

Celebrating French Women

On the occasion of Women's Day, celebrated internationally on March 8, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin spoke before a large audience of guests at his Matignon residence, insisting on the need to promote a "true culture of equality." Following President Jacques Chirac, who had earlier emphasized this need, the prime minister stressed in particular the importance of professional equality: "the stake is to show women that the whole field of possibilities is available to them."

Demonstrating its resolve, the French government unveiled a Charter of Equality Between Men and Women during the ceremony. Officially presented to Raffarin by Nicole Ameline, minister delegate for parity and equality in the workplace, the charter states that equality between men and women is essential for democracy in France and includes approximately 300 concrete actions that will be undertaken by the government, businesses and other organizations to attain parity (please see page 6 for more information).



Marianne in Eugène Delacroix's *Liberty guiding the people*, 1830.

(Courtesy: Louvre Museum)

MARIANNE, EMBODYING FRANCE

First making her appearance during the French Revolution more than 200 years ago, Marianne is the national emblem of France, an allegorical figure representing both liberty and the Republic. She wears a Phrygian cap, which was worn by freed slaves in ancient Greece and Rome and which has now come to symbolize freedom. The origins of the name Marianne are clouded in uncertainty, but it was probably derived from Marie-Anne, a very popular name in the 18th century and thus an excellent choice for the incarnation of the French nation.

Marianne is the heroine of Eugene Delacroix's painting, *Liberty Guiding The People*. She is the face one sees on French euro coins, retired French francs, and postage stamps. She is the bust found in places of honor in government buildings throughout the country (including, most notably, Place de la Nation in Paris). In 1999, her profile became the official seal of France and can be found gracing most official French documents.


From Suffrage to Parity (Continued on page 4)

THE CHARTER IS THE LATEST in a long series of measures seeking to give women equal rights.

Women were granted the right to vote in France in 1944 by President Charles de Gaulle and the following year they were able to present themselves as candidates for parliament. On becoming president in 1995, Jacques Chirac decided to re-emphasize the importance of parity. The Observatory for Parity between Women and Men was established, and in 1999 the French Constitution was amended. Articles 3 and 4 now expressly state that parity is a national goal, and that legislators may thus enact laws that promote parity.

In June 2000, the National Assembly passed a law mandating that political parties present an

equal number of female and male candidates in most elections (particularly in regional, parliamentary, and European elections). France thus became the first country in the world to require an equal number of male and female candidates. Parties that do not present an approximately equal number of male and female candidates are fined.

Such policies are beginning to have an effect, especially on France's political culture. Today, 11 women are part of Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin's government, which is composed of 39 ministers, minister delegates and secretaries of state. Among them, Michèle Alliot-Marie holds the key position of minister for defense, while Claudie Haigneré, a former astronaut, is minister delegate for research and new technologies. 

French Women Firsts

1851: Angélique Duchemin (1772-1859), who fought for France in the Napoleonic wars, was the first woman to be awarded the Legion of Honor, personally presented to her by Napoleon III in 1851. At first Duchemin fought disguised as a man, but by the time her gender was discovered, she had proved so valuable in battle that she was allowed to remain in the military openly as a woman.

1903: Marie Curie (1867-1934) was the first woman to be awarded a Nobel Prize (Physics, 1903) and soon obtained a second (Chemistry, 1911). In 1995, she became the first woman to be interred in the Panthéon, the mausoleum reserved for France's most revered dead.

1947: Germaine Poinso-Chapin (1901-1981) became the first female minister (for public health) in France.

1950: Jacqueline Auriol (1917-2000) was the first French female military pilot. She was one of the first pilots to fly the supersonic Concorde.

1979: Simone Veil was the first woman to preside over the European Parliament.

1981: Marguerite Yourcenar (1903-1987) was the first woman to be elected to the Académie Française.

1990: Christine Janin was the first French woman to climb Mount Everest, and in 1997 became the first woman in the world to reach the North Pole alone, without a dog team or mechanical help.

1991: Edith Cresson became France's first female prime minister.

1996: Claudie Haigneré, French astronaut, was the first European woman in space. She is now minister delegate for research and new technology.

1997: Laurence de La Ferrière was the first French woman to reach the South Pole.

2000: Peggy Bouchet became the first woman to row across the Atlantic.

2002: Michèle Alliot-Marie was the first woman to head the French Ministry of Defense.

Paris Goes to Washington...



Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë presents a gift to Washington Mayor Anthony Williams during a reception, attended by French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte (left), at the French Embassy on March 7. Williams had invited "his friend" Delanoë to address the members of the National League of Cities, which was holding its annual meeting that same day. In very warm terms, both mayors expressed satisfaction with the high level of exchanges between their two capitals, in particular in cultural matters, and with the excellent prospects for reinforced co-operation.

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Salomé Zourabichvili

(Courtesy: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

FRENCH AMBASSADOR NAMED GEORGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

On March 11, the French government, at the request of Georgian President Mikhaïl Saakachvili, allowed Salomé Zourabichvili to relinquish her position as Ambassador of France to Georgia in order to become Georgia's new foreign minister. Such an agreement is unique in the history of diplomacy, and demonstrates France's desire to fully support Georgia as it pursues its ambitious reforms. Saakachvili, who met with French President Jacques Chirac during his recent visit to Paris and who was elected president of Georgia in January, has made rooting out corruption and boosting Georgia's moribund economy primary goals of his presidency.

NEW MISSION FOR FRENCH NAVY

While visiting the naval base of Finistère in Brest on February 17, French President Jacques Chirac announced a new mission for the French Navy. Accompanied by Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie, Chirac called on the navy to fight against what he termed "hooligans of the seas," such as polluters, traffickers, and terrorists. Nearly 2,000 sailors, 70 ships, and 30 aircraft will participate in the new missions. Spanning 11 million square kilometers, France's maritime territory is the second largest in the world.

