

# MarkTime 139

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\$2 cash/stamps/trade/LoC

## Started 11/22/2021

My sister Susan wanted to spend her 60th birthday in New Orleans. That city was already fairly high on our list of need-to-dos, so we were happy to join her in the celebration. I got us the plane tickets just minutes after the right days opened up on the airline website, and after much research Nancy found us a good rental house.

We flew to New Orleans a day ahead of Susan to get things set up, and it also gave Matthew a night with his brother Michael who had happened to move to New Orleans a few months ago to continue his schooling. High winds made the takeoff out of Ontario airport a bit shaky, and the landing at Dallas-Love Field felt like it requires a spiral down ... perhaps a noise abatement maneuver?

The kids chose Whataburger from the list of lunch options at Love Field. I still need to ask Whataburger fans what are their standout, must-have menu items? My double burger reminded me favorably of the early days of the Whopper.

Our flight from Dallas to New Orleans Louis Armstrong airport was fine, and Matthew's brother drove us to the rental house. It happened to be on the same street Michael lived, just a mile apart. Our rental was through Airbnb ...

really nice to stay in a house or apartment in a neighborhood instead of on a Hotel Row in Tourist Hell, though even the inexpensive rentals can be deceptively expensive as they tack on Cleaning

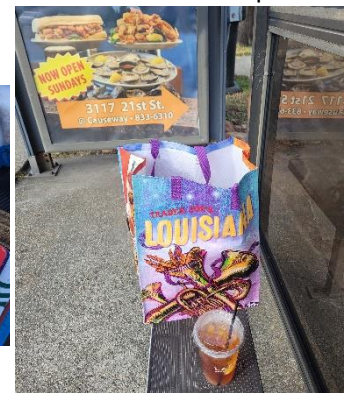


Fees and other Cable TV-style sneaky fees. This was a nice place, half of a standard New Orleans duplex "shotgun" house (the kind when you can shoot from the front door and the bullet would go out the back without hitting anything). Nearby Magazine St. filled many of our needs for the stay, including yes transit.

After bringing in all the luggage and I set up my first radio recording, we all walked over to Dat Dog on Magazine Street. They have a variety of sausage options, including alligator and fish. I had a Crayfish sausage, and shared some fries covered with crawfish etouffee sauce. Michael walked the kids back to our house while Nancy and I went grocery shopping to pick up breakfast, coffee, and other quick eats for the house, and also to see if there were any postcards.

Wednesday morning, I was up around 8 AM. I walked over to Walgreens to buy us some 3-day "Jazzy Passes" for the New Orleans Regional Transit (RTA) bus

and streetcar system, then boarded the northbound RTA route 27 on Louisiana Street to connect to the Jefferson Transit (JeT) route E1. The bus stop on Washington just north of Claiborne had some stickers "Got Demons?" that I thought would interest Matthew. The JeT bus route runs from downtown New Orleans to the airport which is in Jefferson Parish ... that's what counties are called in Louisiana. I had already been in both parishes thanks to the Miami-to-Oakland Greyhound ride in 1981, but Orleans and Jefferson (and indeed the state of Louisiana) were all new to everyone else. Anyway, the E1 also happens to pass the only Trader Joe's in the greater New Orleans area, so I allowed time to get off and buy some locally-themed grocery bags and a few snacks. I had time to hear a couple tunes from the Dixieland jazz band holding court near the airport baggage area before Susan arrived, then I helped lug her luggage to the taxi stand. Taxis are required to charge a set rate from the airport to New Orleans, currently \$36.



Meanwhile, once

Nancy woke up she walked over to Slim Goodies Diner on Magazine St. for breakfast, while Andrew happily continued to sleep. Strange to me, but Nancy had never eaten at a restaurant by herself before! Nancy ordered the "Re-population Combo" (Eggs, Grits, Bacon and Toast with a cup of Joe) because just after Katrina hit this was the only meal they served. Interestingly enough, an older couple sat right next to Nancy. It turned out the wife was also named Nancy and her husband had been a professor of Urban Planning at local Tulane University and also participated in transit planning. The husband told Nancy he recommended we take all the street cars from end to end if we could fit it in. On her way back to the house, Nancy stopped at a CVS and found a batch of postcards.

