

A triweekly review of French news and trends  
Online at: [www.ambafrance-us.org/publi/nff/index.pdf](http://www.ambafrance-us.org/publi/nff/index.pdf)

## Thank You America

A reception in honor of the U.S. veterans who will receive the Legion of Honor was held at the Embassy

**H**OWARD L. BAUGH, 84, of Midlothian, VA, was a Tuskegee airman in the Army Air Corps during World War II. The black Tuskegee airmen were a segregated fighter unit flying P-51s with distinctive red tails. A fighter pilot's duty is to protect bombers, Baugh explained. He said that the Tuskegee fighters never lost an escorted bomber to enemy fighters. Baugh added that he was greatly honored to receive the Legion of Honor. Indeed, Baugh was among the one hundred U.S. World War II veterans who were selected to receive France's highest distinction. They were all invited to the French Embassy on June 3 for a reception, sponsored by French companies and the French-American Chamber of Commerce, which launched a three-day celebration marking the 60th anniversary of D-Day.

The Embassy's defense attaché, General Pascal Vinchon, welcomed the veterans and their guests and announced the theme of the 2004 celebration, "We, the French people, owe you our liberty, and we will never forget."



(Courtesy: Amaury Laporte)

Daniel L. Cooper, undersecretary for the Department of Veterans Affairs said that his department had to make very difficult choices when selecting one hundred U.S. veterans among the millions who served. He explained that the agency tried to choose a representative sample from the different branches of the U.S. armed forces that fought during the Normandy campaign.



French Defense Attaché Pascal Vinchon (left) with a U.S. veteran (right) and his son.

(Courtesy: Aida Senna)

During the reception, the veterans and their families caught a special Air France flight to Paris in order to attend the D-Day ceremonies in Paris and Normandy, at the invitation of President Jacques Chirac. During these commemorations, the veterans received the Legion of Honor, "the highest honor that France can bestow to those who have achieved remarkable deeds for France" according to French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte.

Of the one hundred veterans, 99 received the Legion of Honor from Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie on June 5, during a solemn award ceremony at the Hotel des Invalides, the most prestigious historic military building in Paris. On June 6, the remaining veteran was awarded the Legion of Honor by Chirac in Arromanches, Normandy, exactly 60 years after the landings took place.



(Courtesy: Amaury Laporte)

Nathalie Loiseau, the French Embassy's press counselor, said that the Department of Veterans Affairs proposed two potential recipients for the Legion of Honor awarded by Chirac. The Embassy selected Charles W. Hostler, from California, because as a former U.S. ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, he would not be intimidated in front of the 17 head of states and the French president. Hostler's counter-intelligence unit landed on Utah Beach on June 6, 1944.

An exhibit of 37 archival photos of the Normandy campaign will run at the Maison Française until July 14. For more information, please visit [www.normandiememoire.com](http://www.normandiememoire.com).

## INSIDE

- 2 L'événement**  
*Chirac Attends Guadalajara Summit*
- 3 France-Amérique**  
*Bayou Literature*
- 4 Profil**  
*Napoleon's Legacy*
- 5 Économie / Science**  
*Sarkozy Announces Economic Plan*
- 6 Société**  
*Social Security Remedies*
- 7 Culture**  
*57th Cannes Results*
- 8 Chez nous**  
*"Millet to Matisse" in Kalamazoo*



## Exhibit on Train Celebrates Free French Forces

**A** CELEBRATION OF THE 60TH anniversary of the battle of Normandy during World War II will be rolling through France this summer—quite literally. "The Train of Free France" began its 16-city tour of France on May 21 with an inauguration ceremony at the Gare de l'Est in Paris. The exhibition on board aims to celebrate the efforts of the Free French Forces (known as the FFL, "Forces Françaises Libres") who participated in the liberation of occupied France.

The train consists of five cars, each devoted to a particular topic: "The Refusal of Defeat," "France Fights On," "The FFL in All Battles," "Re-conquer the



Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie (middle) presides over the inauguration of the Free French train, on May 21 in Paris.

