism.com

New Orleans
The New Orleans Museum of Art
One Collins C. Diboll Circle
504/488-2631
Wednesday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
www.noma.org

Longue Vue House and Gardens
#7 Bamboo Road
504/488-5488
Monday-Saturday 10 a.m.-4:30; Sunday 1-5 p.m. ($10 adults/$5 children)
www.longuevue.com

Tours by Isabelle
877/865-8687; 504/391-3544
www.toursbyisabelle.com

Gray Line Tours
800/535-7786; 504/569-1401
www.graylineneworleans.com

UCM Museum
22275 Highway 36
Abita Springs, Louisiana
985/892-2624
Daily, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. ($3 per person)
www.ucmmuseum.com

Abita Brewing Company
72011 Holly Street
Abita Springs, Louisiana
800/737-2311; 985/892-5837
www.abita.com

Chalmette Battlefield
8606 West St. Bernard Highway
Chalmette, Louisiana
504/589-2636
www.nps.gov/jela/chalmette-battlefield.htm

Walter Anderson Museum of Art
510 Washington Avenue
Ocean Springs, Mississippi
228/872-3164
Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
www.walterandersonmuseum.org

Avery Island/Tabasco Bottling Plant
Louisiana Highway 329
(Nine Miles South of New Iberia)
www.tabasco.com/tabasco_history

Jefferson Island, Rip Van Winkle Gardens
5505 Rip Van Winkle Road
New Iberia, Louisiana
337/359-8525
www.ripvanwinklegardens.com

Ohr-O’Keefe Museum of Art
1596 Glenn Swetman Street
Biloxi, Mississippi
228/374-5547
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
www.georgeohr.org

Walter Anderson Museum of Art
510 Washington Avenue
Ocean Springs, Mississippi
228/872-3164
Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
www.walterandersonmuseum.org

Acadiana
Avery Island/Tabasco Bottling Plant
Louisiana Highway 329
(Nine Miles South of New Iberia)
www.tabasco.com/tabasco_history

Jefferson Island, Rip Van Winkle Gardens
5505 Rip Van Winkle Road
New Iberia, Louisiana
337/359-8525
www.ripvanwinklegardens.com

Nita Anderson Museum of Art
1596 Glenn Swetman Street
Biloxi, Mississippi
228/374-5547
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
www.georgeohr.org

Walter Anderson Museum of Art
510 Washington Avenue
Ocean Springs, Mississippi
228/872-3164
Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
www.walterandersonmuseum.org

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