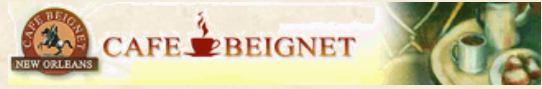


Wednesday, May 2nd – Day 11th

08:15 a.m. – we slightly overslept : „Hurry, hurry !“. Fast coffee from a coffeemaker. We got up into a hot and sultry, cloudy day, 84 F.

08:30 a.m. – we went for breakfast in (<http://www.cafebeignet.com/index.html>) Cafe Beignet, the interesting restaurant by New Orleans Police Department. We ordered our meals, got their numbers and then were waiting for them to call our number. Pretty exciting for our Czech ears ☺.



What in the world did we have ? Aaaaa ! I got it ! Cafe Latte, Breakfast Sandwich and Baklava. We sat at a table in the outside sitting. The table and chairs were made of a cast iron, really the good job. But it was not so quiet place for breakfast, because of many clerks hurrying to their job stopped there for their morning meals. It was rather a bustling crossroad, without any long sitting. Have breakfast and go away again ! Only some cats strolling among tables slowed down that hurry human morning and just they had their laid back time from the very morning. The cats and the four of us ☺.

After our morning meal we head back to our ,Mary'.

On our way back we had a quick stop at wonderful Magnolia trees where I reminded our friends an old Czech custom, kissing women under blooming trees at the beginning of May. Can you remember ? Women who were kissed under the blooming tree will be fresh and healthy over the whole year ...

Yes, Dan was a man of action, he took Hana under one really beautiful bloom of magnolia and kissed her. I did not manage to do the same with Susie, maybe next ☺.

Coming back we visited a souvenir shop for T-shirts and postcards too.

In the hotel we spent only a short time to prepare for that day's program.



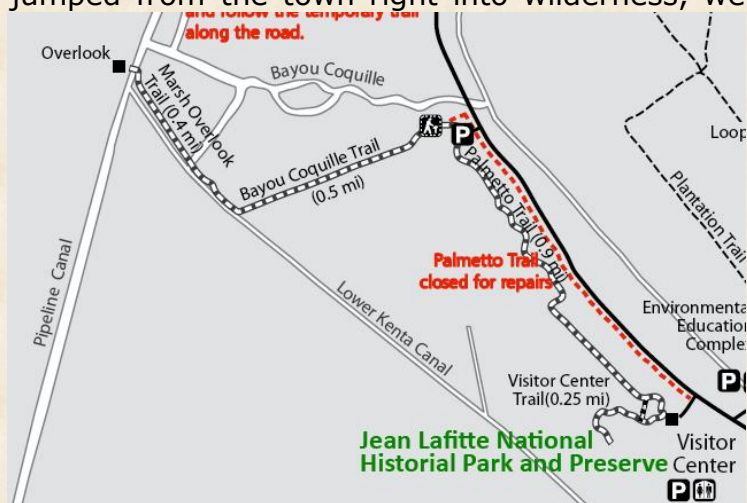
10:15 a.m. – we set out for our first item on agenda, for a visit to an outside exposition of New Orleans Museum of Art that was sat in a beautiful parkland. When we entered the exposition, Dan showed us a mark of how high it was flooded in 2005 there ...

The exhibits were fantastic and the whole exposition was the really good prepared, all sculptures went together with landscaping. We were overwhelmed by their diversity and inventions. Yes, indeed, some we liked more, some we liked less. It still depends on a taste of each of us. Anyway we were not bored. In no way ! We spent there a very pleasant hour walking around.

12:00 a.m. – we moved away and jumped from the town right into wilderness, we visited the Brataria Preserve in the Jeane Lafitte National Park. The Park was stretched in a swampy area with many lakes and bayous that were all fed by an unlimited source, the Mississippi river (<http://www.nps.gov/jela/>).

Unlike Everglades there were many full-grown trees, well known to us Bald Cypresses with spanish moss as a decoration. But ,ground floor' belonged to a thick tropical vegetation. It was everywhere. In swampy areas, on lakes, in banks of bayous with a lazy flowing water that was full of a water grass. It was a jungle !

And among other plants we especially liked those particularly exotic, as tall as an adult ones with large like a palm with fingers looked leaves. They called Palmettos.