FRENCH AND JAPANESE JOIN FORCES IN IRAQ

During his visit to Japan on March 2, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi agreed to work together to help rebuild Iraq, focusing primarily on the country's medical needs and on the safeguard of its cultural heritage. Acknowledging the need for increased involvement by the U.N. in Iraq, France and Japan will primarily discuss the possibility of joint training programs in the fields of electricity, agriculture and education.

Excellent Franco-U.S. Coordination in Haiti

U.S. PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush and French President Jacques Chirac hailed their countries' cooperation over the Haiti crisis, in what is the latest sign of a gradual rapprochement between the two nations. Indeed, on March 2, Bush called Chirac to "thank France for its action" and to praise the "perfect coordination" between French and American troops. The two military forces will work side by side, as they do in many other locations, including Afghanistan. Of the 2,500 international troops already present in Haiti, about 850 are French legionnaires and gendarmes.

On February 29, France and the United States, along with

SUCCESSION OF MIDDLE EAST LEADERS MEET WITH CHIRAC

Eager to pursue a dialogue with the Middle East, French President Jacques Chirac, along with other French officials, recently welcomed Israeli President Moshe Katzav, King Abdullah II of Jordan, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Qatar's crown prince Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Israeli Defence Minister Shaoul Mofaz and Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qorei over the past three weeks. The Arab leaders stressed their support for the modernization of the Arab states through consultation and cooperation among countries. All agreed that any initiative concerning the Middle East should respond to the needs and aspirations of the region and take into account the need for a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

Canada and Chile, sent troops to the Caribbean island following Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide's decision to resign. The forces, under a joint U.S. command, are attempting to restore order to the country after an armed rebellion threatened to ignite a bloody civil war. Both the U.S. and France have a strong interest in restoring order to Haiti. The former French colony is home to 2,000 French expatriates who rely on France for their safety, and America wishes to avert a crisis in its close neighbor which could lead to a large influx of Haitians seeking refuge on U.S. soil.

According to French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin, the joint Franco-American operation has been a model of "good diplomacy working." Villepin has kept in constant contact with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell during the crisis, and the two countries believe that the United Nations and the Caribbean Community (Caricom) must play a key part in resolving the crisis and bringing peace and stability back to Haiti.

Villepin declared on March 3 that the intervention in Haiti was carried out "with due regard for the law" and he hopes that it will "restore order and security throughout the country." The French foreign minister also added that, in cooperation with the U.S., France will provide "humanitarian aid to address the needs of the Haitian people for whom the crisis has caused particularly grievous suffering." Finally, Villepin announced his plans to travel to Haiti as soon as the country has elected a new government. ■ ■

Minister Delegate Noëlle Lenoir Visits U.S.

Lenoir promoted European integration during her week-long visit in America

FRENCH MINISTER Delegate for European Affairs Noëlle Lenoir received a warm welcome from members of the Congressional French Caucus and the Bush Administration during her visit to Washington, D.C., from February 25 to March 2. Her meetings with U.S. officials revolved around transatlantic trade issues as well as political issues concerning the greater Middle East, Iraq, Iran and the enlargement of Europe. Lenoir also gave several speeches at American think tanks and universities.



Minister Delegate for European Affairs Noëlle Lenoir speaking at SAIS

(Courtesy: Aude Rabault)

In addresses to the Brookings Institution, the Center for Transatlantic Relations of John Hopkins University, Yale University, and

Columbia University, she emphasized that "Europe was always meant to be a political force, not a mere market." She argued that the political nature of European integration has been present for the last 50 years, and it resulted in the creation of unique institutions, numerous common policies, and in the ambition to have a unified foreign policy for Europe. In light of this, she explained, "the draft Constitution aims at bringing more purpose and effectiveness into our political aspirations."

She also spoke of a more cohesive European foreign policy, with, for instance, the appointment of a European foreign minister, and of a more ambitious European defense. She emphasized the advances made toward a common European citizenship, and she announced the upcoming distribution of a booklet stating the rights and duties of E.U. citizens to all European youths on their 18th birthday.

NEW PRESIDENT, MEMBERS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL

After the terms of Constitutional Council President Yves Guéna and two other Council members expired on March 8, President Jacques Chirac and the presidents of the National Assembly and Senate named three new members and appointed one of the current members, Pierre Mazeaud, as the new President of the Council. Every three years, one-third of the Council's members are renewed (they are limited to a single term). The Council is the French equivalent of the U.S. Supreme Court. It is composed of 9 members who control the constitutionality of laws and the validity of presidential and parliamentary elections. For more information, please visit www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr.

Addressing the question of enlargement, she repeated that "the unification of Europe was always one of the purposes of the European Union and successive enlargements (including the present one) are arguably its most successful policies." Finally, she said that Europe is determined to "develop strong partnerships with its neighbors in order to build areas of stability and prosperity around it," and she emphasized the importance of the transatlantic link in this endeavor. ■ ■



Justice Ginsburg Awarded Legion of Honor

U.S. SUPREME COURT Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was awarded the rank of commander in the Legion of Honor on February 26. The medal was presented to Ginsburg by Noël Lenoir, the French minister delegate for European affairs, in a private ceremony at French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte's residence. Two other Supreme Court Justices, Sandra Day O'Connor and Stephen G. Breyer, were also present during the ceremony.

Ginsburg received the medal as a result of her lifelong dedication to liberty and equality. According to Lenoir, Ginsburg's "exceptional career has been characterized by a personal commitment and conviction ... in favor of the advancement of women's rights." Lenoir also praised Ginsburg's good relationship with France's Constitutional Council, of which Lenoir herself was a member from 1992 to

2001. The Constitutional Council is the French equivalent of the American Supreme Court, and the two institutions maintain excellent relations.



