

# Welcome



Hello *Stay Local!* Reader,

We produced another beautiful glossy magazine for you. If this isn't a sign of the new Golden Age that's upon us, what else would convince you? The Saints winning the Super Bowl? A historic mayoral election, coupled with a single assessor and a single sheriff?

You must admit that this is a nice magazine you're holding. You also have to admit that a publication devoted to local independent businesses, as an integral thread in New Orleans' urban weave, is long overdue. *Stay Local!* recognizes that our local businesses are leading the charge. They were the first to come back after Hurricane Katrina, and they remain a powerful driving force in our local economy.

This magazine recognizes their leadership, and is also intended to inspire you, the reader, to consider shopping locally before you patronize a big box retailer. Remember, the money you spend in a true local business stays in New Orleans longer. Your money isn't siphoned off to an out-of-state franchise or corporation but rather sticks with us, where its power is magnified in our local economy.

So, continue our new Golden Age prosperity by mixing the howls of *Who Dat!* with cries of *Stay Local!*

Warm Regards,  
Sean Gerowin, Board President  
The Urban Conservancy



Dear Localistas,

When Mitch Landrieu became New Orleans' next mayor in a landslide victory in February, he was given a mandate to make good on his campaign theme: "One team. One fight. One voice. One city." The Saints reinforced the message of unity, teamwork and commitment to New Orleans by clinching the Super Bowl title the night after that historic election.

Like the mayor-elect and the Saints, the Urban Conservancy recognizes that unity fosters resiliency and diversity fosters vibrancy. In these pages you'll meet the New Orleanians whose staying power inspires us every day to engage in research, education and advocacy promoting the wise stewardship of our most precious assets: the people and places that make this city like no other. Our *Stay Local!* initiative focuses on the critical role local business ownership plays in neighborhood revitalization, economic equity and environmental sustainability.

We hope that what you read here inspires you to get civically engaged, or motivates you to venture into a neighborhood you're not familiar with or patronize a locally-owned business that you've been meaning to. And if it does, please consider joining *our* team by becoming a member of The Urban Conservancy today.

Dana Eness, Executive Director  
The Urban Conservancy



Dear Readers,

I was born and raised in New Orleans and, as a local, nothing is more important to me than the cultural, economic and environmental health of my region.

When I came back to New Orleans in the winter of 2007, I did so determined to somehow get involved in the rebuilding efforts. Through *Stay Local!*, I found a way to help our home-grown businesses strengthen and make the most of our local economy.

Working with the local business owners to identify and explore both new and traditional opportunities (to better create awareness for themselves and to increase the benefit to them) while serving the larger community has been a great way to help tell the story of New Orleans' resilient mom-and-pops and their role in the recovery, as well as to help the communities to shape their neighborhoods.

Through my connection to Orleans Parish, I have strengthened my connection to the communities in Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany.

I love my locals!

Sincerely,  
David T. Baker  
*Stay Local!* Project Coordinator  
The Urban Conservancy

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The Urban Conservancy is a New Orleans-based 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization engaged in research, education, and advocacy promoting the wise stewardship of the urban built environment and local economies.



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# Why Shop Local?

## TOP TEN REASONS TO SHOP LOCAL

We all know how fun it is to shop locally in New Orleans, but there's more to it:

### 1. PROTECT LOCAL CHARACTER AND PROSPERITY

New Orleans is unlike any other city in the world. By choosing to support locally owned businesses, you help maintain New Orleans' diversity and distinctive flavor.

### 2. COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Locally owned businesses build strong neighborhoods by sustaining communities, linking neighbors, and by contributing more to local causes.

### 3. LOCAL DECISION MAKING

Local ownership means that important decisions are made locally by people who live in the community and who will feel the impacts of those decisions.

### 4. KEEPING DOLLARS IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Your dollars spent in locally owned businesses have three times the impact on your community as dollars spent at national chains. When shopping locally, you simultaneously create jobs, fund more city services through sales tax, invest in neighborhood improvement and promote community development.

### 5. JOB AND WAGES

Locally owned businesses create more jobs locally and, in some sectors, provide better wages and benefits than chains do.

### 6. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship fuels America's economic innovation and prosperity, and serves as a key means for families to move out of low-wage jobs and into the middle class.

