



## CALL OF INTEREST to NEW ORLEANS in February 2020

Join us (starting **17 February 2020**) for a two week International Rotary Friendship Exchange Programme in New Orleans and the Mississippi area of the US of A. This starts at the Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans and ends there too.

Celebrating New Orleans culture is always done accompanied by food, music and art. New Orleans salutes the performing, visual and avant-garde art scene with festivals and multi-cultural events. The diversity that has made New Orleans the vibrant, magnetic place, sets the stage for a kaleidoscope of festivals and joyous expressions of what brings us together and what sets New Orleans apart.

From Greek Fest by the lake to Essence in the Dome and Carnaval Latino in the downtown area, parties that pay homage to heritage and culture come in every flavour where anyone can sample, sip or savour the city's best-tasting offerings throughout the year; including their strong Cajun and Creole culture. While this RFE is taking place, the multi cultural Mardi Gras Festival will happen, which is Not to be confused with the Australian Gay parades.

**Mardi Gras** (which will happen 25 February 2020 is French for "Fat Tuesday", reflecting the practice of the last night of eating rich, fatty foods before the ritual fasting of the Lenten season. Related popular practices are associated with Shrovetide **celebrations** before the fasting and religious obligations associated with the penitential season of Lent. New Orleans celebrates Mardi Gras beginning on January 6th, or the Twelfth Night, as it occurs 12 days after Christmas, through Fat Tuesday. The date of Fat Tuesday changes from year to year based on when the Christian holiday Ash Wednesday, or the first day of Lent. The first record of Mardi Gras being celebrated in Louisiana was at the mouth of the Mississippi River in March 2, 1699, which was celebrated as part of an observance of Catholic practice; with music and dance, masking and costuming. The colours traditionally associated with Mardi Gras in New Orleans are green, gold, and purple.

Music also plays a leading role in New Orleans, everyday there are several free 'live' music performances in the streets or in restaurants and gardens. And while traditional jazz is revered here, New Orleans is tuned into all kinds of music expression.

There is so much to see and do in New Orleans, walk through the French Quarter & Garden District, hop on the historical New Orleans Canal Street Street Car St. Charles Streetcar Line, enjoy a swamp & bayou tour, see the many sidewalk musicians and artists at work along the way, and No trip to New Orleans is complete without enjoying coffee, hot beignets and Po-Boys.

This is on a first come - first serve basis, with some preference given to those Rotarians who put their hands up to actively be involved in hosting visiting foreign Rotarians in our District. The successful applicants will be asked for more in depth information once this group has been chosen.

Please email me with your interest BY 17 October 2019, and you will then receive a form which must be returned filled-in, including a photo of yourself, along with the contribution- will entitle you to a place in this Friendship Exchange Programme. Anneke Wolterbeek, RFE Chair D9940, [awrootbeer@gmail.com](mailto:awrootbeer@gmail.com),