After Susan settled in for a bit and Matthew came back to the house, we walked over to a bus stop on Louisiana Street. RTA 27 to 94 for late lunch at Willie Mae's Scotch House. The posted closing time was 5 PM, but they already closing down before 4. As we walked in they told us it was closed but the young waiter had had mercy on us and went back to ask. Thankfully he came back and said yes as long as we ordered the family chicken dinner and we picked mac and cheese and rice



and beans as our sides. Imagine our surprise when they started serving us all the sides they had available, such as butter beans and rice, green beans, and fried okra ... it was like a chef's table. We figured that since it was in the end of the day instead of throwing out good food they decided to serve all the extras and we did not complain. On our way out there was a sign that hung on the door that said "Be Nice or Leave". Our rides back were routes 94, 28, the St. Charles streetcar from Napoleon to the temporary east end of the line at Erato St. and a walk down to the 11 on Magazine St. We were in the "Muse" streets, which I remember Don Fields talking about in relation to both New Orleans and his guilty-pleasure movie Xanadu. The bus stop was at Magazine and Terpsichore Streets, and gave me a chance to also take photos of the street name tiles at the corner.



Nancy and kids got off the 11 near the house, while Susan and I continued on the 11 to near the west end of the line then mostly walked back to the house. The Starbucks at Magazine and State had lights on and some people when we rode by on the bus, but just a few minutes later it was dark and empty. Peaches Records just east of Napoleon had been closed since 5 PM but



had enough lights on to take a good photo of the lunch counter still in place from the store's former life as a Woolworths. We continued to walk off all the way back to house.

Thursday morning began with a brisk walk down to Tchoupitoulas Street, to catch route 10 to downtown and a slightly wet walk from Canal St. to the French Market.

The tourist-famous Café du Monde serves chicory coffee and bags of square, puffy, powdered sugar-covered beignets. We were there early enough that there was hardly any wait and quickly had coffee, hot chocolate, and beignets. There also happened to be a jazz trio playing for us tourists.

A few doors down is Voodoo Harley-Davidson, which was on our list as sister Betsy wanted one of their t-shirts for her husband Siggy. Nancy and Susan found an artist shop that displayed and sold mostly local art. They sold the "Be Nice or Leave" sign we had seen the day before. Side note: it turns out the "Be Nice or Leave" sign is done by a local folk artist named Dr. Bob. I also walked over to WWOZ, but their office was closed to the public.

The French Market is just a few blocks from the French Quarter. Our main stop would be Marie Laveau's House of Voodoo. Interestingly enough they have a bouncer type person in the front who laid out strict rules, such as how many people could be in the store at any given time and most importantly being NO Pictures! At some point there was chatter about cursed cameras creating strange photos or no longer working. The shop had mix of roots, stones, dolls, and ingredients to craft voodoo, as well as t-shirts, shot glasses, and other souvenirs. Nancy, me and the kiddies were fascinated by it all however we know nothing about voodoo or the occult and didn't want to tempt fate so we stuck to the usual souvenirs. Susan did buy a "Protection Charm" that she may or may not eventually get brave enough to use.

We also checked out other t-shirt shops along Bourbon Street, taking advantage of the relatively quiet Thursday midday. The kids liken Bourbon St. to Las Vegas in the daytime ... they have yet to see Bourbon Street at night, especially during the lead-up to Mardi Gras. We walked up to Basin Street hoping to catch the northbound RTA route 32, but either we just missed our bus or that bus was a no-show. We instead hired a Lyft up to Parkway Bakery and Tavern for a Po'Boy lunch.



From there we walked to the nearby post office to mail our first batch of postcards, then continued up the very industrial Toulouse St. to Carrollton Avenue for a brief Canal Streetcar ride and bus route 90 to Claiborne Avenue for a postcard-less Walgreens at the west end of the St Charles streetcar line.

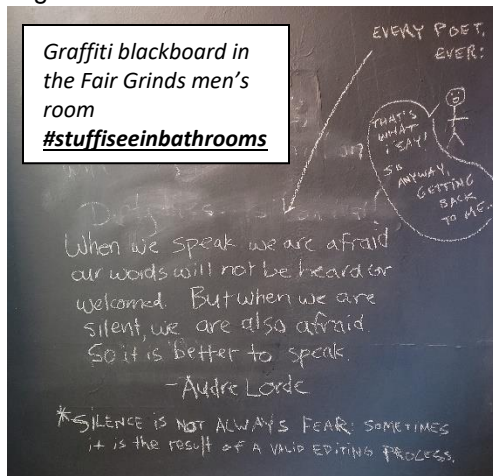


We exited the streetcar at Audubon Park to walk around for a bit. The walk allowed us to see a number of interesting murals/graffiti. While at the park Susan and the kids took a quick walk while Nancy and I sat by the fountain. Their walk was brief since that part of the park was shared by a golf course and no one was interested in getting hit by a golf ball. We then continued east on the St. Charles streetcar to the stop at Foucher for a break at the house.