### 7. PUBLIC BENEFITS AND COSTS

Local stores in town centers require comparatively little infrastructure and make more efficient use of public services relative to big box stores and strip shopping malls.

### 8. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Local stores help to sustain vibrant, compact, walkable town centers, which in turn are essential to reducing sprawl, automobile use, habitat loss, and air and water pollution.

### 9. COMPETITION

A marketplace of tens of thousands of small businesses is the best way to ensure innovation and low prices over the long-term.

### 10. PRODUCT DIVERSITY

A multitude of small businesses – each selecting products based, not on a national sales plan, but rather on their own interests and the needs of their local customers – guarantees a much broader range of product choices.

*Adapted and reprinted with permission of Stacy Mitchell, The Institute for Local Self-Reliance*

## Showcasing Local Businesses Online and in Print

As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting the hometown businesses within Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany parishes, Stay Local! has been working to ensure that we offer great value to the more than 2,000 businesses in our directory.

In early 2009, The Urban Conservancy produced its first annual *Guide to Commerce and Culture* – a tangible resource for people to use when walking the streets of New Orleans. This year's edition lists over 2,000 locally owned businesses. Starting on pg. 23.

The Urban Conservancy also produced a retail study on the impact of local versus chain spending in the region entitled "Thinking Outside the Box." The study results show that shopping with local retailers has a greater benefit to the region than shopping with national chain retailers. Starting on pg. 16.

We have also crafted partnerships with media outlets in the city to help promote the "Buy Local" movement. Through these outlets, we're reaching out into the communities to bring them information about the power they have as consumers and citizens to rebuild their communities through a strong, vibrant, independent-oriented economy.

On the Web, we're engaging the masses via the Internet to help promote local businesses in the region. Through social media, we've raised visibility and created buzz about local business events and successes, economic opportunities and life in New Orleans.

Visit our events page at [www.staylocal.org/events](http://www.staylocal.org/events) to learn about networking events, public markets and other opportunities to Stay Local!



# Stay Local Board of Directors



Top row, from left: Ruth Davis, Christy Williams, Dana Eness, Kathia Duran. Bottom row, from left: Sharon Gancarz Davies, Sean Gerowin, Matthew Wilson. Not pictured: Annie Clark, Karen Gadbois.

## Strategic Partners

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*Continuity Insights* Magazine  
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# Props from our Peeps

"Stay Local! was probably the best part of our trip to New Orleans last March. You guys were very personable and without your help I don't know how we could have learned so much about your great city. I wish you were in NYC, really. And the *Stay Local!* guide to local businesses has been something that has stuck with me. I want to make more people keen to the Web site, its format and still have hopes of spreading it to other cities."

John Lake, Jr.  
Eugene Lang School of Liberal Arts  
The New School, New York City

"The Urban Conservancy has been a strong advocate in helping my new enterprise get off the ground and helping me gain attention in my effort to bring a new industry to the city. They have opened up a business network to me that was otherwise out of my reach."

"The Urban Conservancy is committed to a new and improved New Orleans. This organization is working for the betterment of a city and not just a single entity. They have supported me in a variety of ways for which I am eternally thankful."

PJ Lynch, Owner  
NOLA Bike Taxi

"I am happy to have the opportunity to advertise with you, as an expression of my gratitude and support for all of the work you have done to promote local businesses. I lost my home and my business following the flooding which occurred after Hurricane Katrina, and I made the commitment to return to New Orleans and use every opportunity I could to contribute to the re-building of our city. I have looked to you many times to assist me in finding local businesses I could patronize. Your Web site and brochures are easy to use and have been such an asset to me and to our city. Thank you for being here and for doing all that you are doing and have done to highlight and promote our local businesses!"

Mindy Milam, L.C.S.W.  
Clinical Social Worker

"Stay Local has been a very helpful resource for our small business here in New Orleans. Through Stay Local we have found competent and friendly people to help us navigate the sometimes-tricky waters of doing business with the city and the state. The issues at hand are not necessarily as troublesome as they seem and finding the right folks to help makes a huge difference."

Gary Parky, Owner  
Sputnik Ranch • [www.sputnikranch.com](http://www.sputnikranch.com)

"Successfully safeguarding the continued operation of any organization, regardless of its size or scope, ultimately resides in efforts at the local level. Most business disruptions and other disasters are regional in nature, so local preparedness and response are your first line of defense. The Urban Conservancy and its Stay Local! program foster this vital sense of community, sustainability and resiliency."