French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wearing the Legion of Honor

(Courtesy: Embassy of France)

Ruth Bader Ginsburg was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1933. After receiving her B.A. from Cornell University, she attended the law schools of Harvard and Columbia. Her prestigious career includes service as a law clerk and professorships at a number of prominent universities. Ginsburg was nominated as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court by President Clinton and she took her seat in 1993.

The Legion of Honor medal which was bestowed upon Ginsburg is the highest honor given by the government of France. First established by Napoleon in 1802, the medal has traditionally been conferred upon civilians of merit as well as soldiers, and it is not limited to French citizens. ■ ■

QUENTIN TARANTINO TO PRE-SIDE OVER CANNES FESTIVAL

American filmmaker Quentin Tarantino, 40, will preside over the jury of the 57th Cannes Film Festival, which will be inaugurated by Pedro Almodovar's *La Mala Educacion* on May 12. Director of *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction* and *Kill Bill* (volumes 1 and 2), Tarantino won the Palme d'Or, Cannes's top prize, for *Pulp Fiction* 10 years ago. "For a filmmaker and film lover there's no greater honor than to be on the jury of the Cannes Film Festival," said Tarantino, shortly after his appointment was made public on February 13.

THE HARVARD OF HAUTE CUISINE FETED IN N.Y.

During his two-day visit to New York, Secretary of State for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Renaud Dutreil invited American journalists for a succulent French dinner on March 11 to celebrate the inauguration of the Institut des Hautes Etudes du Goût et de la Gastronomie. Aiming to become the Harvard of haute-cuisine, and supported by many of France's biggest culinary names, the institute will open its doors in October in Reims. More than half of its 100 students are expected to hail from countries other than France (please see NFF issue 03.12 for more information).

French Edition of Newsweek to Come Out in 2004

THE U.S. NEWSMAGAZINE *Newsweek* will launch a French-language edition in 2004, as soon as formal authorization for publication in France is obtained. Thomas Sancton, future editor of the publication, admitted that the French market can be difficult, because of the existence of several well-established newsmagazines, but he believes that "we will be able to find our niche." Sancton was previously the chief correspondent in Paris for *Time Magazine* and therefore benefits from an experience of more than 20 years in the French media scene.

Eighty percent of the magazine will consist of translations of the U.S. edition's articles, whereas 20 percent will be dedicated to specifically French content. This new magazine targets not only the French public, but also audiences in Belgium, Switzerland, Quebec and Lebanon. It should bene-

fit from the reputation of *The Washington Post*, the owner of *Newsweek*, which is associated in this project with Lafayette Press, future publisher of the French edition.

A special edition was issued in January to test whether a French-language *Newsweek* would find an audience in France. This test proved successful since two-thirds of the 60,000 copies were sold. The main theme of this special issue was power and influence. To discuss this topic, French politicians such as Bernard Kouchner and Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin were interviewed, as well as influential Americans such as Noam Chomsky and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. According to Thomas Sancton, "If we can help our two peoples listen to and understand each other, then we will have reached our goal." ■ ■

ARIANE 4 TEAM TO BE HONORED BY U.S. SPACE FOUNDATION

The Space Foundation will honor the launch team for Europe's highly successful Ariane 4 vehicle family during its National Space Symposium in Colorado Springs from March 29 to April 1. The Ariane 4 team has launched 182 rockets for 50 clients from 1988 to 2003. Arianespace Chairman Jean-Marie Luton, CEO Jean-Yves Le Gall, French CNES space agency President Dr. Yannick d'Escatha, and Antonio Fabrizi, director of launches for the European Space Agency, will jointly accept the Foundation's 2004 Space Achievement Award.

France to Help Build James Webb Telescope

THE UNITED STATES, FRANCE, Canada, and several other European countries have joined forces to develop the new James Webb Space Telescope, which will replace the Hubble Space Telescope that now orbits Earth. The French National center for space research (CNES) will participate technically and financially to the project, contributing approximately 17 million euros. The CNES will notably help design the telescope's infrared instrument, MIRI (which stands for Mid InfraRed Instrument).

The different space agencies involved in the project hope to launch James Webb with a European Ariane 5 rocket around 2011. Placed in orbit 1.5 million kilometers away from Earth, at a point where the Sun and Earth's gravity cancel each other out, the James Webb Space

Telescope will help researchers better understand the origin and evolution of galaxies, stars and planetary systems. Indeed, the space telescope, unaffected by atmospheric disturbances, will be capable of peering further away than has ever been achieved.



Hubble Telescope in Space
(Courtesy: Hubblesite)

The Hubble Space Telescope was launched in April 1990. About the same size as a school bus, Hubble is 14 feet across and 43 feet long. On the ground it would weigh over 25,000 pounds but in space it weighs nothing. The telescope orbits about 353 miles (569 kilometers) above the Earth, and takes about 97 minutes to complete one orbit. Among many other discoveries, Hubble recently observed one of the most distant galaxies ever identified (please

see NFF 04.02 for more details). ■ ■

YALE PROFESSOR AWARDED HONOR

Bruce Ackerman, professor of law and political science at Yale University, was honored with the Insignia of Commander of the French Order of Merit. He was recognized for his scholarly achievements, and for having actively participated in the debate over a new European Constitution. Ackerman, saying he was "deeply honored," noted that "this is a particularly good time to reaffirm the deep bonds linking France and the United States. They were forged centuries ago. They will endure centuries into the future." French Minister for European Affairs Noël Lenoir presented Ackerman with the award at Yale University on March 3.



GREAT WOMEN OF FRANCE *(continued from page 1)*

Throughout its history, France has been shaped by women, great individuals of rare character and ability, but also everyday women who kept the country united and dynamic. France has often produced illustrious women who helped prove that women were capable of just as much as, if not more than, their male peers. It is difficult to select individuals from such a long list, but the following French women all stand out in their fields.

