

CHURCH

From 1

While in the shop, Bartz and his host sampled the range of hot sauces produced by Tabasco, starting with the milder ones before making it all the way to the hottest — Scorpion Sauce. They were also able to sample some products still in development. Before leaving the shop, Bartz, a foodie who loves to cook, purchased two bottles of the Scorpion Sauce, which he later used on pizza back home, a Tabasco hooded sweatshirt — great for layering on those -40 with the wind chill days back home — and a Tabasco collector’s spoon for his mother.

Next, the pair headed over to drive the Jungle Gardens area of the island. After stopping by the gift shop there, Bartz spotted and correctly identified a crawfish hole, and his host congratulated him on recognizing the mud chimney. While driving through the garden, Bartz and his host saw many varieties of plant and animal life, including several small alligators, an animal Bartz was already familiar with from the time he was stationed in Florida.

Once the tour of the gardens ended, the duo headed into New Iberia to grab some king cakes and check out some local items at Rouses’s, a grocery store chain that started out in Houma back in 1960.

While in the checkout line to purchase a regular and a praline king cake and a bottle of king cake vodka, Bartz’s host noticed a man at a folding table with an ice chest and a scale.

“Do you have boiled crawfish in there?” she asked.

“Yes,” the worker replied. “Can we have one? Actually, two please? He’s from North Dakota, and he’s never had boiled crawfish,” the host said, pointing to Bartz.

The worker happily obliged, and right there at the end of the checkout line, Bartz peeled and ate his first boiled mudbug.

From there, it was time to find a spot to eat supper. In the planning phase of Bartz’s trip, he and his host were discussing pizza when Bartz asked if there was a place to get boudin pizza or crawfish pizza. While the search for such pies was a bit tricky, the host suggested Deano’s South in Lafayette and provided Bartz with a link to the menu of delicious sounding, Louisiana-centric pizzas.

After a few minutes, the pair decided to do a half and half pizza of the ‘Marie Leveau,’ topped with ‘Blue Point’ crab meat, sautéed with mushrooms, onions and spices, and ‘The Par-rain,’ topped with two types of pepperoni, two layers of cheese and a drizzle of pepper jelly.

With full bellies, it was time to get back to the host’s home and get in a good night’s sleep for the next day’s activity — attending the Church Point Courir de Mardi Gras de le Petit Enfants.

Time to go see the Mardi Gras: Part 1
 By 8:30 a.m., Batrtz and his host were back on the road, bound for Church Point and the home of Dana and Todd Richard, the first stop on the route of the children’s Mardi Gras run. After stopping to get Bartz some breakfast, a boudin muffin from the Chevron Church Point, the pair arrived at their destination, and a crowd of people had already began to form in the Richard’s yard.

The weather outlook for the day was good, warm and no rain in the forecast, and just after 10 a.m., 2025 Enfant Courir de Mardi Gras Capitaine John Luke Leonards made his way down the Richard’s driveway to request permission to enter the yard from area social media content creators Koa Melancon and Sara O’Pry, of the Cajun Mamas, and Hal LeJeune, of Hal the Cajun Lady.

Once permission was granted, more than 400 young Mardi Gras ran across the yard and gathered in front of the porch of the Richard’s Acadian-style home. Father Brian Harrington of Our Lady of Sacred Heart Church in Church Point then asked those in the crowd to join him in prayer, and Bartz, raised Lutheran, removed his hat and bowed his head in prayer as well before the chicken chasing part of the event began.

For the chase, the young Mardi Gras are broken into four age groups, and Bartz looked on as Harrington released chickens to the youngest group and posted a video of the children mobbing the fowl to his social media so those back home could see what he was getting to experience.

After the riders departed the Richard’s home, Bartz and his host hit the road to sample some more Cajun cuisine in Acadia, St. Landry and Evangeline parishes. Stops on their route included a start of crawfish pistolettes and chicken cracklins at Vautrot’s Mini Mart and crawfish pies, crawfish wraps and regular cracklins at Billy’s Boudin & Cracklins in Krotz Springs. The pair then drove over the Atchafalaya River on the Frank and Sal Diesi Bridge for Bartz, an avid deer hunter, to get a quick peek at Sherburne Wildlife Management Area.

After a drive down to the WMA gun range, the duo stopped at Kartchner’s Specialty Meats, also in Krotz Springs, where Bartz sampled a regular Cajun meat pie. North Dakota also has its own version of a meat pie, called fleischkuekle, and the dish was brought to the United States by both the Black Sea Germans and Crimea Germans.

Bartz was asked how he found the Cajun version compared to the northern version.

“I liked them just fine, especially the crawfish pies,” he said. “I still love my German Flieschkuekle, but it was great to have a new experience with something different.”

While at the shop, Bartz also picked up about \$175 in groceries, including alligator meat, to bring back to North Dakota.