(Courtesy: Train de la France Libre)

Motherland," and "Liberation, the FFL's Last Battles." Each car showcases photos, documents, film excerpts, objects with significant symbolic, and testimonials from survivors that retrace the steps taken and sacrifices made in order to liberate France. The train's tour will take it east to Strasbourg, south to Toulouse, and west to Nantes, with several stops in between, before ending on June 8 in Versailles. The exhibition is sponsored by the Free France Foundation and by the French Ministry of Defense.

For more information, please visit:

[www.traindelafreance.com](http://www.traindelafreance.com)



**NEW MISSION FOR FRANCO-GERMAN EUROCORPS**

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and French President Jacques Chirac confirmed on May 13 that the Franco-German brigade will be deployed in Afghanistan with Eurocorps in the second semester of 2004 and that it will take over the leadership of the international forces in Kabul. This decision was announced by the President and the Chancellor at the conclusion of a Franco-German defense and security council. More than a thousand additional French and German soldiers will be sent to Afghanistan, where many have already been deployed.

**E.U. TO SHARE PASSENGER DATA WITH U.S.**

After months of negotiation with the United States, the European Union approved a deal on May 17 to provide records of airline passengers to American authorities. The 25 governments in the Union effectively formalized a procedure in place since March 2003 that provides passenger information, such as credit card numbers and addresses, to U.S. customs officials before the arrival of an aircraft on American soil. Washington says this information will speed up immigration procedures and is needed to combat terrorism.

**FIRST INTERNET CHAT FOR RAFFARIN**

On June 1, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin "chatted" online with internet surfers, becoming the first French prime minister to do so. The prime minister interspersed his political declarations with personal confidences during his hour-long chat, in which he received more than 12,000 e-mails and 1,3 million text messages! Having enjoyed the experience, Raffarin announced that he will engage in such dialogues on a regular basis. He also proposed that citizens be able to vote online for the next European elections in 2009.

**OSCE HATE CRIME FORUM TO BE HELD IN PARIS**

At the invitation of French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) will host an international meeting in Paris on June 16 and 17. At this forum, scholars and government officials will explore the relationship between racist propaganda, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism on the Internet and the occurrence of hate crimes.

**Chirac Attends E.U.-Latin American Summit**

**O**N MAY 28, French President Jacques Chirac, along with other European Union, Latin American, and Caribbean leaders, attended a one-day summit in Guadalajara, Mexico bringing together 58 countries. Hosted by Mexican President Vicente Fox, the talks were held to discuss key issues such as commercial relations among Europe and Latin America, the continued importance of multilateral cooperation, and the growing problem of inequality. This summit was the third such meeting to occur between the E.U. and Latin American countries since 1999. The European Union is Latin America's most generous contributor of aid, and its second largest trading partner (after the United States). Chirac had private talks with several of his counterparts, including Fox, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Rodriguez Lula da Silva, and

Chilean President Ricardo Lagos. Notably absent from the high-profile talks was Cuban President Fidel Castro.

Within the summit's broadly defined parameters, several issues rose to the forefront: free trade, the international role of the United Nations, and the continued conflict in Iraq. By the end of the talks, a trade reform agreement had been reached between the involved parties. In discussing a means of improving the situation in Iraq, Chirac emphasized international cooperation, stating that "multilateralism is an imperative of our times." President Chirac also reiterated the importance of giving the interim Iraqi government full political control upon the arrival of the June 30 deadline for the transfer of sovereignty. In addition to calls for greater U.N. participation in the conflict, an official condemnation of the mistreatment of Abu Ghraib prisoners was also issued at the summit.



**French President Jacques Chirac and Mexican President Vicente Fox in Guadalajara**

(Courtesy: French Presidency photographic service / L. Blevenec)

**Chirac States France's Priorities for G8 Summit**

**D**URING A ROUNDTABLE with local authorities and representatives of trade unions and nongovernmental organizations, President Jacques Chirac underlined France's main priorities in the G8 summit to be held at Sea Island, Georgia, from June 8 to June 10. He first stressed the need for sustainable and equitable growth, and for the development of the world's poorest areas. He then called for a partnership with African countries, and reasserted France's determination to combat the spread of AIDS in the continent. The President's insistence on France's "duty to promote solidarity, namely toward Africa," to further "social and human progress," and to "fight against the deterioration of our environment" received a very

favorable reception by an audience sympathetic to these themes.