... in history: Joan of Arc



Statue of Joan of Arc in Philadelphia, PA.

(Courtesy: Amaury Laporte)

In the early fifteenth century, a young girl, destined to become one of France's most cherished heroes, was born in present-day Domrémy-la-Pucelle. Joan of Arc (Jeanne d'Arc in French) helped the King of France, Charles VII, oust the English from France during the Hundred Years' War. She approached Charles VII and convinced him that she alone had a mission to save France, and that her mission was of divine origin. Armored and carrying a white flag with the fleur-de-lis on it (representing God blessing the French royal emblem), Joan of Arc led the French to victory over the English in Orleans. A courageous leader, she was not afraid to present herself as an equal to men in an age when no one had yet heard of women's rights.

teach at the Sorbonne, taking over her husband's chair following his death in 1906. In 1910 she succeeded in isolating pure radium metal and she was awarded her second Nobel Prize (in chemistry) in 1911. During World War I, Curie helped pioneer the use of radiation for medical purposes, using X-rays to find bullets lodged in bodies for instance. Curie died in 1934 of leukemia, caused in all probability by her extensive exposure to high levels of radiation during her research.

... in science: Marie Curie



Marie Curie, née Maria Skłodowska, became one of world's most famous scientists. Born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1867, she moved to Paris in 1891 to continue her scientific studies at the Sorbonne. There she met Pierre Curie and together they worked on radioactivity. In 1903 the Curies were jointly awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics, making Marie Curie the first woman to have won the prestigious Swedish prize. Marie Curie also became the first woman to

teach at the Sorbonne, taking over her husband's chair following his death in 1906. In 1910 she succeeded in isolating pure radium metal and she was awarded her second Nobel Prize (in chemistry) in 1911. During World War I, Curie helped pioneer the use of radiation for medical purposes, using X-rays to find bullets lodged in bodies for instance. Curie died in 1934 of leukemia, caused in all probability by her extensive exposure to high levels of radiation during her research.

... in fashion: Coco Chanel

Coco Chanel, née Gabrielle Chasnel, France's legendary fashion designer, opened her first hat boutique in 1909 when she was 26 years old. Three years later, she decided to diversify her activity and opened a fashion shop in Paris, then in Deauville (1913) and Biarritz (1914). By the mid-1920s, with the expansion of the 'Chanel style'—casual wool jersey suits that feminised masculine designs—her name had become synonymous with elegance and chic. Chanel was the first seamstress to launch her own perfume brand (1921), and she gained world-wide celebrity with her Chanel No. 5 fragrance. She was soon employing nearly 4,000 workers and selling 28,000 pieces per year world-wide, particularly in the United States where she had a faithful clientele. She died in 1971, a few weeks before her last, triumphant collection was presented.



Claudie Haigneré, minister delegate for research and former astronaut. (Courtesy: ESA)

... in philosophy: Simone de Beauvoir

Born in 1908 and educated in Paris, Simone de Beauvoir was among the first women permitted to study at the Ecole Normale Supérieure. Through her lifelong friendship with Jean-Paul Sartre, she contributed significantly to the development and expression of existentialist philosophy. But she is most well known for her role in the development of feminism, with many crediting her as being the first true feminist. In *Le Deuxième Sexe* (The Second Sex, 1949), Beauvoir traced the development of male oppression through historical, literary and mythical sources. Her works of fiction focus on women who take responsibility for themselves by making life-altering decisions, and she herself lived her life according to these principles.

... in music: Edith Piaf

Edith Piaf, née Edith Gassion (1915-1963), was France's most popular singer. Born to an acrobat and a singer, she moved to Paris when she was 15 and worked as a café and street singer. She was discovered in 1935 by a cabaret owner who named her *La Môme Piaf* (The Kid Sparrow), aptly describing her physical characteristics, as she was only four feet, ten inches tall (1.47m). Thanks to her unique, impressive and powerful voice, she became famous with songs such as "Non, Je ne Regrette Rien" or "L'Hymne à l'Amour" (the little sparrow wrote more than 80 songs during her career). In 1937, she officially became Edith Piaf and acted in her first movie, *La Garçonne*. In 1956 she became internationally acclaimed after her concert at the prestigious New York Carnegie Hall. She died in 1963 in the south of France.



France's Christine Arron, Patricia Girard, Sylviane Felix and Muriel Hurtis (from left to right) after their victory in the women's 4x100-meter relay during the World Athletics Championships (Stade de France, August 30, 2003).

... in journalism: Françoise Giroud

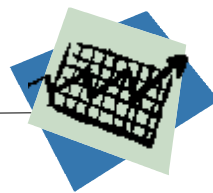
Françoise Giroud, born in Geneva in 1916, was a liaison agent in the French resistance during World War II, until she was arrested by the Gestapo in 1943. But Giroud is mostly known for her important contribution to French journalism, having founded *L'Express*, long France's number 1 newsmagazine, in 1953 with the help of Jean-Jacques Serven-Schreiber. During her 21-year stint at the magazine, she found the time to write about 20 books. In 1974 she went into politics, becoming secretary of state for women (1974-76) and for culture (1976-77) under President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. Giroud passed away last year, on January 19.

... in business: Anne Lauvergeon

Born in 1959, Anne Lauvergeon, a graduate of the prestigious Ecole Normale Supérieure, is now one of France's leading CEOs (27 percent of the country's CEOs are women). At the helm of Cogema since June 1999, she has helped the \$4-billion company consolidate its position as the world's premier nuclear fuel cycle expert. Cogema, with a staff of 20,000 and operations in over 30 countries, mines, enriches and recycles uranium for nuclear power plants. In 2001, Lauvergeon was appointed chairperson of Areva, Cogema's parent company.