We initially had thought Willie Mae's would be Susan's official birthday dinner but it didn't seem special

enough so we were able to make a reservation at Gris-Gris for its fancied local cuisine. It also turns out that the chef Eric Cook had been friends with Anthony Bourdain and had been on one of his shows. We had only made a reservation for 6 but we were lucky enough to have Michael's girlfriend, Sharie, join us. However our table which was on the balcony only held 6 people. Andrew was MORE than happy to stay home and give up his spot. The food was wonderful and the seating from the balcony was great however it just happened to be the coldest evening of the trip. They did have outside heaters but ours would turn off on occasion probably because of the wind. But it was turned out to be a very nice birthday celebration. I had an excellent dish of shrimp & grits, and Nancy had their "Mom's Chicken and Dumplings". At the end of dinner Michael and Sharie opted to walk home instead of Uber. They are right, walking around Magazine is a pleasant experience. We walked as far as the route 11 stop at First St., after stopping at a gas station to pick up Dinty Moore microwavable lunches and Gatorade for Andrew.

Friday morning began with bus rides on routes 11 and 91 up to Fair Grinds Coffeehouse, the meeting place for Free Tours By Foot and their St. Louis #3 Cemetery tour. We had time for coffee, iced tea, and perfectly good and very inexpensive breads and sweet rolls from their "Day Old" basket. The kids and I also bought water and snacks at the Canseco market.



The tour began with a walk up Esplanade Ave. toward the gate of St Louis #3 Cemetery. Our tour guide was a local, and enjoyed telling us about the history of the neighborhood and the cemetery. He noted that this part of town, Bayou St. John, had been where wealthy black and Creole lived, whereas the wealthy white people lived along St James Street. His one-sentence description of New Orleans was so good, we had to e-mail him later to make sure I quoted it correctly. "Sure 😊 - I believe New Orleans exists in a perpetual state of Charming Dysfunctionality". Most of the graves were in above-ground marble house-like structures. This was partially because of the low water table (most of the city is at or below sea level) and partially as that was the preferred burial method of the Spanish folk who ruled the area when New Orleans was founded. The larger buildings were owned and used by families and professional groups such as merchants, priests, and nuns.

After the tour we walked back to Fair Grinds for bathroom break and more iced tea. They were now out of iced tea, but they had another batch of great day-old

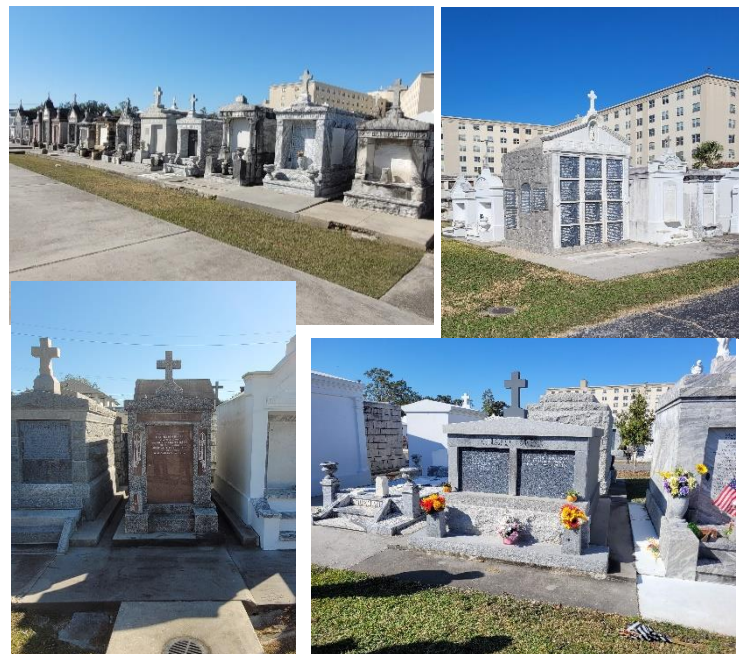
baked goods. We spotted an interesting and very small park where our bus stop for southbound 91 bus was located. Fortier Park was named after Alcee Fortier who was a Creole Philosopher. Exploring the park revealed interesting tiles, hanging lanterns, a stone chess board, and sculptures.

