

## OANA General Meeting Minutes 01-17-19

The January meeting saw fairly high attendance, with many members renewing and several new households joining. As usual, the Pledge of Allegiance was first on the agenda, at just a few minutes after 6 p.m.

Councilman Gillis McCloskey asked to briefly address the group. He began by thanking the OANA for our many contributions to the neighborhood, and said the new “Welcome to Old Arabi” sign has received approval to be installed on the neutral ground. He also asked residents to be patient with so many construction projects taking place at once in the area, explaining that the intention is to finish them sooner this way.

The meeting continued with an End-of-the-Year slideshow presentation, featuring these 2018 highlights:

- Spring & Fall Sippin’ in the Sunset Thursdays (four scheduled, with the final fall one cancelled due to weather) had great vendor participation — there was a waiting list by the end of the season!
- the 10th Anniversary Sugar Fest & Soirée attracted a record number of sponsors, which allowed the event to be a big financial success, as well as lots of fun
- the Mitchell Smith Culinary Scholarship awarded Hailey Baumann \$1000 for her 3rd semester of studies at Nunez Community College; Hailey works at the Chalmette PJ’s
- with Arabi Food Store & Cafe providing the perfect patio venue, we hosted the annual Night Out Against Crime, our first social of the year
- members participated in an afternoon of service at the Old Arabi Community Garden, painting fences, mounting their beautiful new sign, and preparing the beds for winter
- several local artists painted historical mile markers that are mounted on a “totem pole” in front of the Aycock Barn. Three of the artists attended our Holiday Party and were honored there. A new “Welcome to Old Arabi” sign was also shown at the party, and will soon find a place at the entrance to our neighborhood
- once again, the OANA made a \$5000 holiday donation to Arabi Elementary School. Ten families received gift cards from Canseco’s Market & Walmart, along with a voucher for a Christmas tree from Renaissance Gardens
- other 2018 donations were \$200 to the St. Bernard Veterans’ Association for its annual fundraiser, and \$500 to the Chalmette High Key Club for helping out at Sugar Fest
- for the first time in October, we sponsored a fun and successful Trick-or-Treat event, with a map of participating households in the neighborhood
- our member Christmas party was once again held at The Kitchen Table Café; many thanks to them for hosting and catering a festive celebration
- at the Sugar Soirée, the OANA presented Tom Braniff, Faith Moran & Ray Lauga with Friends of Old Arabi awards for their roles in founding and keeping Sugar Fest an exciting annual event for the past 10 years
- financially, we finished 2018 with an increase in our Operating Account, and expenditures from the Scholarship and Beautification funds (please see the

slideshow for a more detailed breakdown). Notably, our Sugar Fest profit was almost twice that of last year!

- membership was down, but not by much; we'll be looking at ways to increase neighborhood participation

Thanks were given to the Committee Chairs. The Membership Chair is still vacant, in case anyone wants to volunteer. The Vice Presidency has been filled by a Board Member, leaving one Board position empty. Elections for Officers and Board Members for the next two-year term will be held in May; nominations must be made by the end of April. More information will be provided at the General Meeting in March.

Congratulations were given to our Board Member who will be attending this year's Leadership St. Bernard class under an OANA scholarship, and to our member who was named LCTCS Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year.

And Happy First Birthday to neighborhood eatery Chew Rouge.

Spring Sippin' in the Sunset dates have been set for Thursdays March 28th and May 9th. Two February Planetarium dates were also announced.

Plans are in the works for an Old Arabi Marching Parade on Lundi Gras, March 4th. The parade will begin at the ex-40 Arpent Tap Room at 3 p.m., and end with an after-party there after sunset. If the weather is bad, we have the option to just party at the Tap Room. Details to follow.

In the "What's New in Old Arabi" department, the Zeitgeist Multi-Disciplinary Art Center, operating on Oretha Castle Haley Blvd. in New Orleans for the past 30 years, will be moving to the ex-Valiant theater space on March 8th. It already has a loyal following for its eclectic mix of unusual film, live theater, and music events, and will be an excellent addition to our Arts & Culture corridor. Owner Rene' Broussard intends to use both the lounge and theater areas of the building.

In the "What's New at Nunez" department, the new Dean of Academic affairs has found a residence in Old Arabi, thanks to help from some of our members. Classes start next week, with over 30 academic, workforce and adult education programs. The average student age is 27, and the school now offers several Louisiana Transfer Degrees, some of which are available online (see slideshow for more details). Pelicans & Pearls, the Nunez scholarship fundraiser gala, will be held on Saturday, January 26.

One door prize winner received a free one-year membership, and another won a gift certificate to The Kitchen Table Café.

Attendees were reminded to renew memberships, encourage neighbors to get involved, and as always, keep our tax dollars in the Parish!

The meeting was adjourned around 6:45.