Hours later, Bartz and his host found themselves at the all-you-can-eat Cajun Catfish Buffet on U.S. Hwy. 167 in Evangeline Parish. There, Bartz sampled fried oysters, corn nuggets, stuffed crab, crawfish etouffee, shrimp etouffee, seafood fettuccine and much more.

After another day of being stuffed to the gills with Cajun groceries, the two returned to the host’s home to sleep and be back at the Richard’s by 7 a.m. the next day for the big show — the 63rd Annual Church Point Courir de Mardi Gras adult run.

Time to go see the Mardi Gras: Part 2

Day two of Mardi Gras in Church Point brought more pleasant weather, and after arriving at the Richard’s that Sunday morning, Bartz and his host enjoyed

a Louisiana breakfast — A ‘Cajun Brand’ fig pie and a pineapple Hubig’s pie, made in New Orleans and considered a staple of life in the Crescent City, before joining the crowd in the front yard of the Richard’s home.

At 8:30 a.m., four 18-wheeler trailer-loads of chicken chasers, all dressed in a colorful riot of traditional Cajun Mardi Gras costumes, capuchons and masks, pulled up on the roadway in front of the Richard’s home, and Le Captiane Troy Richard rode his horse down the driveway to request permission to enter the yard from U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Pat Johnson, of Church Point.

Once permission was granted, Richard gave the wave, and Mardi Gras ran as fast as they could across the property before dancing and begging for change — cinq sous — from the crowd. After about 10 minutes, it was time to get down to the business of chicken chasing.

While the merry mayhem ensued, one smart chicken sought refuge atop the band float. Bartz was able to get video as Mardi Gras attempted to climb on top of the float to get the prized chicken, but the Mardi Gras were promptly shoed down by one of the riders on the float. The adult Mardi Gras this year included more than 600 runners, more than 25 floats and many riders on horseback.

Bartz later met up with Johnson. The two spent a few minutes talking about their Marine Corps days before a Mardi Gras showed up to beg for change from the two men, and they happily obliged.

“The passing along of the history and traditions to the younger generations was fun to see with the kids. I think LSU would do well to recruit some of the adults for their kick-off return team for next season,” Bartz said, laughing, as they waited for the parade to completely pass the Richard’s home to leave for their next destination. “They really went all out to get those chickens, and they weren’t letting them get away. Myself, I was pretty amused by the chicken that had the smarts to perch on top of the wagon for a bit. I was also really impressed with Todd Richard’s hospitality and what a beautiful place he has to host this event.”

When asked, as someone experiencing a traditional Cajun Mardi Gras for the first time, what he thinks makes a traditional Cajun Mardi Gras special, Bartz had this to say — “The history and tradition that has been kept alive over the years. In a world where everything has become more and more commercialized, it’s refreshing to see traditions that have stayed true to their origins.”

Once the Mardi Gras loaded up and traffic cleared, Bartz and his hosted traveled to the home of Suzanne and Scott Neuharth to visit before taking in the Mardi Gras parade from the home later that day. During the parade, Bartz caught items ranging from the tame — a pack of ramen noodles — to the wild — a pair of men’s boxer shorts from the Krewe of Cason (caleçon), which is known for throwing new underwear — and a vintage piece — a 1970 Krewe of Bacchus, a New Orleans Mardi Gras super krewe, doubloon. Bartz was most surprised by the pair of underwear.

“That (the underwear) was different. The ramen noodles — that’s not something I was expecting,”



(Above) Scott Bartz, a native of North Dakota, visited Acadiana earlier this month to attend Mardi Gras festivities in Church Point as well as Eunice. Pictured with Bartz, top right, are, clockwise, Church Point News Editor Claudette Olivier, Jennifer Tullier Fontenot and her cousin, Mimi Cloutre, both of Brusly, and Billy Joe Fontenot, of L’Anse Aux Pailles. (Photo courtesy of Jennifer Tullier Fontenot)



Bartz, right, arrived in Louisiana at the Alexandria International Airport on Thursday, Feb. 27. Waiting to greet him at the airport upon his arrival were Olivier, center, and Olivier’s brother, Patrick Olivier, left. (Submitted photo)



(Clockwise, from above) Scott Bartz, a native of North Dakota, visited Avery Island and the Tabasco facility during a recent trip to Louisiana. Bartz is a U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Air Force Veteran. Bartz sampled all of the Tabasco hot sauces as well as a few in-development products at the facility. Bartz got to see an original Acadian style house made of bousillage, and the home belongs to J.D. Soileau, of Point Blue. Here, Soileau shows Bartz some of the visible bousillage. Bartz went home with many Louisiana items from his trip, including these ‘Color Me Cajun’ dolls from VaCajun by Sew What Customs in Branch. Bartz and Church Point News Editor Claudette Olivier each colored one of the dolls. (Pictures by Claudette Olivier/Church Point News)



he said, laughing.

By the time revelry ended for the day and Bartz and his host were back on the way to her home about 4 p.m., Bartz was nodding off in her vehicle. Once the two enjoyed a buffet of south Louisiana barbecue — a pork steak plate lunch and a chicken leg quarter plate lunch from Blue Junction, rib and brisket plate lunches from Point Blue Barbecue and a big bowl of Jack Millers barbecue sauce for dipping — the day was a wrap.