Lunch was at the Port of Call, recommended by a co-worker of Nancy's who used to live in New Orleans. The menu was small but it was recommended we have their burgers. The burgers came with shredded cheese on top and were huge, and they all came with baked potatoes. They also served the drinks in large plastic cups which delighted the kids. The cups were similar to those of Dickies large yellow cups. We had gotten there soon after they opened for the day, but there was already a full house so we had to wait for seating. Our wait turned out to be relatively short and we were not disappointed.

We headed home so that we could spend time shopping along Magazine Street. Susan went off to enjoy the galleries and boutique shops while the kids and I walked to Peaches Records and Beard Papa cream puffs. Nancy had big plans to join us but decided an afternoon nap would be perfect.

Nancy also tried to get reservations at Dooky Chase's restaurant but with no luck. Dooky Chase's had been a hot spot for meetings to discuss issues of civil and economic rights in the African-American community in New Orleans and throughout the country. Additionally Leah Chase who married into the family expanded the restaurant and became known as the Queen of Creole Cuisine. She was the inspiration for Disney's Princess Tiana. Eating at this restaurant had been one thing Susan really had wanted to do, though it had originally only been presented to us as an "option" for Susan's birthday dinner.

The restaurant was fully booked for that night, but because it was her birthday, we didn't want her to miss her chance. We paid for a Lyft there and back to pick up their gumbo, fried okra and peach cobbler. I think if it was just Susan and I we could have eaten at the bar, as a





nice dressed older couple was going to do so while waiting in case of a late cancellation.

While we were out Nancy and Andrew picked up from New York Pizza, on Magazine St. near Peaches Records. She had tried to call in the order but no one answered. It wasn't too far away so they headed out to the restaurant, walking because they didn't know when the bus would be there. When they got to New York Pizza, the restaurant side was empty but the bar was filled. Nancy and Andrew ordered a large pizza to go and a single slice to share. However after waiting longer than promised Nancy asked about the pizzas. Nancy said it was like they had forgotten about the order or they had smoked so much Wacky Tabacky it was like they were in slow motion. By the time they got their pizza Nancy saw the bus making its stop and she and Andrew tried to make a run for it but it was too late. So they started their walk home. In the meantime, Matthew and I got so worried about Nancy and Andrew so Matthew ran off to find them. Fortunately by then they and the pizza were only blocks away from the house.



Saturday morning we slept in late, then caught route 11 east to Canal Street. Susan had been interested in seeing at least some live jazz, so she went directly from there to Bourbon St. and the Musical Legends Park. Andrew wanted to go back to Voodoo Harley-Davidson for their alligator biker shirt, so we took a short ride on route 5 back to the French Market.

It was good we had already tried Café du Monde as the Saturday morning tourist lines were crazy. Andrew got his t-shirt, and Nancy and I bought souvenirs and candies from a praline shop next door. Jackson Square itself was quiet, but the street between the square and the St. Louis Cathedral was full-on tourist mayhem. Bourbon St. smelled a bit riper than Thursday, the kids went back to a couple of the t-shirt shops, and then we found our way to meet Susan.



Musical Legends Park had live Dixieland jazz, beignets, and statues of jazz musicians. We judged the Café Beignet beignets superior to Café du Monde. We then had a nice seafood lunch at nearby Oceana, suggested by Nancy's friend Debbie, then walked it off with a stroll up to Rampart St. for Our Lady of Guadalupe Church & International Shrine of St. Jude. Just west of Canal Street, [atlasobscura.com](http://atlasobscura.com) noted we would find one of the "Gates of Guinee", but the main gate at 127 Elk Place was well disguised as a Tulane University facility. We continued west to Duncan Plaza, which is "temporarily" an RTA transfer center. One of the RTA routes serving Duncan Plaza is Route 80, the replacement bus for the fabled "Streetcar Named Desire" but darn we did not get to see let alone ride it. Instead we took route 91 to Magazine, then we had enough time to walk over to DNO Garden District t-shirt shop at First St. They sell cool t-shirts, many used t-shirts they added printing to, and cool stickers. From there the kids walked ahead towards home, while the rest of us got day passes on route 11. We dropped off the day's purchases, Matthew went off to one last overnight stay at his brother's, and the rest of us eventually went off to dinner at Anatolia Mediterranean Cuisine.

