

The Scandalous Scallion:

From one Market to another

By MEGAN LEE

This past month all eyes were on New Orleans; a beautiful, one-of-a-kind city; a jewel linked with The Father of Waters; the proud location of possibly the oldest multi-cultural trading grounds and open-air urban markets, in the country.

The New Orleans French Market was born more than two centuries ago on the relative high ground where the Mississippi River bends on its way to the Delta. Native Americans began trading here, French colonists and assorted settlers followed suit. The Spanish were the first to build structures.

In 1813, the first market building was erected (to provide sanitary conditions for selling meat). Over the years various tents and shacks were covered. In the 1930s the market that grew there was remodeled.

Our Market has a similar, albeit shorter, history; but the major differing fact is our Market has been in continuous operation since that fateful August day, in 1917. The French Market has been virtually abandoned on a couple occasions: folk have moved on uptown or outta town. The market recovered. Right now the French Market looks like a wily pile of rubble.

Being on high ground, the market isn't flooded, but everything is in disarray. Stalls are smashed and broken; tents are collapsed and blown down and festering in piles. Their farmer's market arcade (countless rows of hot sauce bottles, beads and 'Gater Sausage) down to the Flea Market, ruined.

The French Market had the open space quality and was a definite destination. In olde NOLA you had to begin your morning with chicory coffee and beignet at Café du Monde. (Then, a Crawfish etoufee crepe in the afternoon ...and off to the daiquiri races...)

My brother lived about 10 minutes away from the market and I went there often. It is a transcendent place and a vital link to the history of New Orleans. In a Market-to-Market link it makes a lot of sense why people here are getting so involved. Market-to-Market caring.

In the Down Under, Eugene and Ellen Kim, or Pike Place Bags, next to Sunshine Jewelry, were the angles that got the ball rolling by going around and collecting money – stall-

to-stall and door-to-door – from nearly 50 Market Merchants (and one customer, Lisa Skvarla, saw what was happening and wanted to contribute too). The endeavor raised \$2,375



that was immediately sent to New Orleans, via our US Bank. The Pink Door paid homage in a signature NOLA-style with their drink and

donations.

The Buskers dedicated their fourth annual Busker's Festival to the Hurricane victims and collected about \$600 specifically for hurricane recovery.

Native Louisianans Christy Coco and Chuck Smith, relatively new owners of Sestos, on Western, closed their shop and went down to help.

Saturday, September 24, Local Color hosted an auction benefiting hurricane victims, donated items came from all over the craft line, the fish markets, assorted merchants and everywhere: everything from handmade kaleidoscopes to a chance to throw fish at Pike Place Fish Co. Sharon Shaw who helped organize the event was pleased and amazed with how generous the Market community was. All proceeds collected from the auction went to Habitat For Humanity.

Hurricane victims are still in need, anyone able to give, contact the Market Branch of US BANK or the Red Cross.

Sightings

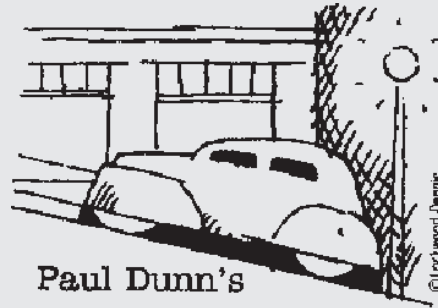
Still life (though never still life) in our urban village went on and, again, in September, it was the variety of people that kept things oh so interesting!

The two Argentinean guys who are riding

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Our Incredible Shrinking Market

When making decisions on new or changing uses, the major goals of the Commission shall be to preserve the Market as...A widely varied shopping area with a diversity of many small, owner-operated specialty businesses...In the interest of maintaining a diverse mix of businesses and because of the importance that owner-operators play in establishing the character



Paul Dunn's Post Alley Passages

of their business, growth through the introduction of new, independent start-up enterprises is strongly preferred over expansion...