Chirac also brought up the fight against international terrorism, seen as the United States' main concern during the upcoming summit. According to Chirac, it is essential to continue observing human rights and the rule of law while confronting terror. "When dealing with this challenge to our democracies, it is only if we respect our values that we shall win the battle." Indeed, Chirac recommended that the G8 members adopt legislation making it possible to sue firms which resort to "modern forms of slavery" in poor countries, a phenomenon he described as a "plague" affecting millions, including countless women and children.

**French-American Awarded Silver Star**

*Michel Thomas is the first soldier to be honored at the new WWII memorial*

**I**N THE FIRST MEDAL ceremony to be held at the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., French-American Michel Thomas was honored with the U.S. Army's Silver Star (its third highest medal for combat valor) on May 25, 60 years after he was first nominated for the medal. Former Senator Bob Dole and Senator John Warner, themselves WWII veterans, presented the award to Thomas for his role in the French Resistance during WWII. French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte attended the ceremony.

The citation given to Mr. Thomas commended him "for gallantry in action against the enemy in France from August to September 1944." Born in



**Michel Thomas at the WWII memorial in Washington, D.C.**

(Courtesy: Handout Photo / U.S. Army / U.S. Newswire Photography)

Poland to a Jewish family, Thomas grew up in Germany, then fled to France in 1933. During the war, Thomas survived two years in a concentration camp in Vichy France and narrowly escaped deportation to Auschwitz. He joined the Secret Army of the French Resistance, acting as a commander until 1944. He then joined the U.S. Army's 45th Division—the Thunderbirds—in their march across France and Germany.

After WWII, Thomas moved to the United States. He has devoted his life to the development of superior methods of teaching and operates the world-renowned Michel Thomas Language Centers.



# Born, and Published, on the Bayou

## Francophone Literature Returns to Louisiana

**T**HROUGH THE efforts of Dana Kress, a professor of French at Centenary College in Shreveport, Louisiana,

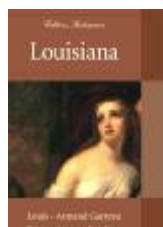
francophone literature of the Bayou has been resurrected. After his grand success organizing the Tintamarre Library, a vast collection of French and Creole literary works, Kress spearheaded a project called Tintamarre Editions, the publication—in French—of works by Louisiana authors. Seven books have already been published, and several more will become available in June 2004.

Kress believes that the heart of the French heritage of Louisiana exists in

these works, which include both poetry and fiction, mostly from the 19th century. Unfortunately, because they are buried in library archives across the state, it is extremely difficult for researchers, as well as for the francophone public, to access them. By making at least a dozen books readily available, Kress hopes not only to reinvigorate an interest in the francophone literary heritage of Louisiana, but also to help minority groups in the United

States find their voice. The works available in the Tintamarre Editions range from \$13 to \$18 and purchasing details can be found at:

[www.centenary.edu/editions/](http://www.centenary.edu/editions/) ■ ■



**Louisiana, by Louis-Armand Garreau**

(Courtesy: Tintamarre Editions)

### FRENCH HEROINE TO HOLD BOOK SIGNING IN D.C.

Marthe Cohn, WWII veteran and French spy, will hold an official book signing on June 19 and 20 at the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. Her book, *Behind Enemy Lines—The True Story of a French Spy in Nazi Germany*, tells the story of her experiences during the war, in which she gathered critical information during covert operations (including the detailed plans for a German retreat and counterattack). Her courage and resourcefulness were recognized in 2000, when she was awarded the Médaille Militaire by the French consul general of Los Angeles, and in 2002, when she received the Medal of Valor from the Simon Wiesenthal Center. A source of strength and honor for the French Resistance under Germany's occupation, Cohn's determination was unwavering, despite her sister Stephanie's deportation to Auschwitz, and her fiancé's execution. For more information, please see our previous issues, NFF 03.02 and 01.09.

### VINEXPO 2004 IN CHICAGO

The second edition of Vinexpo Americas will be held in Chicago, Illinois, from June 20 to 22 at the McCormick Place / Lakeside Center. Over 4,370 professionals from 48 states and Canada have already registered to attend the show, in which 440 exhibitors—representing 22 wine- and spirit-producing countries from all over the world—will participate. Participants are more convinced than ever of the need to invest in the booming North American market. French companies, in particular, will seek to reassert their preeminence, after steady declines in sales to the United States during the past few years. For more information, please visit [www.vinexpo.fr](http://www.vinexpo.fr).

### UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO OPENS A CENTER IN PARIS

The University of Chicago's new center in Paris, on the Left Bank in the 13th *arrondissement*, is just blocks away from several prominent French institutions of higher learning and was inaugurated on May 14 by its president, Don Michael Randel. Robert Morrissey, the center's director, explained, "There's a strong concentration of knowledge in Paris. French research is of a very high quality." The undergraduate and research institution offers a wide variety of programs in both French and English, including exchanges with French universities of the region.

### AMERICAN GUIDE ON BEST PARISIAN BOULANGERIES

Steven Kaplan, an American with a yen for only the most sublime baguettes, has written a guide for those who wish to follow in his discriminating footsteps. The guide, *Cherchez le Pain*, cracks the crust of over 600 boulangeries from all over Paris. Boulangeries were rated according to their baking equipment and ovens, ambience, and, of course, the overall taste, texture and aroma of their breads. Upon discussing the various merits and missteps of each, Kaplan chooses 100 of his favorites and invites you to discover each at your leisure (and pleasure!).

### NEW FRENCH WINE SOON ON U.S. SHELVES

California-based wine dynasty Ernest & Julio Gallo will launch a new French wine in the U.S. this summer. Dubbed "Red Bicycleette," it will benefit from a strong marketing campaign, perhaps the biggest ever for a wine, as Ernest & Julio Gallo seeks to make it the leading French brand in the United States. Its label will show a beret-wearing Frenchman on a red bicycle, accompanied by a little dog carrying a baguette in its mouth. Red Bicycleette will be the first French wine marketed by the American giant and will be available in both red and white varieties.

### BANQUET CELEBRATING WWII VETERANS RE-LAUNCHED

On June 5, following a year's postponement due to the disagreement between France and the United States over Iraq, a banquet honoring American soldiers who landed on the Normandy beaches in 1944 took place. Organized by Bernard Marie, a French-American who has hosted the event for the past 20 years (save one), the banquet is his small way of thanking those who helped to liberate France from Nazi occupation. This year the event was held in Salem, Virginia, where some sixty veterans who participated in D-Day attended the dedicatory luncheon.

## French-American Contemporary Dance Partnership

**J**EAN-RENÉ GEHAN, the French cultural counselor, recently announced in New York a \$2-million French-American program dedicated to promoting contemporary dance. This unique partnership represents a joint effort between the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA), and the Society for French American Cultural Services and Educational Aid (FACSEA). These organizations will collaborate in sponsoring and promoting dance profes-



**Choreographer Philippe Decouflé (l); Judith Jamison, artistic director of the Alvin Ailey Company; dancer Karine Plantadit-Bageot (r)**

(Courtesy: [www.frenchculture.org](http://www.frenchculture.org))

sionals from the United States and France who have not yet established themselves in the other country.

Each year the program plans to provide five dance choreographers the opportunity to interact with a corresponding choreographer from the partner country. Through this four-year initiative (it will run until 2008) the sponsors aspire to foster artistic collaborations and cooperation between French and American choreographers as well as to promote contemporary dance. ■ ■

## Once Upon a Time...

**F**OUR HUNDRED YEARS AGO, in June 1604, a group of French merchants founded a small colony on an island in the Bay of Fundy. Sainte-Croix, as the settlement was called, was the first permanent European establishment of its kind in North America. In honor of this important anniversary, the Canadian Museum of Civilization has gathered together 500 objects, from over 40 Canadian and foreign collections, which depict life in New France. The exhibition, entitled "Il était une fois en Amérique Française" (Once Upon a

Time in French America), features a variety of pieces, including furniture, paintings, clothing, religious ornaments, and sculptures. The artifacts are arranged in such a way as to give visitors a sense of the daily, communal and religious life in New France by examining how the French settlers adapted their traditions to North America. The exhibition will run from June 11, 2004, to March 28, 2005, at the museum, which is located in Gatineau, Québec. For more information, please consult the museum's Web site: [www.civilization.ca](http://www.civilization.ca). ■ ■



**THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE**

**T**HE TERRITORY of Louisiana once encompassed the current states of Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Oklahoma, and of course, Louisiana itself. In short, nearly the entirety of the central United States. In 1682, Sieur de la Salle reached the Mississippi's mouth and claimed all the land drained by it and its tributaries for France's Louis XIV. At the end of the French and Indian war, however, France ceded the territory to Spain in the Treaty of Fontainebleau.