French actress Emmanuelle Béart



Snecma to Be Partially Privatized

The aerospace engine-maker, one of the world's largest, should attract many investors

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT announced on February 24 that it will sell a "substantial and minority" stake in Snecma, the world's fourth largest manufacturer of aircraft engines (after General Electric, Pratt & Whitney, and Rolls Royce). According to the government, which currently owns 97.2 percent of Snecma,

"Opening up Snecma's capital will give the company room to pursue its industrial development." Indeed, privatizing the firm should greatly facilitate potential alliances with other aerospace companies.

The sale, which is slated to take place before July, will probably involve 40 to 50 percent of the company, although an exact figure has not yet been released. Experts estimate the company's total worth at between 5 and 6 billions euros. France had intended to sell a 20 percent stake of Snecma in 2001, but the air travel crisis provoked by the September 11 attacks put its plans on hold. But now, the government believes that "prospects for the aeronautic market have improved and Snecma has shown its capacity to resist in a difficult climate."

Indeed, the company boasted a net profit up 70 percent from last year, reaching \$229 million. Its operating profits have also increased, by 2 percent, despite slower sales. The company's debt has been slashed by more than half in the past year, and it has predicted that it will remain profitable in 2004.

Snecma builds engines for commercial airliners and military jets, but also for helicopters, missiles, drones, satellites and rockets. Snecma has formed a joint venture with GE that manufactures many of the engines that equip Boeing and Airbus jetliners. To consolidate their cooperation, GE has expressed an interest in purchasing a 10 percent share of Snecma. ■■

E.U. CALLS FOR OPEN AVIATION AREA

Representatives from the European Union and their U.S. counterparts are presently negotiating a new aviation agreement. American negotiators have simply proposed an extension of existing open-sky agreements to the entire E.U., whereas European officials have urged the creation of an Open Aviation Area (OAA), which would entail a complete liberalization of the airline industry, creating in effect a single, transatlantic market in air travel. The increased competition would result in a broadened choice of services and lower fares for Americans and Europeans. In addition, security, safety and environmental regulations would be standardized and strengthened. The OAA would also provide clear benefits for airlines: it would eradicate the restrictions that prohibit the foreign ownership and control of airlines, thus facilitating mergers, and American companies would be allowed to fly directly from one European city to another.

FRENCH TRADE STILL GOING STRONG

Despite a sluggish global economy, France achieved a trade surplus of 4 billion euros in 2003, according to figures recently released by the Ministry of Economy. Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade François Loos noted that French exports to China and to the 11 countries that will join the European Union on May 1 have increased significantly. Loos expressed his confidence that 2004 will see even stronger results.

EVEN MORE DISTANT GALAXY FOUND!

French and Swiss astronomers announced on March 1 the discovery of an even more distant galaxy than the one found two weeks ago by a team led by French astronomer Jean-Paul Kneib (see NFF 04.02). This new galaxy is 200 million light-years farther than the previous record-holder, which itself lies 13 billion light-years from Earth. The discovery was made with the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope in Chile.

ROSSIGNOL: 50 MILLION PAIRS OF SKIS!

With celebratory torches in hand, 700 mountain guides recently skied down the slopes of Courchevel in honor of winter sports giant Rossignol's 50 millionth pair of skis. The French sports company was founded in 1907 and now dominates 25 percent of the winter sports market. Not content with producing an average of 6 million skis and snowboards per year, Rossignol has announced plans to expand into other outdoor sports products as well.

DAUZIER TO PROMOTE FRANCE'S ECONOMY

Pierre Dauzier, 65, was recently named president of a new committee, the Comité de pilotage pour l'image de la France, formed to promote the economic image of France beyond its borders. As the former head of the marketing company Havas, image marketing is far from new to Dauzier.

L'OREAL WORTH IT: PROFITS UP 16.7 %

French cosmetics leader L'Oréal announced an astonishing increase of 16.7 percent in net profits for the 2003 fiscal year. This success is of particular note as analysts had formerly predicted a much more modest increase. Their lower estimate was due to the ever-increasing rise in the value of the euro relative to the dollar, which generally has damaging effects on European exports. It appears, however, that L'Oréal's superior products speak for themselves.

Rosetta Launched, Probe Will be First to Land on Comet

ON MARCH 2, at 7:17 am GMT, the new European space probe, Rosetta, began a ten-year journey to the comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko, nicknamed "Chury." Launched atop an Ariane 5 rocket from Kourou, French Guiana, the probe will cover half a billion kilometers before achieving orbit around Chury, all under the watchful eye of the European Space Agency (ESA).

The billion-euro mission will be carried out primarily by the robot Philae, which will eventually land on the comet in order to collect samples of the comet's composition and to take photos of its surface and surroundings. Once the probe is well in the comet's orbit, Philae will be dropped from a distance of approximately one kilometer. The impact of the landing should not damage the robot or the comet's surface due to its weak

gravitational pull. Indeed, its gravity is so weak that several small motors have been installed on the robot to keep it pinned against the surface of the comet, preventing it from rebounding back off into outer space.

Philae will complete 95 percent of its mission in its first five days on the comet, due to limited battery power, before going into a period of hibernation that will last several weeks. Scientists hope to discover the composition of the comet, and whether it is made of several layers or of one compact substance. By studying the substances collected, scientists hope to better understand not only the formation of our solar system, but possibly also how life first appeared. The mission is especially significant to European space research as this will be the first probe to land on a comet. ■■

The Growing Success of Free Papers in France

THE FREE PRESS PHENOMENON emerged in France with *A Nous Paris* ("Paris belongs to us"), which offers a variety of news related to the city and which was later joined by the daily newspapers *Metro* and *20 Minutes* and by the weekly sports publication *Sport*. Increasingly successful, these free papers rely on advertising to thrive. And advertisers are eager to pay up: often offered in metro stations, these free papers are especially valued by young urban professionals (yuppies), who read them on their way to and back from work. Indeed, 74 percent of their readers are between 15 and 49 years old. More than 50 percent of them did not previously read any dailies.