Pike Place Market Historical Commission Guidelines, 2.1.4 & 2.6.6

Matt Janke succeeded the popular Café Counter Intelligence with his eponymous, even more popular, fine dining spot in the Market. He has earned public and critical awards in that small sliver of a space. Last month, with the landlord PDA's blessing, he asked the Market Historical Commission for approval of an expansion into the adjoining office space. The move would just about double his seating capacity.

The Historical Commission unanimously approved the expansion.

It is sometimes not understood how established, successful Market businesses which expand into neighboring spaces with assistance from landlords and approval by the Market Historical Commission contribute to a trend that alters and hurts the Market. The expanded businesses remain small by out-of-Market standards but the number of Market businesses is still less and, therefore, the Market is diminished.

Look at what makes this Market special. It has no national or local chain store merchants. The 'sameness' of shopping malls is nowhere evident. All the business spaces are small and compact, which puts the shopper in direct contact with the owner-operators who know their products, many of which are grown or made by them. These small businesses offer specialty products and services. Their number creates the business mix of diverse products that attract shoppers. Unlike department stores, searching out the locations of these shops rewards persistence and route-finding by shoppers, which most find rewarding and distinct from their other shopping experiences.

None of those qualities meet the needs of commercial property managers. Ideally, they would prefer fewer tenants with large capital reserves and small demands for support and services. They would prefer to deal with the leasing department of The Cheesecake Factory and not Ramadan Senturk of No Boundaries.

The Historical Commission Guidelines were written in the winter of 1971 and have been tested by time. Yet the Market has changed considerably. The Guidelines have not failed. Nevertheless the accretion of small accommodating decisions over time

by landlords and the Commission have brought us to a changed Market.

The rule to prefer new business to expansion of an existing one has good sense behind it. This preference was written by the original Historical Commission in 1971 because they understood that reasonable people would never flatly prohibit expansion. Yet, they knew that small, start-up businesses were what would keep the Market's promise.

The PDA admits the amount of 'percentage rents' paid by a few large successful, businesses exceeds the total of all other tenants. It is easy for property managers who are business people to enable successful business expansion. It is not, however, the obvious decision for Historical Commissioners, who are preservationists, not property managers. Their guidelines have no mandate to support practical business decisions. The Historical Commission is often unfairly criticized for obstructionism to Market business and management plans. It might as well earn that rebuke by doing its job.

Even though all the guideline conditions are met for an expanding business, the Historical Commission still has the power and authority to deny the requested expansion and await new, unknown applicants.

The PDA management is supportive of off-site ventures by Market businesses. DeLaurenti tried Bellevue for a while. Market Spice has many other retail outlets, a thriving wholesale trade to supermarkets, and a healthy mail order operation. Pike Place Fish is selling its entrepreneurial enthusiasm off-premises by book, video, and seminars. Sur la Table is still growing into a national brand. Many other businesses augment in store sales with internet commerce. Starbucks ... oh, you've heard enough about them.

Since 1988, the PDA has seen its total commercial leasee numbers drop from 226 to 205. There are almost a dozen other landlords in the Market all of whom manage only about 15 percent of leasable space. The PDA and the Inn at the Market are the biggest consolidators.

The PDA aided the following expansions: Tracy Rose Boutique and American Pie became Kitchen Basics; The Vegetable Kingdom and Spadaccini are now Michou; Chez Shea made prix fixe of Martin Kaplan AIA by adding Shea's Lounge; Seattle Picture Frame and Retro Viva combined to become Metsger Maps; Cinderella Thrift, Elevenhearth, and Charlie's Parrot Market were all absorbed by the Child Care Center.

The Inn at the Market recently ingested Market Place Photo and expelled John Fluevog. Earlier it gave Café Dilettante and DeGraff books to Café Campagne.

The Market's mission and ethos is to support start-ups and incubate businesses. Established Market businesses have many routes to growth which do not limit the opportunities for newcomers. It is important that the enablers, landlords and the Historical Commission, observe the wisdom of the past as they do their jobs today.

Department of Corrections:

Last month Passages incorrectly referred to the Samis Foundation as a corporation and implied it would develop residential property on Second Avenue. The Samis Foundation is not a developer, but does work through third parties who meet conditions imposed by it.

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