Napoleon, then First Consul of France, spent years trying to get it back but faced significant resistance on the part of the British and the United States. The former, naturally, were wary of their rival and anxious to curb the colonial ambitions of the French. The United States, of course, was adamantly opposed to such a strong presence of the "old world" on its very borders. And Bonaparte's imperial ambitions did nothing to ease their worries. Nevertheless, in 1800, another treaty was signed restoring the Louisiana Territory to the French.

President Thomas Jefferson received the news of this new development with alarm. He ordered his newly appointed Ambassador to France, Robert Livingston, to negotiate the sale of the land to the United States. Napoleon, predictably, was just as determined to keep it. His dream of establishing a true French Empire to rival that of Britain's failed, however, to sustain him throughout the trials he would endure: the war with Britain, a revolt by the French colony of Santo Domingo, U.S. overtures to Britain. The emperor eventually realized that France's resources were spread too thin to maintain its overseas empire.

With typical decisiveness and strategy, Napoleon almost immediately ordered the sale of the Louisiana to the United States, hoping to appease this new player on the world scene and pry it away from Britain. The \$15 million he gained from the transaction (a paltry sum, even by the standards of the day) went directly into the French war chest and helped fuel Napoleon's conquest of Europe. In the meantime, the United States more than doubled in size, literally overnight, forever altering that day the destiny of two entire continents. ■ ■

# The Legacy of Napoleon

*Napoleon Bonaparte, perhaps the most revered and mysterious of French leaders, was crowned Emperor in 1804, making this year the bicentennial anniversary of his coronation.*

## A Social Reformist With a Totalitarian Approach

**A**LTHOUGH PERHAPS BEST known for his military achievements, his greatest and most profound accomplishment remains his strength and savvy as leader of a new, inexperienced government. In the wake of the bloodiest revolution in history (which was followed by the "Times of Terror" and a series of supposedly enlightened governments that in fact harbored lawlessness), Napoleon, though quite the totalitarian, created a lawful body of text from which many of France and Europe's laws still stem.

Napoleon's enthusiastic participation in and endorsement of various social and civil laws, giving each and every human basic rights, embodied the spirit of the social revolution. Napoleon was keenly aware that his opportunity to rule rose from the pleas and cries of the populace to end the injustice of the fiefdom system and the denial of social and civil rights. The Civil Code, sometimes referred to as the Napoleonic Code, established these rights in three, distinct sections: personal rights, property rights, and property acquisition. The personal rights' section, for instance, included the rights of citizens, the naturalization process, as well as marriage and divorce procedures.

Napoleon also excelled in restructuring important institutions, which had either been left unchanged for too long or had crumbled under the revolutionary tidal wave. Religion, the most important institution at the time, was revisited by Napoleon in a Concordat with Pope Pius VII. Napoleon recognized the need for a strong ally and made the Catholic religion the faith of the land. Nevertheless, Napoleon kept his distance

from the Church, and would not let it interfere with most government matters. Indeed, Church and State were officially separated, and the former became subordinate to the latter for all secular—particularly political—matters.

Education, which had long been inextricably linked with religion in France, experienced a split with Christendom and came under the control of the central government, with teachers, books and recruitment becoming centralized. Indeed, Napoleon needed capable engineers, architects and scientists on which to base a strong empire! Though quite regimented by our standards, this new educational system was nevertheless a definite improvement over the religious education that had made a mockery of science and math, as well as historical facts.