Circulation numbers are good indicators of the popularity of this form of media, which was launched in France in 1999

with the appearance of the weekly city guide *A Nous Paris*. At present, 350,000 copies of *A Nous Paris* are distributed in the metro stations of the Ile-de-France region. *Metro* was launched in February 2002 in Paris (with a circulation of 340,000 issues) and Marseilles (70,000) and was later distributed in other major cities (Lyon, Toulouse and Lille). The daily now claims 1.6 million readers throughout the country. That same year, *20 Minutes* made its appearance in the Parisian metro and since its launching it has spread to Lille, Lyon and Marseilles and now boasts a daily circulation of 600,000. Finally, *Sport*, the latest offering (October 2003) has already reached a weekly circulation of 600,000. It would seem that the French public has taken a liking to the free press concept! ■■

MAKING PARIS HOUSING AFFORDABLE

Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë announced a new plan to finance loans for the purchase of housing in the capital with a zero percent interest rate over a 15-year period. This plan is designed to ensure that the middle class can continue to afford living in Paris. "Without strong public intervention, Paris could soon be reserved only for households that receive government help (those who live in public housing) or upper-class households," explains Delanoë. The loans will become available in May, and should help offset Paris's high real estate prices (last estimated at \$4,812 per square meter).

CRACKING DOWN ON CLASS CUTTERS

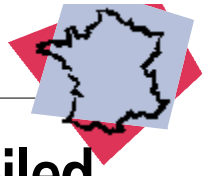
On February 20, the government announced new measures to combat absenteeism in schools. The proposal calls for the regulation of attendance, as well as putting in place a protocol for dealing with frequent skippers. Parents and guardians are already responsible for informing the school of absences, and schools are now encouraged to maintain an open dialogue with them. As a very astute parent, parents can now be held responsible for their children's repeated absences with a fine of up to 750 euros.

GOING TO PARIS? GET OUT YOUR BIKE!

Bikes are quickly climbing up the list of preferred transportation options in Paris. During 2003, the capital saw a 31 percent increase in the number of cyclists on its streets. Denis Baupin, assistant to the mayor of Paris and in charge of transportation in the capital, gives credit to their plan to progressively reduce the amount of vehicles in circulation in Paris. The city intends to continue to improve bike paths and to work with bicycle associations. Bikes have proven a popular alternative to public transportation, and their use has been encouraged by the past year's nice weather.

1 OUT OF 5 EAT ORGANIC FOOD

The French National Agronomic Research Institute and the Technological Research and Exchange Group studied the consumption of organic products in France during 2003, and found that 20 percent of those surveyed bought organic products. Survey participants were asked what kind of organic products they had purchased in the preceding four weeks, and how often. The most frequently purchased organic items were milk (39 percent) and eggs (30 percent), followed by bread, pasta, cereals, biscuits, and beef (20 percent each).



Charter for Workplace Parity Unveiled

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT has taken new, strong steps to tackle the ongoing inequality between men and women at work, as even today, the average wages of women remain lower than those of their male counterparts. On February 25, President Jacques Chirac presided over a roundtable that gathered human relations directors and employees from five major French companies (PSA Peugeot Citroën, Renault, Thales, Credit Lyonnais, and Gravelleau) that have already taken measures to ensure professional equality between their male and female employees. Chirac called on all of France's firms to reach similar agreements as rapidly as possible.

In order to help businesses reach this goal, the government introduced a Charter on Equality Between the Sexes on March 8 (International Women's Day) during a ceremony at

the prime minister's Matignon residence. The charter identifies four major policy thrusts which structure the government's policy: parity and access to decision-making, professional equality, access to rights, and the reconciliation of family and professional lives.

Nicole Ameline, minister delegate for parity and equality in the workplace, noted that the charter includes two original measures: the creation of an "equality label" that will be awarded to companies that have done the most to promote parity between the sexes, and the creation of a system that will help female entrepreneurs from poorer neighborhoods set up companies. "My ambition is that France pass in the first rank of countries that have mobilized to ensure professional equality," declared Chirac, who maintains a strong commitment to the process. ■ ■

France Places Food Security Above Taste

WITH MASS PRODUCTION taking over the food industry, and as genetically modified organisms become more present in our diets, people in France are becoming increasingly aware of the quality of the food they put on their plates. In spite of France's heritage of fine cuisine, it appears that in recent years French citizens are willing to sacrifice some taste in exchange for the guaranteed safety of their agricultural products.

In a 2002 poll of consumer preferences concerning agricultural products, 40 percent of respondents placed taste as the most important quality they look for in food. But in a recently released survey, conducted in January 2004, only 23 percent still identify taste as their main concern, whereas 27 percent now place security as the most important cri-

terion they take into account when purchasing produce. For these individuals, "traceability" and "guarantee of origin" are now essential.



A pastoral scene in Normandy.
(Courtesy: Tourisme Normandie)

These concerns have reached new heights as a consequence of several health scares throughout the world. The French government and the European Union have reacted forcefully, enacting new legislation and reinforcing safety measures. But the survey results indicate that the French still highly respect small farmers, who, according to respondents, fulfill their ancestral role of primarily "nourishing the people" and secondly of protecting France's national culinary tradition. President Jacques Chirac recently underscored his commitment to help struggling farmers, in an effort to protect both national agriculture and the environment. ■ ■

The Art of *la Bise*

IF YOU HAVE EVER been to France, you have surely noticed all the "air" kissing that takes place. This air kissing, or *bise*, is exchanged between friends, family, some colleagues as well as between friends of friends upon meeting and departing. Think of it as something done in lieu of the hugging that takes place in the United States. For those of you who have wondered about the when, where and wherefore of *bise* etiquette, rest assured. You are not alone. In fact, despite it being as common in France as breathing, French people are often at a loss themselves.

