

OH, FRÈRE, WHERE ART WE?

Congratulations, you've made it to Mardi Gras. But which Mardi Gras, exactly? What do you mean, "which Mardi Gras?" Didn't you know that St. Louis' Mardi Gras is only the world's *second*-largest Mardi Gras, and that, in fact, New Orleans has a Mardi Gras that may be larger/better/more well-known/more fun/infested by more alligators?

Don't panic. There are tell-tale signs to look for that will help you determine if you're two-fisting drinks in New Orleans ("The City That Care Forgot") or in St. Louis ("The City That Chicago Ignores"). If you're actually two-fisting Louis, this is not going to help you much at all — but we'd like you to give us a call when you have a free hand. We didn't give *that* up for Lent.

NEW ORLEANS

You left the bus station and discovered your hotel is actually a FEMA temporary housing module.

Official motto of Mardi Gras: Let the Good Times Roll!

You fueled up before the parades by visiting one of those drive-through daiquiri places.

On Monday, February 19, you will be partying like a Roman Senator with a Viagra stipend.

Annoying mispronunciation of the city name by tourists: N'Awlins.

Local celebrity who starred on Roseanne's sitcom, *Roseanne*: John Goodman.

Annoying local guy who became a celebrity: Emeril.

Broken civil project that hinders the future of the city: Levees.

Closing time? We don't need no stinkin' closing time!

At midnight on Tuesday, February 20, a phalanx of well-organized cleaning crews will take over the city, sweeping up the debris and detritus of another successful Mardi Gras.

ST. LOUIS

The bus station looks like a FEMA temporary housing module and you had no trouble finding a hotel room. Because you're in St. Louis. In February.

Official motto of Mardi Gras: Nazi-free by order of the Missouri Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Control.

You fueled up before the parade by visiting the White Castle drive-through on Broadway.

Monday, February 19, is a regular work day. Nothing out of the ordinary.

Annoying mispronunciation of the city name by tourists: Saint Louie.

Local celebrity who starred on Roseanne's sitcom, *Roseanne*: John Goodman.

Annoying local guy who became a celebrity: Beatle Bob.

Broken civil project that hinders the future of the city: School system.

Closing time? 3 a.m., max.

That garbage ain't going anywhere.