We woke up at 4:45 to see off Susan and her cab to the airport, then we cleaned up the Airbnb including the obligatory run a load of our used towels in the washer. Michael drove us to Waffle House on Canal St. and after breakfast bid us adieu. We caught a Lyft to airport, then had a long wait for our takeoff time.

Susan was impressed by the friendliness of the people we came into contact with and agrees that we all left wanting more time and experiences with New Orleans.

"I'm still energized by the memories of our trip to NOLA. I keep adding to the list of places and experiences for trips to New Orleans. I'd like to go to new restaurants (Dooky Chase's and Café Reconcile) and return to the Parkway and Willie Mae's. Go to Preservation Hall, Fritzel's Jazz Pub, and other music venues. I would like to explore the many museums in New Orleans. The Katrina museum. The Mardi Gras Museums, Art Museums, Sculpture Gardens. I like to go on an Architectural Tour.

I'd like to take a cooking class. I'd like to go to Jackson Square and see the local artists' vendors.

"I'm glad an opportunity came up to go with the world travelers, Nancy, Mark, Matthew and Andrew. I've known people who have gone over the years, and it seemed a little overwhelming. It gave me perspective and a starting point, to go with your family.

"I felt a sense of calm/peace and an appreciation for the resilience of New Orleans.

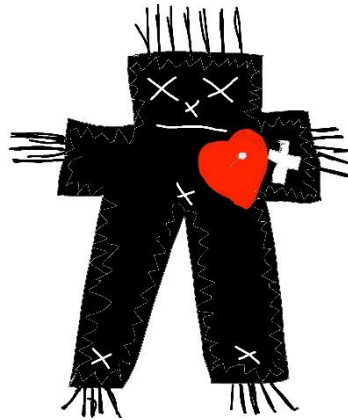
"Albert was unable to go this time. He wanted to know what the mystique of NOLA is? He doesn't know anyone who has gone to New Orleans. His family did not wake up one day and plan a trip to go listen to jazz there. His exposure to New Orleans was the news during and after Katrina, a movie called 'The Cat People'. The fact that they have looser laws. A series he watches, called 'Swamp People' (bayou culture). He doesn't understand how some people have a group of friends who have been or would like to go to New Orleans, and others don't. He said he can't think of anyone he knows, especially not his family who would like to experience New Orleans. I think most of what comes to mind for him is the drinking, drugs, prostitution, police corruption etc. He wonders how some people are in awe and are drawn by the positive and others aren't open to the positive. He almost seemed to wish he understood the difference in people. I expressed to him that different people gravitate to the different and many sides of New Orleans.

"Why do some people gravitate to going to New Orleans and others don't? It's a unique city with lots of culture. There's a variety to experience and something for everyone.

"I was wanting to see more of New Orleans, even if it was a movie. I wanted to watch it with Albert, since he was unable to go with us. Once in a while you can go to Spectrum On Demand and be pleasantly surprised. NCIS: New Orleans, was not the only option. 'The King of New Orleans' was 1 of 4 options. The description provided was 'A taxi driver in New Orleans provides the city's people with transportation'. Other than a bus driver, trolley or train conductor - who takes you through a variety of neighborhoods with as many different people/passengers? Larry Shirt is the taxi driver. We travel through his days. It takes place right before Katrina. He has a repeat customer over a period of time. We are there for some of his worst days, through to a new life direction. Larry Shirt is a part of that life change. Another character (that you never meet) is Larry's son 'Little Larry'. There is a photo of him on the dashboard of the taxi. Larry senior and friend's make references through stories and special days. I don't want to give too much away, but I think it is worth watching, if you'd like to have a new friend in New Orleans. I could see myself crossing paths with Larry and him bringing interest to my life.

"I'm still in sync with NOLA movies. I stumbled on a Joaquin Phoenix movie called 'C'mon, C'mon' from 2021. It was an interesting movie. The last 39 minutes take place in New Orleans. The description makes no mention of it. Joaquin's character travels the country going to different cities to ask young people the same questions. He's also in charge of his nephew, while his sister tries to hospitalize her bipolar husband.

"The St. Louis #3 Cemetery tour was interesting. The structures of the crypts almost seem like a crowded city. The process of putting the body of your loved one in the crypt, sealing the crypt, and a year later gathering and removing the remains. Storing them in another part to the crypt. Reuniting them with generations of other family (or individuals of an organization) can be joined and saved together in one place. While they welcome the process/remains of a future person in this self-contained structure. A place to gather, send off, visit, knowing where your resting place is etc.... Our tour guide's family has a family crypt. It seems like a cultural rite of passage.



