THE ABBEVILLE ALTERNATIVE
by John Cameron

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Whenever people in Lafayette talk about oysters, the conversation inevitably turns to Abbeville. Not only does most of Lafayette view Abbeville as the true town in which to eat oysters, but the discussion will usually center on Dupuy's Restaurant. For Lafayette, Dupuy's is seen as the Four-Star oyster restaurant and there is, of course, no doubt that Dupuy's reputation is well earned. However, there are some other restaurants in Abbeville worthy of being known in their own right. I have heard many Lafayette oyster gourmets talk about going to "that other place," either because the line at Dupuy's was too long or because they prefer "the other place." The "other place" is Black's and it serves some of the finest oysters in southwestern Louisiana.

Black's is a small restaurant across from the Catholic church in Abbeville and just around the corner from Dupuy's. Be prepared to wait for a table at Black's. Get a beer from the inside and stroll around Abbeville a bit; you'll find some interesting buildings and scenery in the vicinity, so the wait can be a pleasant one. Once you get your table you'll find yourself in a little restaurant that is of a type rapidly disappearing—plain small-town café with wooden walls and little signs for various foods. It is the sort of room that I find very comfortable in a café. It somehow seems more real than the plastic wood of most of today's small-town restaurants, and this is why I give the ambience at Black's a higher rating than many other places.

The real joy at Black's is the food. First, the oysters—as you would expect in Abbeville, each table has a half-dozen condiments so that you may spend your time waiting for your oysters by creating your own sauce. If you have never eaten in Abbeville, be advised that that oyster-loving place has created several bottled sauces all its own, one of which is garlic sauce that does incredible things for a cold raw oyster. For some reason—perhaps because I use a large portion of the garlic sauce in my own oyster sauce mix—only devoted oyster lovers will now go with me to Abbeville and even these sit in the back seat returning to Lafayette. It is a potent garlic mixture. By the time you finish your sauce, your first dozen oysters (and no one can eat just one) will be at your table. The tray ($2.25 a dozen) will be icy cold and covered with plum oysters. In this season of small-to-minuscule oysters, I am delighted to say that Black's will, if the oysters are really small, place 13 or even 14 in your dozen.

After you eat raw oysters, there are several fine ways to finish the evening. You can get a good poorboy ($1.75), or stuffed crab plate ($3.25). The fried oysters ($3.75) are excellent, and what goes better after raw oysters than fried oysters? The one dish that might be better than the oysters at Black's is the fried shrimp ($4), which is an absolute joy. The batter is so light as to be virtually non-existent and the inside is always hot and juicy. Black's fried shrimp may not be the world's best, but I have truly never eaten better.

One final note about Black's. The management is very serious about its food. Not long ago, I was rather late finishing a meal there and ordered coffee after more oysters than I will admit. The waitress said, "No," the coffee had been sitting too long by that time and it would not be good; then she graciously offered to make a fresh pot (an offer I declined due to the late hour). I trust people who love their food or coffee so much, that they won't serve it if it is not up to their own tastes.

Black's Oyster Shop
311 Père Negret Street
Abbeville - (318) 893-4266
9am-9pm Mon-Sat - Closed Sunday

ECOUTEZ LE PROGRAMME CATHOLIQUE EN FRANCAIS

CROWLEY
KSLG - 1450 AM
Sunday - 6:15 a.m.

FURLOCH
KGBU - 1490 AM
Sunday - 7:00 a.m.

FRANKLIN
KFRU - 1390 AM
Saturday - 10:55 AM
Sunday - 6:45 a.m.

GOLDEN MEADOW
KLEB - 1800 AM
Sunday - 8:35 a.m.

JENNING
KJRE - 1200 AM
9:27 AM
Sunday - 9:45 AM

LAFAYETTE
KPLY - 1390 AM
Saturday - 10:45 AM

NEW IBERIA
KDEA - 99.1 FM
Sunday - 6:00 a.m.

STRETCHING THE LIMITS OF CAJUN MUSIC

All of us in South Louisiana are familiar with Cajun music on the radio. Cajun music shows have existed for about fifty years and are more popular and widespread than ever before. Approximately 15 radio stations in Louisiana have regular weekly Cajun music programs.

Most people do not know, however, that Cajun music has expanded beyond its Louisiana borders. Johnny Janot, noted Cajun musician and disc jockey, has a Cajun music program on the very powerful KLVI station in Beaumont, Texas. The program is broadcast every Sunday morning from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. and covers all of Southeastern Texas and much of Louisiana. The powerful signal (16 on your AM dial) can be picked up in Lafayette or Alexandria and, in fact, in many areas of Louisiana where no other Cajun music programs can be heard.

But the most distant regular Cajun music program is in, of all places, New York City. Cajun music in the Big Apple? Well, we wouldn't want Nor Guidry to get homesick, would we? Paul Aaron, a Cajun by la porte en arrière, has been promoting Cajun music on station WKCR-FM (89.9) for several years. The show is broadcast on Sunday afternoon from noon to 1:00 p.m. The non-commercial station broadcasts with a power of 5,000 watts, but the population is so dense that it has a potential audience of over 15 million!

We have even heard rumors that WKRP in Cincinnati is considering a Cajun music program...