Robert Nakao, Executive Publisher  
*Continuity Insights Magazine*

# BEHIND MISSION:

Getting up close and personal with Urban Conservancy founders Geoff Coats & Ed Melendez on the future of the Stay Local! project — By David T. Baker



## DTB: WHAT IS STAY LOCAL!?

**GC:** Stay Local! is about sustaining authentic communities. It is about living, working and thriving together with the people around you. Stay Local! is also democratic: it's people coming together to assert control over their lives and their communities in the face of increasingly colossal, faceless corporations whose goal is to mine local economies for profits but who have no loyalty to the communities beyond financial transactions.

**EM:** Stay Local! is a means of collectively showing pride in where we live, and something I felt was sorely needed in the past. Sometimes, people in New Orleans had a low image of their city and were sometimes cynical about it, perhaps hoping it would be something different. I felt, and still feel, that New Orleans has so much to offer and buying local is one major way to celebrate that.

## WHY SUPPORT THE "BUY LOCAL" MOVEMENT?

**GC:** It depends a bit on your personal values. Buying Local creates a stronger economy: local dollars stay in the economy creating more jobs, a stronger tax base and a more resilient community. Buying Local is good for the environment: while not all items purchased from a local retailer are created locally, local networks feature more locally produced food and other items and therefore reduce our carbon footprint. And perhaps most important, Buying Local supports local culture: music that isn't dictated by Clear Channel executives; restaurants that preserve and evolve our local dishes; and coffee shops and neighborhood bars that allow us to gather with our friends in real places, rather than facsimiles of Texas roadhouses or Mediterranean villas. Our lives are richer and more grounded when our communities reflect the quirkiness of our local settings and individual personalities.

**EM:** The research out there shows that \$1 spent locally goes farther in your community than one spent at a national store, that's pretty much conclusive. We also know that sourcing locally produced goods whenever possible makes good sense from an ecological perspective. But beyond those very good



# BEHIND THE MISSION:



reasons, there's something wonderful about doing business with your neighbors. It is about being a part of your community and affirming that we're most linked to those closest to us – in our neighborhoods and our cities.

## WHAT HAS BEEN THE BENEFIT TO YOU?

**GC:** The benefit to me personally has been the opportunity to meet some amazing people who became great friends and even heroes to me. I have also come to realize that so many other people share a passion for authentic relationships and for living in a real community – warts and all. New Orleans isn't perfect ... but it isn't plastic either.

**EM:** I am blessed to still have so many friends and colleagues doing the good work in New Orleans, and I'm thankful for that.

## WHAT WAS THE INITIAL VISION BEHIND THE CONCEPT?

**GC:** The initial vision grew out of a central question: What does progressive economic development look like in a specific, historic, urban city called New Orleans? According to City Hall, 'Economic Development' meant destroying the urban fabric of the city in the name of 'Progress' (note that it still does to many at City Hall who currently advocate destroying an entire neighborhood to build a hospital complex – *plus c'est change* ...). At the same time, too many in the established preservation community seemed only to articulate a negative critique of each new proposed development.

In this polarized environment, it was all too easy for people with plans that were detrimental to the city to paint the opposition to their plans as "against progress" – even when their plans represented a failed vision of development from the 1970s or '80s.

We believed that to counter these plans one needed to present a positive vision of what we as a community could be "for," rather than merely saying we are against this project or that development.

SLI attempted to articulate a positive vision of what the city's assets really were, and what the future could be, if the city and the business community abandoned their obsession with attracting big-box retail, and instead decided to invest in the existing businesses and revitalize the urban infrastructure that supported the local economy.

Besides, who just wants to "preserve" a city? We wanted a thriving, exciting, dynamic and democratic city. We saw the need for a program that talked about utilizing the existing assets of the city – the urban grid, the urban forms and the urban economic advantages – to build a more equitable, more dynamic and more vibrant future.

On a deeper level, the vision was rooted in having lived in other communities around the country which had embraced the tax giveaways and "big-box-is-the-future" mantra, only to discover too late that they never captured the tax revenues they were promised, that the jobs promised by the developers turned out to come at the expense of other existing jobs and that asphalt, traffic and run-off replaced their neighborhoods and parks. The communities ended





up poorer – economically, aesthetically and environmentally – than when they started.

