



Actor Jay Marcher, playing Ignatius J. Reilly, grabs a hot dog from Leroy Hughes' Lucky Dog stand during taping of video.

STAFF PHOTO BY ELIOT KAMENITZ

## Tourism ad takes a novel approach

By **GAYLE ASHTON**  
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It's a new twist to the usual talk about tourism. They've got a guy in a green hunting cap and a plaid flannel shirt. And he's with his mother.

Ignatius J. Reilly and his mother have gone commercial. They've jumped off the pages of fiction and onto the tourism bandwagon.

These central characters from John Kennedy Toole's New Orleans novel "A Confederacy of Dunces" are also scheduled to appear on local television screens next week as part of a public service campaign by the Greater

New Orleans Tourist & Convention Commission.

The theme is "Invite a Friend to New Orleans." The idea is that locals can be instrumental in bringing friends and relatives to town, Tourist Commission spokeswoman Beverly Gianna said.

So why Ignatius?

"I tried to think of the most lovable New Orleans characters I could think of that had not been exploited," said Robin Kotchan, a writer-producer for WWL-TV who is making the public service announcement for the commission.

In the 30-second spot, Reilly and his mother Irene are seen in

an Uptown kitchen, where they get a letter from friends looking for "a vacation spot with culture." Reilly is transported via the St. Charles Avenue streetcar line to Jackson Square.

There, carrying a Werlein's bag that presumably has sheet music for his trumpet and a new lute string, he casts aside his theological and geometrical standards.

He bursts into song.

Grabbing a Lucky Dog he mentions all that cultured stuff: the festivals, the music, the food and the history, to a tune from Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Pirates of Penzance."

Jay Malarcher, a theater teacher at Archbishop Chapelle High School in Metairie donated

his time as Reilly. Shirl Cieutat, who is in theater and does commercials, is his mother.

The television spot is part of a June campaign on WWL, WQUE radio and billboards donated by Naegele Outdoor Advertising.

In September, the campaign will switch to a civic pride theme, tentatively called "I'm for New Orleans." In November, there will be a message urging locals to help land conventions: "Bring Your Meeting to New Orleans."

Kotchan said the Reilly spot should draw some attention.

"They (the actors) told me that walking here from where they parked everybody recognized them as Ignatius and Mrs. Reilly," Kotchan said.