

## **New Orleans Convention Rocks!**

### **Fun and Fellowship Abound in the Crescent City**

Together we can definitely do what we can never do alone.

The two to three years of planning for our Overeaters Anonymous World Service Convention, held August 7–10, 2003 at the beautiful downtown Sheraton hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana USA, surely demonstrates this.

Over 700 members strong from around the world celebrated our recovery in an atmosphere of fellowship, support, swinging music and Cajun charm. We celebrated our theme of “Happy, Joyous and Free in 2003” with enthusiasm while we “Let the good times roll” or, as is said in Cajun country, *“Laissez les bon temps roulette!”*

An event of this magnitude, requiring so much effort, doesn’t happen overnight. It took loving care by dedicated people. A considerable amount of thought, group conscience, service and unity by every person who had a hand in it produced a fantastic experience for everyone there. Of course, without the attendance of so many OA members, the Convention would not have been such a great success.

Despite some obstacles, the planning committee continued on faith and received blessings from a power greater than all of us, providing us with reasonably priced airline tickets, reduced hotel rates and cooperative South Louisiana weather.

The committee chose a theme centered on the Mardi Gras colors of purple, green and gold, along with the ambiance of a beautiful hotel and a breathtaking view of the Mississippi River, all of which contributed to a relaxed and reassuring atmosphere.

Stunning decorations throughout the OA area in the hotel, along with the hotel’s old-world charm, brought grace and elegance to every corner.

From the grand opening to the grand closing, every event created a magnificent reality of what Overeaters Anonymous really is: a fellowship. From members who spoke at the general sessions, workshops, marathons and special focus meetings to the attendees, translators, clowns and cloggers, all added to the fun and recovery.

A few days before Convention, I walked into the huge, exquisite rooms reserved for the jazz luncheon and the banquet. Awe overcame me as I pictured all of us in these rooms. Words cannot describe the power and magnitude I felt seeing hundreds of OA members in those places celebrating recovery. The jazz luncheon provided a great warm-up for fun-filled activities.

The evening banquet in the beautiful Armstrong room, overlooking the lights of the city and the mighty Mississippi River, and the awards and recognitions ceremony gave us a night to remember. The poster contest and live auctioneer generated excitement and funds to carry the message to still-suffering, compulsive overeaters. Music and dancing added to the joy, and the fantastic hotel staff demonstrated excellent follow-through and southern hospitality at its best.

I have heard heart-warming comments about the Convention, such as “If you were not there, you sure did miss a great Convention” and “I can’t wait until the next Convention — you mean it will be 2010 before the next one?”

Together we did it because we did not depend on our own unsteady power but rather on a power and strength greater than each of us — the God of each of our understanding. The Convention became the recovery success we had dreamed of because we did not do it alone.

*J.S., Cochair, World Service Convention 2003*