**EM:** I really struggled with the question of how we nurture our community and culture in a world that too often uses unsustainable measures for value. What led me to localism was my belief that by transacting with our neighbors first, we were setting an agenda for how we thought the world should work.

**WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE INITIATIVE IN FIVE YEARS?**

**GC:** First of all, I have to say that SL! is a stronger and more vibrant program than I ever thought it would be. This is due entirely to the work of Dana and David, the other volunteers on the ground and the vision and support of the board. I tell people all the time that the best business decision I ever made was getting out of the way of UC and SL!. That said, I would like to see SL! continue to grow in its capacity to affect public policy. Working from the grass roots with the businesses provides legitimacy and keeps SL! grounded in the realities of the daily struggles of the businesses to survive. Effecting public policy allows SL! to give back to those businesses the support and infrastructure they need to continue to compete and to thrive. Businesses shouldn't be forced to subsidize the turning of the playing field against them – which is what much current economic development policy does. What I would hate to see is for SL! to move solely into the policy realm and lose that tactile connection with local businesses and the immediate good that's delivered each and every month.

**EM:** I'd love to see more experiments: support for cooperatively owned businesses, local currencies and neighborhood initiatives to name a few. There's still so much to learn!

**WOULD YOU SAY THAT SL! IS ON TRACK FROM INITIAL CONCEPT TO INTENDED OUTCOME?**

**GC:** Absolutely! Early on there were some ideas about monthly business get-togethers as well as mentoring opportunities whereby established businesses could mentor younger or less established businesses. I still like this idea but we also learned that business owners are very busy people with little time for yet another meeting with no direct impact on their businesses. This might be the current thinking behind the "Cocktails & Colleagues."

**EM:** Any time a business is started, it rarely ends up exactly as planned; change comes for entrepreneurs regardless, and how it's managed is the true test of a leader. That said, I never could've imagined how well it has done. I just got it started; the SL! team and the community has made it a success. The organization has moved from its humble and makeshift beginnings to a potent force for positive change for New Orleans and the world. •

# LOCAL BUSINESSES recognized for GOING ABOVE & BEYOND

BY DAVID BAKER

In mid-2009, The Urban Conservancy put out an open call to the communities of the Greater New Orleans area urging them to nominate any business they felt go above and beyond in their support of the community as a whole. We sought to honor eight from Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany parishes for exceedingly favorable work in community involvement, charitable giving or just being the best in kind.

We winnowed the nominations to eight winners: Edwards Shoe Service, Teacher's Stop and Lupo Enterprises won special awards for Continuity, Resiliency and Leadership respectively; Zuppardo's Family Supermarket, Pal's Lounge, Poydras Junction Hardware & Marine Supplies, Campbell's Coffee and Tea and Black Velvet Oyster Bar & Grill each received a Placemaker Award acknowledging their ongoing contributions to the cultural and economic life of their respective parishes.



**Left:** Campbell Morrison, Elizabeth Van Sant, Christy Williams and Kelli and Bryon Marinovich.  
**Above:** Ricky and Karen Landry, Lona Edwards-Hankins and Lona Edwards.

**EDWARDS' SHOE SERVICE:  
THE LEGACY LIVES ON**  
*Continuity Award Winner*

On the corner of Magazine and Amelia streets, as cars speed by and pedestrians jog along the sidewalk, a sign in bold, gold print reads, "I will heel you. I will save your sole. I will even dye for you."

It is the message of the late Jules Edwards, founder of the reputed Edwards' Shoe Service.

Mr. Edwards opened his shoe service shop when he was 18, but his career began at the ripe age of 16. "He learned shoe repair from his cousin," says Lona Broussard Edwards, Mr. Edwards' wife of 52 years and mother of his five children.

"He used to work for McCrory's," Mrs. Edwards recalls, "that was long before we met." According to Mrs. Edwards, Mr. Edwards got his start as a shoe repairman for the five and dime store, before leaving to start his own – the result of unfair wage practices in the Post-Civil War Era.

He saved his money with the goal of opening his own business, because, as he often told his children, "I work too hard to work for somebody else."

