

NEW ORLEANS NOSTALGIA

Remembering New Orleans History, Culture and Traditions

By Ned Hémard

New Orleans Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all around town
The people were stirring, their spirits were down.
A field of fresh faces was chosen with care,
In hopes that New Orleans would have a new mayor.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While *crème brûlée* cravings appeared in their heads;
And Mom in her nightie, an eye toward my lap,
Had opted instead for a holiday nap.

When out on the *banquette* there came such a bustling,
I bounced out of bed to see what was rustling.
Away to the window to survey the scene,
Tore open the shutters and peeked through the screen.

The moon on the dew on my walkway of bricks
Gave the lustre of Mid-Day (old school Channel Six).
Well, what did my wondering eyes soon observe,
But the mayoral candidates. Wow, what a nerve!

With a hunched-over back and the wildest of hair,
I knew right away Doctor Morgus was there.
To our science *savant* these politicians came,
Morgus bristled, and shouted, and called them by name:

"Now, LANDRIEU! now, JACOBS! now, PERRY and MURRAY!
On, GEORGES! on COUHIG! Oh, how they all hurry!
On, RAMSEY! on HENRY! they follow the call!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As school busses sit as wild hurricanes fly,
When they meet such an obstacle, where is our guy?
So up to my doorstep the mayor's limo drew,
Through the traffic cams came along hizzoner, too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on my roof
The voice of Ray Nagin sounding not too aloof.
As I drew in my hand, and was turning around,
Down the chimney came Ray with a thunderous bound.

He was dressed in fatigues, just like Che or Fidel,
And his clothes were all tarnished with soot as he fell;
A bundle of budgets he'd flung from his pack.
"If you don't pass these now, it's no skin off my back."

His dome how it sparkled! How shiny it twinkled!
His smiles were like poses, his brow was all wrinkled!
A Cuban cigar he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.

He was tall and quick spoken, like a cable exec,
And he looked undisturbed with his city a wreck.
"And you guys in New York, you just bring me to tears.
You can't fill a hole after only five years!"

He spoke some more words, "People must get their kicks.
You're having drug addicts look around for a fix."
And feeling these words way deep down in his bones,
"They're looking toward taking the edge off their jones."

"And if you live Uptown, wherever you stay,
The city's still chocolate at the end of the day.
As for felons as workers, I give them a ten.
We're too smart to let them go stealing again."

"Hurricanes are just like your washing machine.
Katrina, the wash cycle, came in too mean.
Then Rita, the rinse cycle, rose up too high,
So please no spin cycle. Just hang me to dry."

"I'm all in the moment and treat everyone fairly,
And as for my statements, I exaggerate rarely."
A wink of his eye and a twist of his pate,
Soon gave me to know I had only to wait.

As he entered his limo, he sighed "I must leave.
One will soon fill my shoes, so please do not grieve."
But I heard him exclaim, as he drove off that night,
"MERRY CHRISTMAS, NEW ORLEANS, YOU'RE SURE OUTTA SIGHT!"

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