And the four of us came through all that beauty down the wooden sidewalks and admired those views. But we admired the views also very carefully and watchfully because other than turtles, herons, small snakes and frogs there were some other creatures hidden somewhere ... yes ... „Look at the water ! Alligators !”, we shouted during our touristic walk almost every moment. We could see the small, bigger and really the big gators. And that one the biggest we spotted in the hindmost point of our stroll when we came across a high wooden bridge over the bayou and went down to its bank. We let him swim to us just at the distance of about ten feet so we could take an eye contact with that big lizard. But just for a second. Then we rather left the field ... quickly ... as quickly as we could !

Otherwise we had a good time there, in peace and quiet without almost any people only with singing and chattering of birds.

Anyway ... almost with no people. On our way back, right on the bridge over the bayou we came across a bunch of strange dressed, also twittering people. They looked like from the 18th century and so ... rustic. They were Amish people.

The Amish people are members of a very strict church fellowship. The history of the Amish church began with a schism in Switzerland within a group of Swiss and Southern German Brethren, in 1693. Nowadays they are best known for their simple living, plain dress and their resistance to the adoption of many modern conveniences.

The Amish church seeks to maintain a degree of separation from the non-Amish world. There is generally a heavy emphasis on church and family relationships. They typically operate their own one-room schools, and discontinue formal education at grade eight. They value a rural life, where a large family provides an abundance of manual labor. The rules of the church — the Ordnung — must be observed by every member. These rules cover most aspects of day-to-day living, and include prohibitions or limitations on the use of power-line electricity, telephones, and automobiles (they use horse-drawn wagons) and , as well as on clothing. Many Amish church members may not buy insurance or accept government assistance, such as Social Security. Today, the most traditional descendants of these Amish Mennonites continue to speak Pennsylvania German (more often referred to as Pennsylvania Dutch), the language spoken by the descendants of Pennsylvania's late 17th and 18th century immigrants. There are also Old Order Amish communities, especially in Indiana, where a dialect of Swiss German predominates. They live in closed hamlets and towns mainly in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. Their church has a population of about quarter a milion.

The really strange people for us ...

We continued our walk back on the same track as we used before. In the parking place we found our Toyota, jumped in again and set out for our return to civilization.

03:45 p.m. – on our way back we spotted Starbucks Coffee and us three immediately got coffee withdrawal, so Dan did not have the option and had to pull the car off and stopped there. We entered, absorbed that beloved characteristic scent and first we viewed souvenirs of that worldwide wellknown chain of coffees. Yes, of course we succumbed temptation and bought two cups for us and



a thermo cup for Michal. And of course we mainly bought coffee and peach mango pies. And of course Pepsi for Dan as usual. Yum, yum, yum !

04:10 p.m. – again in the car, the New Orleans direction. Talking about the South. We



learned from our friends that ,Dixie' is not a name of a town and ,Dixieland' is not only a style of jazz but that ,Dixieland' or ,Dixie' is a name for the southeastern portion of the USA, which arose during the Civil War. Dixie derives from the Mason-Dixon line which defined the border between Maryland and Pennsylvania, and, for the most part, free and slave states (a small portion of Delaware, a Union border

state, and slave state up to the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, lay north of the boundary.) The states of Dixie include Virginia, North & South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, West Virginia, Louisiana, and Kentucky.

„O, I wish I was in Dixie! Hooray ! Hooray! In Dixie Land I'll take my stand. To live and die in Dixie. Away, away ! Away down south in Dixie !”.

05:00 p.m. – back in the hotel.

17:30 p.m. – „BAF !!!”. For that time it was genuine and double Czech „Baf !” not American „Boo !” and we surprised Dan and Susie by that our shouts when they left their 214 number for our evening joint walk. And it was not any normal „Baf = Boo !” , Hana and me wore boffoonish red noses ! 😊 Wow ! What a fright and surprise it was for our friends ! And what a joy as well ! A lot of smiles and laughters ! *„Did you buy these red noses in New Orleans ? ”... „No, no, friends. We brought them along from the Czech Republic. To make you smiling in New Orleans. And it works. The Czech red noses in New Orleans.”* 😊 And on top of that we handed them another two red noses! Only now it was a mirth ! Four clowns in the hotel coridor ... with red noses we came through a hotel hall among laughing guests. Let's go to Mississippi ! And still with the red noses on our faces we went down Toulouse Street, over Bourbon Street right to the River Walk. Yes, still with the red noses. *„Whatever ! We are in the town of Mardi Grass !”.* We were living our easy time up and we only smiled at surprised faces of people we met ...