When Mr. Edwards began his business, it was located for a few years on the corner of LaSalle St. and Louisiana Ave.; it then moved to the corner of S. Claiborne and Washington avenues. It wasn't until around 1962 that he purchased the building on the corner of Magazine and Amelia streets, moving again in the late '70s to the building he purchased next door, where he decorated the storefront with lots of signs and paraphernalia.

"Everybody thought it was a bunch of junk," laughed Mrs. Edwards. "They would ask me 'Why does your husband have all that junk on the front of his store?'" With a chuckle, she would reply, "It got your attention, didn't it?" All the signs and so-called "junk" were a way to draw people's attention and pull in more customers.

"He was making \$11 a week when he first started," Mrs. Edwards says, and eventually the shop built up a loyal following of customers with whom, according to his son Dow Edwards, he bragged about his family.

Now, he's known as New Orleans' own "shoe repairman to the stars," having repaired shoes for such names as Aretha Franklin, Linda Ronstadt and for the recently Oscar-nominated movie *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* featuring Brad Pitt.



"My dad was successful because he didn't quit, not because he never failed," says Lona Hankins, Edwards' daughter. "He always continued pursuing his goals." In fact, according to Mrs. Edwards, it was her mother-in-law who taught her husband to be strong.

Back in 1952, Jules Edwards was stricken with Tuberculosis. "His mother stepped up to run the business until he was back on his feet," Mrs. Edwards says. It was a lesson in life, family and togetherness for the Edwards family.

"My dad worked hard and had an amazing work ethic," says Hankins. "He also had a caring heart for the invisible man." It was that work ethic and caring heart that motivated Hankins, an engineer by trade,

to help rebuild the schools in New Orleans.

"I gave up a successful career in private industry to rebuild the schools in our city after Katrina," says Hankins, "so that the children of the invisible man could have a much better chance at success than their fathers had."

Mr. Edwards ran his shoe repair business for 64 years until he passed away in 2009 at the age of 82, but his legacy continues through the new owners of Edwards Shoe Service, Jeffrey Smoot and Glenn Cheatham, his family and community.

Last October, Edwards Shoe Service was publicly honored for continuity in business and all Mr. Edwards' hard work. "I have really mixed emotions about him being publicly honored," says Hankins. "My father used to say give me my flowers while I am alive."

"Still..." Hankins continues, "I just wish he could have been around to see the appreciation."



**NOTHING STOPS THE  
TEACHER'S STOP**  
*Resiliency Award Winner*

Christy Williams is an educator. And 14 years ago, when she, her students and fellow teachers lost the only supply store where they could buy the supplies they needed locally, an idea set off in her head: Teacher's Stop.

Teacher's Stop is an educational supplies store that sells everything teachers, students and parents need for everyday learning from markers and chalk to crayons and notepads. But what sets her model apart from others is the time she puts back into the community serving as an information station for parents, →

teachers and students and her time spent volunteering to assist students with homework and computer literacy programs.

“I’m a certified teacher and the store is just an extension of the classroom for me,” says Williams.

It is her mission to try to help someone, every day, and it was that philosophy that carried Williams through the storm. “My customers are my students and my daily goal is to be sure I assist each and every person who crosses my door sill for assistance.”

As a result of Hurricane Katrina, Williams’ store was left with four feet of water and a peeled off roof. And while some of her customer base – developed since 1996 – remained intact, she lost a great deal of customers to other cities and free supplies provided by charitable organizations and the federal government.

Williams says that the thought of quitting came to her on more than one occasion, but rather than give up she faced these new challenges head on; she kept the business going from the backseat of her car as a drive-and-drop supply store, ordering the supplies her customers needed and delivering them personally.

Going forward, Williams hopes to continue educating through her store. “That’s my initial goal as well as my on-going one.” It is a goal she’s sure she can achieve as long as she stays positive and keeps working hard.

“Each year I just hope and trust God to enable me to continue assisting my ‘students’ [customers] with a larger selection of materials to choose from.”

**LUPO ENTERPRISES LEADS BY DOING**  
*Leadership Award Winner*



Real estate development firm Lupo Enterprises has been a staple in the community for generations – building houses, businesses, supporting schools and building the figurative bridges that have helped keep the community of Lakeview so close knit.