"From Marie Laveau's

House of VooDoo I purchased a VooDoo doll that had a white cross for protection from negative forces. I've yet to carry out the instructions to carry out the "spell". I'm on the fence, intrigued and cautious. I also picked up a little tortoise charm. The charm is for perseverance (like the story of the 'tortoise and the hare'). I was thinking of my home and the little constant nudges to keep plugging along.

"I look forward to returning to New Orleans in the near future, either with those who have never been or those returning."



As noted in MarkTime 138 (the Montana issue), I often prepare what could be considered a pre-trip zine, with things to see, do, eat, and shop, transit information, and yes, a list of radio stations to hear and record. As you would guess, the New Orleans version was huge, so I am

not including it with this issue. I send a printed or e-mailed .pdf copy of my trip notes upon request.

## The End Times

3/1/2022

Oopsie ... life and stuff got in the way, but three months later this MarkTime is out at last. I am pushing to mail off this issue prior to our upcoming Big Adventure tied in with Nancy's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. There is an ever-growing backlog of material, including the Montana photos, trips taken and family activities held since November, a few (but, sadly, ONLY a few) letters of comment, oodles of zine plugs, etc. etc. so by the end of March there will be enough for two or maybe three MarkTimes weeeeeeee.



The WFMU radio broadcast I talked about waaaaaay back in *MarkTime* 136 did happen, though it aired on March 19th, 2021 instead of on April 9th. Two of the three hours are still in the station's archives (<https://wfmuplaylists/shows/102045>). I placed a copy of the entire three hours into the Internet Archives (<https://archive.org/details/wfmuplaylists/shows/102045>), or I can send it to you directly via Dropbox or WeTransfer. They liked my fill-in show enough to include me in a new Tuesday afternoon show with a rotating crew of hosts, and my one-hour presentations of old airchecks, commercials, and TV themes has appeared on the 2nd Tuesday of each month since last September. Long as I am sharing links, the "Wiggle Room" shows are all at <https://www.wfmuplaylists/WG>. And, what the heck ... longtime MarkTime reader Don-O Fields has found that his long-running CD compilation series transferred his

long-running CD compilation series transferred quite well to a Friday evening show *Hour of Crap*:

<https://www.wfmuplaylists/HF>

Otis Fodder of MoFo Outreach Ministries fame has a weekly program of themed music called *Slow Transit*:

<https://www.wfmuplaylists/S2>

And, another WFMU DJ recently produced a three-hour Howard Hesseman tribute using "Dr. Johnny Fever" intros and outros to songs with the actual songs, well worth a listen:

<https://wfmuplaylists/shows/112277>

I am ever more happy to see Chicago TV horror movie host Svengoolie on MeTV every Saturday night, and the Buffalo Saturday night movie show Off Beat Cinema on the Retro TV channel hidden way out in the 1200 channels, the exurbs of cable TV land. Upon further viewing of Retro TV programs, they have at least four other other oddball movie shows:

- \* *Dracula's Kung Fu Theater* - Friday nights. Yes, "Dracula" hosting kung fu movies, imported from Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong
- \* *Drive-In Movie Maniacs* - Friday night/Saturday morning. I have not watch this much ... just enough to know it's not Joe Bob Briggs drive-in movies. Is Joe Bob even still on anywhere?
- \* *Horror Hotel* - after Off Beat Cinema Saturday night/Sunday morning. Hosted by "Lamia, Queen of the Dark"
- \* *Harvey's Festival of Fear* - Sunday nights, hosted by a "Halloween Harvey" from some small Texas TV market. Harvey's white and black makeup reminds me a bit of "Ned the Dead" from Green Bay, but his vocal style is somewhere more in the neighborhood of Curly from 3 Stooges.

Retro TV has a few other shows of interest scattered about its schedule. WGN used to rerun the police drama *Naked City* in the 1960s, when I was too young to appreciate it but I try to catch it at 2:00 weekdays when I don't have to pick up Andrew from school. Shows I do remember liking from previous rerunning include *Dragnet* (4:00 PM Saturday), *The Ray Bradbury Theater*, and *One Step Beyond* (6:30 PM weekdays). I am curious about *Retro Drive In* and *Who Dun It Theater* (4:00 PM weekdays).

OK ... see you all again hopefully just a few weeks!