So who exactly is supposed to *faire la bise*? Women kiss men, men kiss women, women kiss women, and close male relatives kiss each other as well. As for technique, usually the

kiss is a right-cheek-to-right-cheek action followed by the same thing on the left. One tends to make a slight kissing sound as if kissing the air: "mwoah."



But actual practices vary from region to region, and other factors come into play as well, such as the level of intimacy between the two parties. Two *bises* (one on each cheek) is the most common form, although be aware that you could be the recipient of one to four *bises*. When in doubt, it is usually best to follow the initiator's lead. In any case, the French are aware that many foreigners do not practice this custom and find their uncertainty and/or uneasiness cute or amusing. Be sure to use this to your advantage if you have a particularly attractive French person before you! ■ ■



France Celebrates Birth of Arthur Rimbaud

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, several events will be organized to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Arthur Rimbaud's birth on October 20, 1854.

These include a show called *L'Espace Dernier* in the Bastille Opera, an exhibit in Paris relating Rimbaud's trip to Africa, and "Rimbaud -Verlaine," an exhibit first created by the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, and which will now be presented in Rimbaud's city of origin, Charleville-Mézières. In autumn, a conference entitled "Rimbaud: Geography and Poetry" will be co-organized by the Paris IV University and the Society of Geography under the sponsorship of Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin.

Considered a precursor of surrealism, the precocious poet Arthur Rimbaud was a brilliant student, but a rebellious one, eager to leave the hypocrisy of his provincial town and



Sketch of Rimbaud
by Verlaine

his authoritarian mother. He ran away from home in 1870, and soon met Paul Verlaine. The two poets had a very controversial relationship, which ended tragically when Verlaine shot and wounded Rimbaud in Brussels (Verlaine was subsequently sentenced to two years in prison). After penning *Une Saison en Enfer* (A Season in Hell) and *Illuminations* (1874), Rimbaud quit writing to lead an adventurous life as a trader in Africa. He returned to Marseilles in 1891 and died on November 10 of that same year.

Rimbaud's writings have inspired poetry, literature and music in the 20th century and he has become a symbol of youth's rebellion against authority and convention.

For more information (in French), please visit the Ministry of Culture's website:

www.culture.fr/culture/actualites/celebrations2004/rimbaud.htm

Artists Find New Home in Paris Warehouse

The reconverted warehouse will serve as an artistic workshop until 2007

THE QUAI DE VALMY, along Paris's famous Saint-Martin canal in the 10th district, will soon be the home to a new space for artists. The city recently reached an agreement to transform a portion of the building along the canal, formerly a large warehouse, into a cultural space (the rest will house a new fire station). Paris's City Hall has partnered with the association "Usines Ephémères" (Ephemeral Factories) in this cultural endeavor. Usines Ephémères refurbishes unused sites so that they can be transformed into temporary artistic celebration spaces. The building on the canal has been reserved for the association until December 31, 2007, after which the entire building will be devoted to an as yet undetermined cultural function.

The Usines Ephémères Association is currently renovating the space to include workshops and studios for sculptors, dancers, musicians, and comedians. There will be two new concert halls, an exhibition hall, and a restaurant/bar that will be used

to welcome conferences. The current remodeling seeks to rejuvenate and update the space, while leaving it rather rudimentary and simple in order to give free rein to the inspiration and imagination of the artists who will soon be working in it. Although the grand opening is not scheduled until July 14 and the main events will not begin until September, 15 performances of the new Brunu Lajara play, "Ne Pas," were held there from March 1 to 11, allowing the curious public a first look at this new cultural space. ■■



Autoportrait, Joan Miró, 1919

(courtesy: Musée Picasso, Paris -
Photo RMN / J.G. Berizzi)

The Ancestral Heart of Paris is ... Nanterre?

THE ORIGINAL URBAN settlement which gave rise to Paris may have been located over six miles northwest of the traditional heart of the French capital. New archeological evidence has been unearthed suggesting that the chief community of the ancient Parisii tribe was actually located in Nanterre, a suburb of modern Paris, rather than at the long-accepted site of Ile-de-la-Cité.

While the debate regarding the original site of the large Parisii settlement, conquered by Julius Caesar in the year 52 B.C., is far from over, the recent excavations have added weight to the argument of the revisionist school of archeologists. This school rejects the conventional wisdom that the settlement was located on Ile-de-la-Cité, an island in the center of modern-day Paris (where the Notre-Dame cathedral can be found).

The settlement excavated in Nanterre in late 2003 appears to be much larger and more sophisticated than any other pre-Roman settlements discovered on the territory of the Parisii tribe. The Nanterre site covers 37 acres of land and includes a planned urban area centered around a market square and two parallel streets. Each house in the settlement possessed its own stone-lined well, and community ditches existed which drained away waste water.

The pre-Roman Nanterre community was situated on a peninsula-like piece of land surrounded on three sides by a large loop of the Seine River. Limited access to the site would have made it easy to defend and the peninsula would have provided the community with a rich array of fields, grassland, and forest, making it an ideal site for the metropolis it was to become! ■■

THE 2004 CESAR RESULTS

Best picture, Best Director, and Best Original Screenplay :

Canadian Denis Arcand's
The Barbarian Invasions

Best Foreign Film :

Clint Eastwood's *Mystic River*

Best E.U. Picture :

Good Bye Lenin (Germany)

Best Actor :

Omar Sharif for *Monsieur Ibrahim*

Best Actress :

Sylvie Testud for *Stupeur et Tremblements*

Best New Talent :

Julie Depardieu (Gerard Depardieu's daughter) for *La Petite Lili*

The only foreign film contender to appear on both the Cesar and Oscar lists was Clint Eastwood's *Mystic River*. Other U.S. movies to receive Cesar nominations were *Elephant*, *Gangs of New York*, and *The Hours*.