“We’re fourth generation in Lakeview,” said Robert Lupo, CEO of Lupo Enterprises; “three generations were still living here at the time the storm hit.”

After the surge from Hurricane Katrina tore through the neighborhood, destroying houses, schools and businesses, Lupo used his real estate development firm as an anchor to bring residents back to the blighted area.

“A lot of people looked to us to see if it was worth the effort coming back,” says Lupo, speaking of Lupo Enterprises, the largest independent business in the community.

The logic behind returning, according to Lupo, was that if one of the most successful businesses in the neighborhood returned, then the residents would see it as a symbol of hope for recovery, and that returning to rebuild was a safe, smart choice.

“We were fortunate enough to convince people that it was worth doing.”

He cites citizen resiliency and involvement as the heart of the rebuilding operations. It is for that reason that Lupo says that rejuvenation in Lakeview is occurring much quicker than in other neighborhoods.

“The bottom line is: 10 years after the storm, Lakeview – and all the neighborhoods of New Orleans – will be better off than they would’ve been without it,” Lupo says.

“Now,” Lupo continues, “we have a committed group of politicians” to help move the recovery forward.

# THE PLACEMAKERS

**Zuppardo’s Family Supermarket**  
**Jefferson Parish**

The marquee in front of Zuppardo’s Family Supermarket sums up the Zuppardo philosophy: “It Makes A Difference When the Owners Are There ... A Big Difference.” The Zuppardo family



should know: they began selling fruits and vegetables from a cart on Elysian Fields Ave. in 1929. Four generations later, Zuppardo’s Supermarket serves residents across parish lines.

“It’s a wonderful place to shop,” says Roy Zuppardo, commenting on why Zuppardo’s customers prefer to shop there rather than with the competition. “When you walk in the door, there’s a family atmosphere.”

According to Zuppardo, it was that sense of family and community that carried the store through the worst of times. Speaking, of course, of Hurricane Katrina. “It was very disheartening,” Zuppardo says.

As a result of the storm, the original store on Elysian Fields Avenue in Gentilly was left unsalvageable and was eventually torn down. The Veterans Boulevard location, however, fared slightly better and, after a coordinated cleanup effort, acted as a supply center for all of Jefferson Parish, doling out water, food and other supplies to residents and emergency workers.

“We didn’t turn anybody away; we supplied cops, firemen and other organizations who were providing for people.” Zuppardo says that his efforts were the result of his parents’ life lessons, making sure that everyone’s needs are met. “It wasn’t just about me or my kids, it was about everybody. It was about the community.”

Now, with the store and community back on track, Zuppardo turns his attention toward expansion, particularly onto the Northshore and back into Orleans Parish – a community his family has served for years.

Zuppardo never takes the goodwill of the community for granted. Now, with the store and community back on track, Zuppardo is making a difference at the policy level as a member of the Food Policy Advisory Council. This committed group of grocers, chefs, nonprofit organizations and public health advocates is working to ensure healthy food access for all in the greater New Orleans region.

**Pal’s Lounge**  
**Orleans Parish**

Some call it a “pub.” Others call it a “bar,” but to the residents of Faubourg St. John, Pal’s Lounge is a haven.

“It’s kind of like Cheers, but it’s Pal’s,” said Suzanne Accorsi, one of Pal’s owners, referring to the bar’s close-knit network of patrons and employees. “It’s your friendly, neighborhood bar.”

Along with her fellow owners, Linda Novak and Rio Hackford, a determined Accorsi was able to restore the now eight-year-old Pal’s to working order after Hurricane Katrina dealt a harsh blow to the business. “We lost lots of bartenders, got looted and had water damage.”

But Pal’s rebuilt, and they did so with the help of the

neighborhood.

According to Accorsi, residents began spending time at Pal's helping what was left of the staff clean up debris and damage. In return, the bar became an open kitchen.

"Linda began serving meals, every day." Accorsi says. Novak prepared dishes that could be easily served from a crockpot and keep a belly full through the night, welcoming all who needed a good meal and drink. "People came to have a meal and get information about what was happening in the city."

It is a tradition that continues five years later as patrons flock to the St. John pub to partake in good drinks, friendly conversation and the occasional bowl of chili, fulfilling the owners' hope that the pub will continue to remain a neighborhood gathering place.