Finally some down time, owed to loss in a coin toss

Due to a coin toss decades ago between Elton Richard, who first formally organized the Church Point Courir de Mardi Gras in 1961, and Senator Paul Tate, of Mamou, the courir in Church Point is hosted on the Sunday before Mardi Gras.

Detailed under ‘History’ on the Saddle Tramp Riders Club web site, the two men, “decided that each town needed its own courir, and they flipped a coin to decide which town would have its courir on Fat Tuesday, Mardi Gras Day, or on the Sunday before Mardi Gras. ... The results of the toss determined that Mamou would conduct its courir on Mardi Gras Day and the Church Point courir would take place on the Sunday before Mardi Gras.”

For those not Mardi Gras-ed out from the ‘Fat Tuesday’ activities in Church Point, a good time continues to be passed in towns including Mamou and Eunice, and after taking it easy all day Monday, Bartz and his host journeyed to Eunice for the ‘Cajun Mardi Gras Festival.’ On the way there, the host pulled up to the drive-through window of The Daiquiri Shack to get Bartz his first drive-through drink.

“What should I get? What’s the standard go-to drive through drink?” Bartz asked his host.

“A strawberry daiquiri,” she replied, and with that, Bartz enjoyed his drive-through adult beverage as well as sampled his host’s Hurricane.

Another different-than-back-home circumstance Bartz got to enjoy while in Louisiana was partying outdoors during the night — and day — while it’s still

technically winter. Here in Louisiana, there are usually only a few nights a year that it’s not advisable to be partying outdoors — like the Blizzard of 2025 earlier this year. For North Dakota residents like Bartz, it’s more like a few months.

“You don’t see this at home,” Bartz said as he took in the huge crowd of people in front of the stage listening to Travis Matte and the Kingpins play several of the band’s popular song including a cover of Lynyrd Skynyrd’s ‘Tuesday’s Gone,’ a song Bartz said he listens to while cooking back home.

While at the street dance, Bartz and his host sampled more food from vendors at the event — more meat pies and boudin balls, fried alligator on a stick as well as a bite of his host’s tasso po-boy for Bartz — partied with some of his host’s friends and enjoyed more live music from Rouge Krewe. At 10 p.m., the band shut it down for the night, and so did Bartz and his host.

The plan for Fat Tuesday was to head to Mamou between 10 a.m. and noon and watch the Mardi Gras there come in between 2-3 p.m., but when they awoke the next morning, the weather hadn’t got the

memo. Strong storms were set to roll through the area starting at 11 a.m.

Bartz and his host discussed options, including going to Freds, having a quick beer and a shot, snapping a photo in front of the mural on the exterior of the bar and heading back, but they completely switched the plan from partying to a short Cajun history lesson in the form of a tour a original Acadian style home in Point Blue.

The home, made of wood and bousillage, belongs to J.D. Soileau, of Point Blue, and is filled with everyday items from Cajun history, including a loom and spinning wheel, a baby bed made of wood and wire screen, to keep the mosquitos out, and a garde solei or sun bonnet. Soileau told Bartz that the age of the home was determined by examining the hand made nails in the structure, and that the home was likely built in the 1840s.

With that, Bartz’s tour of Acadiana had come to a close, and the following morning, Ash Wednesday, his host and her mother bid him a safe trip as they dropped him off at the airport in Alexandria.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS
The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) will receive bids for the construction of the following project(s):
Job No.: 24082
Project No(s): CERP-0221(085)
Length: 0.185
Type: HILL SLIDE REPAIR & 3-CABLE GUARDRAIL
County(s): BARNES Co
Location: CMC 0221, 3.5 MI S OF JCT CMC 0206
Bids will be received via the Bid Express on-line bidding exchange at www.bidx.com until 09:30AM, May09, 2025. Bids will be opened at that time at the NDDOT building on the capitol grounds in Bismarck and the bid results will be distributed and posted on-line at <https://www.dot.nd.gov/business/bidinfo.htm> approximately 30 minutes after bids are opened.
The proposal forms, plans, and specifications are available on the NDDOT website at <http://www.dot.nd.gov> and may be inspected at the Construction Services Division, 608 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, North Dakota.
All bidders not currently prequalified with NDDOT must submit an online Contractor's Prequalification request to the Department at least ten (10) business days prior to the bid opening. The online application can be found on the NDDOT website at <https://www.dot.nd.gov/business/contractors.htm>.
NDDOT reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, waive technicalities, or to accept such as may be determined in the best interests of the state.
For disability/language assistance, call 701-328-2978.
Requested by:
Ronald J. Henke, P.E., Director
North Dakota Department of Transportation
(April 15, 2025)

TO VALLEY CITY:

Andrew & Fallon's daughter
Georgie

Thank you for letting us share your joy.

jrmcnd.com