In the riverside we admired the Mississippi river. It was so huge ! We had never seen such a mighty watercourse before ! So much flowing water that headed to the Gulf. And we also be amazed at sounds of a giant steam organ built on a historical paddle boat. And there was also an interesting heavy traffic on the river. So many big ships we could see there ! And what a majestic arches of a bridge over the river in the distance ! And what high towers of modern skyscrapers of concrete, metal and glass, the current symbols of nowadays New Orleans we got to see on the left side of the river ! Yes, it was something unusual for us again, that connection of the old French Quarter with that modern world ...

So we were strolling along the river, relished all those spectacles ... and just now we could see that Dan entered into conversation with one corpulent woman wore a yellow



T-shirt with a clown face on it. And they were both smiling and hugging as well as other companions of the woman. Then Dan said them good bye, came to us still laughing and he explained something unbelievable to us.

„You won't believe that. That woman asked me why we have worn the red noses, whether we are clowns because ... THEY ARE

THE GENUINE CLOWNS !!!”. It was a double joke !!! We met the genuine clowns ! Wow ! It was another unforgettable event ! What a joy and laughters the four red noses from the Czech Republic brought to the four of us ! 😊

Meanwhile we were laughing we reached a destination of that evening exploring, a departure station of a ferry across Mississippi, to the Algiers Quarter on the opposite side. It runs every hour and it is for pedestrians (*for free*) as well as for cars (*for \$1*). We boarded the ferry and in a next moment we flowed across the River. We did not want to get off on the other side, we were only going to have a ride there and back again and relished the cruise and views of New Orleans of the opposite side. And it was a good plan. We really liked that sail. The River, bridges in the distance, imposing scyscrapers with a sunset as a background. We took shots and shots and shots. Satisfaction ...

06:00 p.m. – we said our farewells to the cruise, got out of the ferry in ,our' side and walking toward the French Quarter we looked for a nice restaurant for dinner.

07:15 p.m – we explored the Chartres House Cafe restaurant and went through into outside sitting by a fountain. First I went to a restroom. *„Bloody hell !”.* I did not

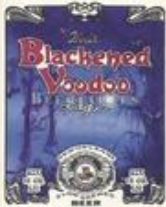


noticed they had newly concreted a small part of the ground, they did not mark it and I stepped onto it ... Well. At least they will have a memory of my visit there for long times. ☺ Tell the truth, I was not the only one who did it. Even if I told my companions about that danger, there was at the minimum another one who left his message in the concrete. Yes, I think it was Dan ☺.

,Grilled Chicken Sandwich, Jambalaya, Coronas’.

„And Dan, how about after high school ?”, I questioned Dan after dinner during our sipping drinks. „After graduating from high school, my sister Vera told me that it was time to stand on my own. I didn’t know what I wanted to do and there was a silly bet with my friend about military service ... so I went into the Marines. I enlisted because the U.S. had instituted the draft and I had a low draft number. I decided to take a dare and joined the Marines. I requested to go to Viet Nam because, at the time, if you went to Viet Nam, you would get out sooner. But, as it turned out, they changed mid stream and I did not get out any sooner. I was in the Marines for three years. That’s a normal tour of duty in the States. I was in Viet Nam 13 months. I should mention that it’s a more honor to be in the Marines as opposed to being in the Army”.

08:15 p.m. – going ,home’ Dan had a fancy for dancing somewhere in New Orleans but we others talked him out of doing that. We were tired a bit, we had enough of events that day, so we took direction back to the hotel. Dan was disappointed a bit and came forward with other idea, to taste a local beer, *Blackened Voodoo Beer*’ somewhere in bars. But however much he tried to find a restaurant or bar with that brand of beer, he could not find anything. So at least he got for us another one beer to taste, ,*Horrible*



Dog Beer’ in one bar. It was another brand of special local beer. And it was good ! Thanks, Dan !

10:00 p.m. – we went to bed, our stay in New Orleans was almost over, the next day there was already a ride to Saint Louis in Susie’s itinerary. Yes, the last night with dreams about New Orleans ... we turned in for the night.