"I just hope we can continue to serve the community."



the rebirth of Louisiana's southeastern most parish. The old school, personal customer service given by this family owned and operated business is always a priceless experience, satisfying the hardware needs for rural residents and businesses alike. "We go out of our way to help," says owner Chris Roberts.

According to Roberts, the bustling hardware store serves customers from all over the region, and it's their personal care approach to customer service and wide selection of goods that keep patrons coming back. "We're busy all the time," says Roberts. At Poydras Hardware patrons can find not only nuts, screws, bolts and marine supplies, gardening goods, fresh eggs and much more. In addition to customer service and a diverse inventory, Roberts attributes its success to hard work, dedication and the will of the people.

Roberts is proud of his store and the sense of community felt by his employees and customers. It is that sense of community and helpfulness Roberts wants to see continue in his store as more customers come and business continues to thrive. "Every year, we're growing." →



### **Poydras Junction Hardware & Marine Supplies St. Bernard Parish**

Poydras Junction Hardware & Marine Supplies has been a cornerstone in St. Bernard for decades, but in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina they have played a major role in facilitating

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**Campbell's Coffee and Tea**  
**St. Tammany Parish**

One word embodies Campbell's Coffee and Tea in Covington: fresh. Fresh coffee, fresh atmosphere and a fresh business model have kept customers of the Northshore establishment coming back for years.

"I think it's thrilling," says Elizabeth Van Sant, co-owner of Campbell's Coffee and Tea. "It demonstrates that we're doing right what we set out to do by selling the best coffee products in St. Tammany Parish."

The savvy coffee shop roasts a proprietary blend of Arabica beans, daily. They keep the atmosphere fresh and fun with hand-painted signage, murals and Burma-Shave style drive-thru ads.

But it may not be their special blends alone that keep customers swooning. Since opening the coffee shop just after Hurricane Katrina, Van Sant, and co-owner Campbell Morrison, have been adamant about staying involved in what's important to Covington-area residents.

Campbell's combines coffee roasting and social responsibility, donating time, merchandise and space in the coffee shop for the effort of supporting endeavors to help improve the community such as school functions, community events and the Covington Food Bank. "One of the philosophies that binds us together is social entrepreneurship," says Van Sant. "Both of us believe very strongly in being responsible to our community."



**Black Velvet Oyster Bar and Grill**  
**Plaquemines Parish**

"From Katrina With Love" It is a motto much touted by Byron Marinovich, proprietor of Black Velvet Oyster Bar and Grill, and one of which he's most proud.

Before Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005, Black Velvet was just a bar, but after, it became a "seafood mart," according to Marinovich. "We lost everything and were operating out of tents."

But from those tents and sheds, Marinovich and his wife, Kelli, began serving food to the masses, and it was then that the small bar had its renaissance. "We are now doing live and boiled crawfish," says Marinovich, listing but a few items on their now full menu.

Since the storm, Black Velvet has continued to embrace the still recovering community that surrounds it, by providing jobs, serving up local seafood and other products, and by providing



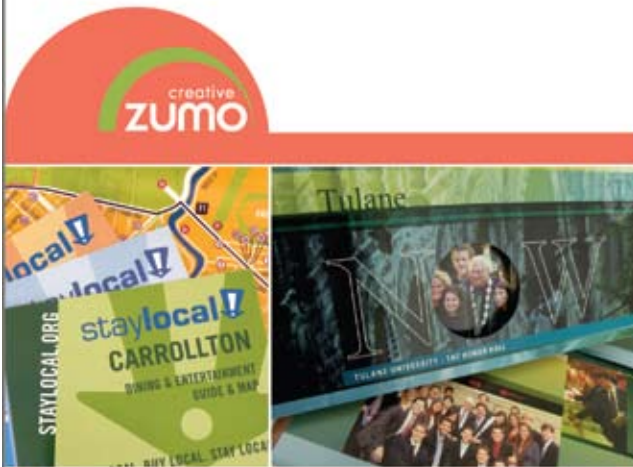
the only meeting place in town for firemen, church groups and anyone else in need of a space to gather.

Now, Marinovich is contemplating a career in politics to be able to better serve the community and help speed along the recovery, starting with a bid for a seat on the parish council.

"The reason we came back in the first place was for our peers," Marinovich says. •

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