

## Helping Your Neighbors – Todd Starnes (FOX News Radio)

31 August 2008



My Hurricane Gustav provisions are meager — a few cans of Vienna Sausages, a bag of pork rinds and a box of Moonpies. So I put on my weather gear and set out in search of a hot meal. I ran into one guy rushing back to his home in the French Quarter. He was clutching what appeared to be a sandwich.

“Excuse me, sir,” I asked, “Is that a po-boy?”

The man eyed me with deep suspicion.

“Are you a cop,” he wanted to know. I shook my head and told him I was simply hungry and wanted to eat a dressed oyster po-boy. (For you Methodists out there, they dress their sandwiches in New Orleans.)

With great hesitation, the man admitted he knew of a place where I could find a sandwich — but I was sworn to secrecy — seeing how all the stores in the French Quarter were supposed to be closed.

I thanked the man profusely and watched as he scurried away nibbling at his contraband po-boy. Unfortunately, I promptly got lost.

A few hours later, I found a police officer on St. Charles Avenue in the Garden District who pointed me in the direction of The Avenue Pub. “Great food,” he said. “And I believe they may be open.”

His directions were right on the money and a few minutes later I parked alongside St. Charles and walked inside the bar.

It’s unfair to call it a dive bar — but it had all the atmosphere of a really cool dive bar. The Avenue Pub is a neighborhood place — where you can shoot pool, grab a cool beverage and toss around friendly insults at the guys and gals quaffing suds. And it’s also where I found one of the coolest stories on my adventure to the Big Easy.

The owner of the Avenue Pub is a lady by the name of Polly. She holds court from a table just off the bar. And when word came down that Hurricane Gustav was on the way, Polly made a good business decision.

“Anybody in uniform gets to eat free,” she told me. Burgers, hot dogs, chicken sandwiches — whatever they wanted, the police officers got. No questions asked. “It’s pub food,” she said. “It’s not gourmet.”

But it was great food. I ordered the cheeseburger and a Baptist Martini (for you Quakers — that’s a Diet Coke).

Polly shrugs off any talk about being a Good Samaritan. She says neighbors look after neighbors in New Orleans. “These guys don’t get anything but MRE’s,” she said. “And we’ve got hot food. There’s no point throwing away stuff that can do some people some good.”

And of course, the police officers are extremely thankful. Many are regular customers.

After the storm, Polly said they will be open for business and she made a special officer to the police. “I told them if they bring me steaks, I’ll cook for them. Whatever they bring, I’ll manage to get it cooked.”

You know, Polly may just run a neighborhood bar — but it’s a five star restaurant in my book.