

## Executive Director's Notes

In my notes below I will try to highlight some additional things that you and your family may want to do during your stay in New Orleans for the IETC. My experience comes from actually having lived in New Orleans for three years in the early '90s, and now holding the IETC in New Orleans every year since 2005. My family and I have been to the places discussed below, many of them a multiple of times, and they are enjoyable and interesting. If you have the opportunity to bring your family, then consider coming early or staying later!

What do you think of when you hear "New Orleans?" Many people will say "Mardi Gras" and "Jazz music in the French Quarter." Before having lived in New Orleans I would have said pretty much the same. However, after having lived there in the early '90s with my young family, we came to know New Orleans as very much more than those clichés. There is a lot for a family to enjoy about a trip to New Orleans that goes way beyond the common answers.

I hope that the information below will enlighten you to some of the fun things that New Orleans has to offer. As time allows I will add to the list below, so please check back later for more fun things to do in New Orleans.

### **Audobon Zoo, Aquarium, and Insectarium**

Audubon Zoo is a world-class zoo, set in Audubon Park in the Uptown/Garden District. From the Loews Hotel site of the IETC you can walk 4-5 blocks to St. Charles Avenue and catch the trolley, riding it all the way to Audubon Park. The animals are in natural-type habitats, easily viewable from the pathways through the zoo. The wildlife variety is outstanding with over 2,000 animals displayed in the zoo's 58 acres. Please see the two websites for additional information about the zoo - <https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/> and <http://www.neworleansonline.com/directory/location.php?locationID=1249>

The Aquarium of the Americas features many animals from the world's water habitats. Walk about five blocks from the hotel and you can find yourself immersed in an ocean of finned friends. The walk through the Aquarium features the 400,000 gallon "Gulf of Mexico Exhibit." The "Caribbean Reef" will have you in a clear tunnel, completely surrounded by colorful denizens of the deep. Other featured animals include exotic frogs, penguins, and the southern sea otter. Please see the website

<https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/aquarium/explore-aquarium> for more information.

The Insectarium will have the entomologists among you enjoying the winged, and creepy-crawly critters in a location 2-3 blocks from the hotel. Exhibits include the butterfly garden, prehistoric bugs, a metamorphosis exhibit showing the life cycle of bugs, and others. You can even eat a bug at Bug Appétit. Please see the website

<https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/insectarium/explore-insectarium> for additional information.

All three of these attractions are part of the Audubon Nature Institute, and tickets can be purchased at any of the sites for reduced entry into two, or all three of them.

## **World War II Museum**

This museum was established as America's National World War II Museum by a 2004 act of the US Congress. Eight blocks from the hotel, this museum is the most visited museum in New Orleans, and ranked #2 in the world by many travel related websites. My family has been there many times over the years, and every year there are new and expanded exhibits as they build new buildings to house them. The exhibits feature many artifacts from the small to the large – including the Higgins Boats used in D-Day, aircraft such as the Spitfire and the B-17 Superfortress, award winning films in the theaters, and more as they expand the museum site. Please see the website <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/> for more information.

## **Louisiana Children's Museum**

About six blocks from the Loews, at 420 Julia Street, is the Louisiana Children's Museum. The museum features over 100 hands-on exhibits. My young kids loved this place, and we visited it multiple times while living in New Orleans. It has gotten bigger since that time judging from the information on the website <http://www.lcm.org>. The \$10/person (child and adults) admission cost is good all day, with in and out privileges as long as you keep the admission ticket. The museum website suggests a minimum of two hours, but if you can stay longer you will certainly enjoy it. This excerpt is taken from their frequently asked questions:

“Children's museums are places where children learn through play and exploration in environments designed just for them.

Our museum creates a playful, interactive learning experience in a safe environment for families. We encourage hands on, participatory learning for children of all ages. Encouraging discovery through observation, inquiry, creative construction, role-playing, problem-solving and free play, the Museum motivates children to develop their cognitive, physical and social skills while enjoying fruitful interaction with adults and peers.”

## **Jean Lafitte Barataria Preserve**

The Barataria Preserve is physically south of New Orleans, in Marrero on the West Bank, and the car ride takes about a half hour. It is a US National Park, staffed by Park Rangers. The preserve's 23,000 acres include bayous, swamps, marshes, and forests. Walk along boardwalks and dirt trails to spot animals including alligators and over 200 species of birds plus an ever-changing array of wildflowers and plants. The Visitor's Center can be called at 504-689-3690 for timely updates on the activities. The website of <https://www.nps.gov/jela/barataria-preserve.htm> also provides a wealth of information. The park rangers provide tours through the wetlands, on a raised boardwalk, starting at 10 AM, Wednesday – Sunday. Since this is a national park, admission is free. Their website states that not all GPS systems will correctly find the site, so please check the maps before you go to be sure things are working well. The physical address is 6588 Barataria Boulevard, Marrero, LA. 70072.

## **New Orleans City Park**

Located in Metairie, New Orleans City Park can be accessed from the conference hotel by your personal or rental car, or by its own adventure using the iconic New Orleans street cars. The park contains the New Orleans Museum of Art, the 12-acre Botanical Gardens, and the Carousel Garden. The Carousel Garden has 16 carnival rides for all ages, and the experience

is capped by one of the oldest working carousel rides in the US. City Park also contains playgrounds for children underneath the giant oak trees in the park, some of which are now 800 years old. These trees would take about 10-20 people holding hands around the trunk to encircle the tree, and the first-level lateral branches are large enough to be considered large trees in and of themselves – just going sideways from the massive trunks that spawned them. The park is also one of the largest city parks in the country, over 1300 acres – which is over 50% larger than Central Park in New York City. See the website <http://neworleanscitypark.com/> for City Park, and the website <http://neworleanscitypark.com/in-the-park/carousel-gardens> for the Carousel Gardens area of the park.

### **French Quarter Visitor's Center**

The US National Park Service also operates the Visitor's Center, located about 9-10 blocks from the conference hotel, on the north side of Jackson Square in the French Quarter. This is the starting point for many guided tours of this historic area, and a wonderful place to learn of the unique architecture that pre-dates New Orleans as a US city. Originally a site of French settlement, it also was governed by the Spanish starting in 1766 before becoming French again shortly before the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. You will learn to tell the difference in the building designs and embellishments through the guided tours that are available through the experienced docents and park rangers. Please see the website <https://www.nps.gov/jela/french-quarter-site.htm> to learn more.