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French Quarter Fest welcomes special guest: the sun

By Molly Reid

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I had my first snowball of the year yesterday afternoon. I'd seen the Plum Street Snowball stand at Woldenberg Park several times, and despite the overcast skies and slight chill in the air, I couldn't pass it up. I got my favorite, a nectar cream. Sweet, subtle and the most wonderful shade of creamy, peachy pink. My friend was less subtle. He opted for a large bubblegum and strawberry mix -- topped with condensed milk. That is not messing around.

But today, it seems, is the real day for kicking off snowball season. Not long after arriving at the Louisiana State Museum/U.S. Mint stages this morning, the slight drizzle and gray skies started moving out to reveal - gasp - the sun! There is actually blue in the sky right now, and it's about time.

The Creole String Beans, a charming ensemble of nattily-hatted dudes, has been playing a great string, so to speak, of old R&B and rock hits, like "Mother-in-Law" and "Unchain My Heart." We've got some good dancing going on over here, though I can't say the same for the other side of the U.S. Mint, where Trent Lejeune is providing a Cajun-zydeco soundtrack to the copious crawfish-eating going on.

Maybe it's not late enough in the day, but most everyone seems content to stay in their lawn chairs instead of cutting a rug. Maybe it's because I come from Cajun country, but I'd expect more than two couples to be spinning and two-stepping when there's a great zydeco beat.

Let's hope the overdue arrival of the sun gets a few people out of their chairs -- if not to dance, then at least to get a snowball.

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