

## 96 Degrees in the Shade

Jun 27 2006

It's hot. It's hurricane season. It's time for some good news.

On a good year, summer in New Orleans is the time we all struggle to remember why we live here. The stultifying heat makes just laying on the porch feel like work. The economy slows from its normal crawl. The musicians who can, head to Europe. The musicians who can't, lay on the porch trying to figure out how to get to Europe. This year, it's all that and more.

But just as the heat of the day makes a cool evening breeze that much sweeter, the backdrop of devastation intensifies the beauty of each community gathering, each dinner with friends, and each rebuilding of a home or business. What follows is a completely unscientific sampling of what we are seeing and hearing around town.

Even in the summer, the music in New Orleans is top notch. And the resourcefulness of the musicians is unmatched.



We ran into Mike Hood and his band down on Frenchman St. and were impressed by the drummer's use of a bike and a burley trailer to haul the drums to the gig.

The New Orleans Museum of Art is open and free for Louisiana residents.

Talking with the proprietor of Terranova's — a much-loved neighborhood grocery famous for its handmade sausages — we learned that starting July 3rd they will be back to their pre-Katrina hours.

One thing we New Orleanians learned over the past year is that when the going gets tough, don't hold your breath waiting on the national chain retailers to open back up. Thankfully, locally-owned businesses stepped up and continue to do so every day.

New businesses and new locations for established businesses are opening and providing everything from paint and refrigerators to nice bottles of wine and organic local produce.

On Saturday we participated in the [Festival of Neighborhoods](#). For the past nine months, the individual residents of many New Orleans neighborhoods have worked indefatigably to bring their communities out of post-Katrina crisis mode and into the city's vision for a better, brighter future.



The Festival of Neighborhoods allowed these groups to showcase and celebrate their efforts in a relaxed environment.



The event was held in conjunction with the [Mid-City Art Market](#) and featured informational booths from countless community groups and nonprofits including our [Stay Local!](#) project.

So while it's true that the Federal response has been less than [promised](#) and that our Mayor appears to have fought for victory and then gone back to sleep, the people of New Orleans continue to work day in and day out to rebuild our city.



All of us here know the stories of those who have left. We miss them every day. But over the past couple of weeks we have met more and more people who have chosen to move to New Orleans in the post-Katrina era. We welcome them into the community — a community unlike any you will find. We value their courage, their energy, and their adventurous spirits. To them and to all our friends, we say:

Damn its hot! Be ready to evacuate. But don't forget to enjoy this summer. Help your friends with their house. Buy everything you can at a locally-owned store. Sit on the stoop and talk to your neighbors.

And think about how nice fall is going to be this year.