HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 75th ANNUAL AATF CONVENTION IN BOSTON

Over 500 attendees gathered in Boston for the 75th Annual AATF Convention. Everyone enjoyed the excellent selection of sessions and workshops, the special events and activities organized for members, and the historic setting. The Park Plaza Hotel, where the AATF also met in 1988, was celebrating its 75th anniversary as well. The Executive Council met for the two days preceding the convention. A special thanks go to the FIAP Jean Monnet which sponsored an Executive Council luncheon and the French Library and Cultural Center for the reception it organized.

The Convention began on Thursday with an opening Plenary Session. Corinne Trang, author, culinary critic, and Visiting Professor at Drexel University (PA), spoke on the cultural influences of French cuisine throughout the world. Her remarks are reprinted on page 15. We offer special thanks to TV5 for sponsoring the keynote speaker, François Trégouët, author, culinary critic, and Visiting Professor at Drexel University (PA), spoke on the cultural influences of French cuisine throughout the world. Her remarks are reprinted on page 15. We offer special thanks to TV5 for sponsoring the keynote speaker.

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Friday evening our Exhibitors welcomed attendees to examine their products and services followed by a Wine and Cheese Reception co-sponsored by the AATF and the French Cultural Service. The Exhibit Hall was full, and we thank all those Exhibitors who joined us. In particular, we would like to thank the French Government Tourist Office and Heinle & Heinle, sponsors of coffee breaks throughout the meeting. Visit the AATF Web site at [http://www.frenchteachers.org] to learn more about those companies which exhibited in Boston.

Local Chair, Joyce Beckwith did a wonderful job putting together a terrific local committee. She also organized a clambake on Thursday evening. Most significantly, she organized and supervised the stay of the fourteen Grand Concours Lauréats who won a trip to Boston. The students visited Boston, Salem, and Plymouth and were recognized at the Awards Banquet. On Friday evening at the close of the afternoon sessions, attendees were treated to an avant-goût of the 2003 convention in Martinique with a presentation by Valérie Vulcain of the Martinique Tourism Board in New York and a performance by Carole Alexis and les Ballets Mozaik.

Friday evening, many congressistes attended the Bastille Day Celebration sponsored by the French Library.

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday morning, congressistes were able to participate in 78 sessions, 13 Commission meetings, 6 workshops, and 17 Exhibitor sessions.

At the Awards Banquet on Saturday evening, the AATF was pleased to honor many members who have contributed significantly to AATF activities, including inducting three new Honorary Members (see page 13), three outstanding teachers (see November issue), and two National French Contest Administrators (see page 5), as well as the fourteen Grand Concours winners (see page 6). Afterward they were entertained with traditional Franco-American music by Josée Vachon. Her performance was in part sponsored by Bernard Petit Video.

In short, a wonderful time was had by all. We look forward to welcoming participants next summer at the 76th Annual AATF Convention in Martinique.