

A SPECIAL MESSAGE

TO OUR MARDI GRAS VISITORS, OUR TOURISTS, AND OUR CITIZENS:

I WISH YOU A WARM WELCOME FOR THIS CARNIVAL SEASON, AND ASK THAT YOU LET ME EXPRESS MY PERSONAL HUMILIATION, REGRET AND SORROW, AS PRIVATE CITIZEN ANNE RICE, FOR THE ABSOLUTELY HIDEOUS STRAYA'S RESTAURANT WHICH HAS JUST OPENED ITS DOORS ON ST. CHARLES AVENUE.

THIS MONSTROSITY IN NO WAY REPRESENTS THE AMBIENCE, THE ROMANCE, OR THE CHARM THAT WE SEEK TO OFFER YOU AND STRIVE TO MAINTAIN IN OUR CITY. IT IS AS IF MR. COPELAND HAS TAKEN EVERY FAST FOOD RESTAURANT FROM HERE TO PANAMA CITY AND COMBINED THEM INTO ONE LUDICROUS AND EGREGIOUS STRUCTURE. THAT THIS RESTAURANT STANDS IN THE SAME BLOCK WITH THE VENERABLE PONTCHARTRAIN HOTEL DOUBLES THE INSULT TO ALL OF US.

THE STRIP OF ST. CHARLES AVENUE BETWEEN LEE CIRCLE AND JACKSON AVENUE IS A KEY PART OF OUR CITY, WHERE BLACK FAMILIES AND WHITE FAMILIES CONGREGATE FOR MARDI GRAS. THE RESTAURANTS ALONG THIS STRIP--SHONEY'S, HOUSTON'S, THE CARIBBEAN ROOM, DELMONICO'S--HAVE ALL GIVEN PLEASURE TO NEW ORLEANIANS.

STRAYA'S, HOWEVER, IS NOTHING SHORT OF AN ABOMINATION, AND MR. COPELAND SHOULD BE ASHAMED. AS A RESIDENT OF NEW ORLEANS, I AM DISTRESSED. I AM SURE THAT I DO NOT SPEAK FOR MYSELF ALONE IN SAYING THAT IN SPITE OF THIS MOST RECENT INSULT TO ALL OF OUR PRESERVATION GOALS, NEW ORLEANS REMAINS OUR PRIDE AND JOY. THE HUMBLEST FLOP HOUSE ON THIS STRIP OF ST. CHARLES AVENUE HAS MORE DIGNITY THAN MR. COPELAND'S STRUCTURE.

WHAT MAKES THIS REALLY TRAGIC IS THE FACT THAT THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESTAURANT ITSELF IS POTENTIALLY BEAUTIFUL. REMODELING PROMISED A REAL ASSET TO THE AVENUE, INSTEAD, WE HAVE AN EYESORE.

NEW ORLEANIANS, I URGE YOU TO EXERCISE YOUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT AS AMERICANS AND LET MR. COPELAND KNOW YOUR FEELINGS, IN WRITING OR BY PHONE CALLS. MAYBE THEN MR. COPELAND WILL REALIZE THE GRAVITY OF HIS MISTAKE, AND DO SOMETHING TO SHOW RESPECT FOR HIS FELLOW CITIZENS AND HIS CITY.

ONCE AGAIN, A WARM WELCOME TO ALL OF OUR MARDI GRAS VISITORS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

**ANNE RICE
AUTHOR OF INTERVIEW WITH THE
VAMPIRE**