NEW CHOCOLATE MUSEUM

A palace of chocolate, Les Secrets du Chocolat, has opened its doors in the Alsatian town of Strasbourg. The museum not only offers sampling of its riches, but also instructs on the origins and secrets of chocolate fabrication. It reveals for instance that the chocolate craze spread across France in large part through the influence of the marquise de Sévigné. Alsace is the second leading producer of chocolate in France, closely following the Ile-de-France region.

JOAN MIRÓ:

LA NAISSANCE DU MONDE

The Pompidou Center is hosting an exhibit on Joan Miró (1893-1983), a Spanish artist who spent many summers in Paris, from March 3 through June 28. The exhibit is the first of its kind to be completely dedicated to the intricacies of Miró's work from the years 1917 to 1934—a period of intense production and growth. The exhibit will showcase some 100 paintings, matched by the same number of drawings, collages, and constructions. Some of the pieces are making their début to the public eye.

APPETITE OF CHEESY PROPORTIONS

The French appetite for cheese remains steadily on the rise. In less than 15 years, annual French cheese consumption per person has risen from 15.2 kg in 1989 to 24.6 kg in 2002. This leaves France at second place worldwide (Greece came in the lead with 26.6 kg per person annually). France offers more than 400 varieties of cheese, and new additions appear every year with hopes of providing cheese that will appease the discerning palettes of connoisseurs.



The largest francophone film festival in the country will soon showcase a diverse sampling of France's newest feature films by established, award-winning directors, complemented by a screening of short films by France's next generation of groundbreaking filmmakers. The annual VCU French Film Festival will take place from March 26 to 28 in Richmond, Virginia. For more information, please visit:

www.frenchfilm.vcu.edu

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Toulouse-Lautrec: Master of the Moulin Rouge

The "Toulouse-Lautrec: Master of the Moulin Rouge" exhibition is on view through May at the Baltimore Museum of Art, in Maryland.

HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC, one of France's most talented artists in the late 19th century, observed and captured in his art the Parisian night-life of Montmartre, the bohemian quarter of Paris which was swarming with an avant-garde community of writers, artists and performers who greatly influenced modern art at the time. The Baltimore Museum of Art is currently displaying a unique exhibition of more than 100 posters, prints and other graphic works by the French artist.

Born in the "Hotel du Bosc" in Albi (in the south of France) to one of France's wealthiest aristocratic families, Toulouse-Lautrec started drawing and painting by the time he was 10. At 12, he broke his left leg and at 14 his right leg; the bones failed to heal properly and his legs stopped growing (he was only 1.5 meters tall as an adult).

While he was living in Montmartre, he would attend circus performances, dance halls and nightclubs as often as he could. He loved to mingle with the crowd in nightclubs and thoroughly enjoyed sharing in the *joie de vivre* of that time. While laughing and drinking, he would make sketches that he would turn into bright-colored paintings in his studio the next morning.

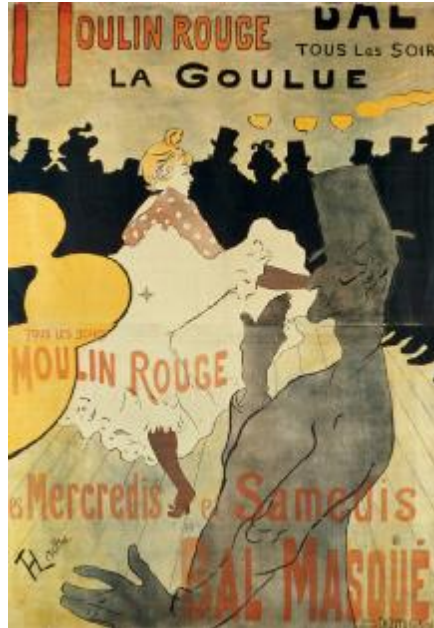
He was only 26 when he became famous, almost overnight, thanks to his first poster, "Moulin Rouge, La Goulue" which depicts a popular cabaret performer nicknamed "La Goulue" ("the glutton") for her voracious sensual appetites (she was famous for going around draining the glasses of customers' unfinished drinks!).

During his lifetime, his posters, bursting with colors and incredibly lifelike, except when garish faces were deliberately distorted to make them more expressive, became so popular that people would tear them down the minute they were plastered on the walls of Paris.

The posters, which often featured other popular nightclub performers such as Aristide Bruant, dancer Jane Avril, and singer Yvette Guilbert, helped move the humble advertising poster into an independent form of art. Toulouse-Lautrec understood very early that the poster is above all meant to be a form of communication, catching people's attention, and he decided to remove any superfluous details. He reduced his color spectrum to yellow, red, blue and black and the contours were replaced by solid background colors. He would get deep olive green from expert ink mixers for his lettering.

In the 1890s Toulouse-Lautrec, deprived of the kind of life that a healthy body would have allowed, started drinking heavily. His health soon deteriorated, and he was confined to a sanatorium. He died on September 9, 1901, in his family's Malrome château.

The exhibition includes virtually all of Toulouse-Lautrec's celebrated posters of Parisian dance halls, as well as sets of lithographs that he created for private collectors and advertisements for print portfolios, books and magazines. It also features works by his post-impressionist contemporaries such as Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard and Henri-Gabriel Ibels. For more information, please visit: www.artbma.org.



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. *Moulin Rouge (La Goulue)*. 1891.

(Courtesy: The Baltimore Museum of Art: Nelson and Juanita Greif Gutman Collection)