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Mardi Gras

New Orleans gears up for Fat Tuesday 'blowout'

United Press International

NEW ORLEANS — A river of dazzling floats surrounded by throngs of Mardi Gras revelers flowed through city and suburban streets Sunday in a warmup for the annual blowout on Fat Tuesday.

"I've never seen anything like this in my life," said Sonja Mielke, 27, an accountant from Chicago. "Boy, New Orleans sure knows how to throw a party."

Raucous crowds of children and adults swarmed parade routes, shouting the traditional "Throw me something, mister,"

to coax maskers in glittering costumes to toss them inexpensive treasures of beads, toys and plastic cups.

Revelers clapped and swayed in time to bands marching between the Carnival floats.

Six parades and scores of floats wound through New Orleans and its suburbs, capped by the Krewe of Bacchus float with actor Kirk Douglas as the king of merriment.

"Does it really get wilder than this?" asked Don Polken of Baltimore. "I'm a Catholic and I think this is a wonderful prelude to Lent."

Mardi Gras was expected to draw more than a million revelers to the city by Tuesday, a police spokesman said.

Authorities estimated 1.1 million people crowded into the French Quarter and downtown area during Carnival 1983, and the spokesman said officials expected a comparable crowd for this year's festivities.

The officer said the crowds had been well-mannered and no one had been injured along the parade routes.

"They're being pretty calm," the spokesman said, "but this is just the warm up. Just wait until

they are crowded into the French Quarter (Tuesday).

"We think we can keep it orderly. We've had lots of trouble with this happening every year, and we've got over a hundred extra officers who are helping us out."

Last year, the festivities were marred by the deaths of a 21-year-old woman shot during a bery outside a restaurant and a sailor from Philadelphia who was crushed beneath a float.

In 1982, two children were injured along crowded parade routes died under the wheels of Mardi Gras floats.

Contest for ugly bartenders will raise funds to fight MS

By CATHERINE CAMPBELL
Reporter

The UGLY bartenders contest is a fund-raising project to help find a cure for an ugly disease, multiple sclerosis. The three-week contest kicks off Tuesday and ends March 27.

For the bartenders, UGLY stands for Understanding, Generous, Lovable You — but for MS — a disabling, neurological disease — ugly defines it.

"The UGLY bartenders' contest is a bizarre but effective way of attracting attention to the disease — and to get money, of course," said Mark Miller, an MS fund-raising coordinator.

Miller, 23, is the Fund-Raising Coordinator for the Houston Area Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. The Houston Chapter services over 30 counties and their support groups.

"The point of the contest is to increase public awareness of the MS society and its services by raising funds," Miller said. "The goals of the contest are to fund the fight against MS, to learn more through research

and to better serve the special needs of people with MS."

This is the first time the Bryan-College Station bartenders will be participating in the national contest to join in the fight against MS since the contest was first started in Ohio in 1979.

Each year about 100 contests are held nationally and together they've raised \$2 to \$5 million a year, Miller said. The city of Denver raised \$246,000 during one year; and one Denver bartender raised \$9,200 all by himself, Miller said.

Miller said he estimates the Brazos area bartenders will be able to raise \$10,000 to \$15,000 during the contest, with the winning bartender earning from \$2,000 to \$4,000.

"Nothing can be done without the dollars and the purpose of the UGLY bartenders' contest is to raise dollars for research and patient care programs," Miller said. "It's outrageously expensive to do research."

The Brazos Valley bartender who raises the most money will win a trip for two to the Bahamas. The top 20 bartenders will compete for other prizes such as memberships to health, exercise, and recreation clubs, escape weekends and more. All

trips and prizes have been donated to the NMSS.

Miller said the idea for the fund raiser began as a beauty contest but when the NMSS reversed the idea, they found UGLY made more money.

"The contest basically boils down to a popularity contest," Miller said. "This is the largest special event fund raiser for MS, except for corporate donations."

The places to find UGLY bartenders are bars, nightclubs, racquetball clubs, restaurants, private club bars and even bowling alley lounges, Miller said.

With usually one or two bartenders competing per bar, people can vote for the ugliest bartender of their choice as many times as they wish or can afford to. It costs 25 cents per vote.

To try to attract voting customers to their bars, the bartenders will host special events such as:

- the UGLY Pie Toss, where for 50 cents customers can target their favorite bartender,

- UGLY Hour, where happy hour becomes ugly hour and the bar will donate 25 cents per drink to their bartender's UGLY campaign.

- Buy-Someone-UGLY-a-Drink Night, where customers

are encouraged to buy UGLY neighbor a Miller's Miller Beer is a national sponsor of the UGLY contest.

- The UGLY-est Contest, in which patrons elect UGLY-est couple of the bar.

- Insult-an-UGLY-Bartender Night, in which the bartender is hand-cuffed and customers can let an insult fly.

- The Balloon Burst, which, like the name says, involves bursting balloons with names inside. The balloons are hung from the ceiling and some sages give away free drinks.

Miller said most of the participating bars also will sell various UGLY promotional items such as "Get Ugly" beer caps, "Kiss Me, I'm Ugly" buttons, "I Like It Ugly" t-shirts, bumper stickers, and shirts. The profits from these items plus the money collected from the votes all go to support MS research, Miller said.

Each week the bartender money is collected and the votes are tabulated. Radio station KTAW will announce alphabetically who the least bartenders are each week will announce the winner of the amount of money he or she has raised as the Brazos Valley UGLY-est bartender.

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'Gimme those beans'

United Press International

FORT WORTH — For Sunday were looking for a 15-ounce can of beans at a point from a Methodist charity project.

Stephen Kenerly, built host at the First United Methodist Church downtown, the man arrived Saturday the wrong day for the church food giveaway, but considered the gun and all, Kenerly allowances.

"I had the front door propped open and a man in and said, 'A man told me could get some food here,'" Kenerly said.

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