Finally, Napoleon naturally paid close attention to the French military, the basis of his rule. To provide his armies with able leadership, he transformed the Ecole Polytechnique (created in 1794) into an elite military academy, complete with the self-explanatory motto "Pour la Patrie, les Sciences et la Gloire." It has since become France's most prestigious engineering and management school. And to reward his most capable soldiers, as well as civilians who have contributed by their knowledge, their talents or their virtues to the Republic, he instituted the Legion of Honor in 1802, now the most highly prized honor in France. ■ ■



**"Napoleon the First on his Imperial Throne," 1806, by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres.**  
(Courtesy: Musée de l'Armée - Paris)



## A Great Artistic Legacy Amidst the Ashes of War

**N**APOLEON HAS LEFT an indelible mark upon painting, sculpture, monuments, literature and the decorative arts. While generally remembered for his military conquests, Napoleon's meteoric rise to the position of emperor during the late 18th and early 19th centuries transformed the artistic face of France and, indeed, of Europe. Riding on the heels of a neo-classical movement that recalled the splendor of ancient Greece and Rome, Napoleon sought to immortalize himself and France in the hearts and minds of those over whom he ruled.

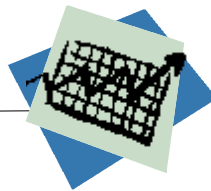
A brilliant strategist, Napoleon realized that to achieve these goals he had to invade the collective psyche of his Empire by, among other things, constructing opulently intimidating buildings and commissioning grandiose works that served to capture the imagination of his world audience.

Under Napoleon's rule the Louvre became the world's premiere museum for the arts through the acquisition of invaluable treasures from across the continent; architects constructed the Arc de Triomphe of the Place de l'Etoile, the Arc de Triomphe of the Carrousel, the Rivoli wing of the Louvre, numerous fountains, four bridges and completely refurbished the Madeleine in the style of a Greek temple; and renowned artists were charged with portraying Napoleon's imperial countenance, displaying him in rich and opulent detail.

The art forms introduced during this imperial era affected not only France but also Germany, Belgium, Russia and Denmark, where key neoclassical elements of art and architecture were re-created in the Napoleonic style. Whether seen as demi-god or demon, then, Napoleon became more than a mere man. Immortalized through what in the end was primarily a propaganda ploy, Napoleon successfully seared his artistic legacy onto an Empire.

For more information, please visit [www.napoleon.org](http://www.napoleon.org). ■ ■





# Sarkozy Announces Economic Plan

**M**INISTER FOR THE ECONOMY Nicolas Sarkozy described during a press conference on May 4 the main features of France's new economic policy. His plan includes several steps to encourage consumption, to curb the state's deficit, and to promote an energetic industrial policy. For instance, Sarkozy announced that legislation requiring most stores to close on Sundays will be made more flexible, thereby offering more convenient hours to shoppers. In addition, parents will be allowed to give larger tax-free monetary gifts to their children, and more generous tax credits will be proposed to individuals making large purchases.

In order to implement a more rigorous budget policy, Sarkozy insisted that state expenditures not increase in 2004 or in 2005. He added that such rigor

will only be possible if the health care system is reformed (please see our article on page 6). In addition, only one retiring state employee in two will be replaced from now on, so as to gradually reduce the government's payroll (Sarkozy was careful to note, however, that this last policy would not be applied indiscriminately, to avoid too brutal a transition). He also recommended that a law be enacted ensuring that at least half of any extra income resulting from an unexpected increase in economic growth would be earmarked toward deficit reduction.

Sarkozy will also accelerate the privatization of certain state-owned companies, the sale of unneeded government real estate, and the structural reforms currently being applied to government spending to make it more cost efficient. ■

## FRENCH RESEARCH BUDGET TO EXPAND BY BILLIONS

François d'Aubert, minister delegate for research, announced on May 19 that France will expand its research budget by \$3.6 billion over the next three years. Recognizing the importance of staying on the cusp of new and emerging technologies, France has made research spending a top priority, and has set an ambitious goal: 3 percent of its GDP will be allocated to research and development by 2007, thereby consolidating its position as a leading scientific nation in Europe.

## ALSTOM ON THE MEND

Alstom, a world-renowned engineering firm that gave France the TGV (the fastest conventional train in the world), will receive temporary state aid during its restructuring. In a deal struck on May 26 between the European Commission and the French government, Alstom will be required to sell 10 percent of its non-core businesses and find industrial partners in exchange for the aid.

## CAPGEMINI WINS MAJOR CONTRACT WITH TEXAN FIRM

On May 19, CapGemini, Europe's largest computer consulting firm, secured a contract with the Texas-based power company,

TXU. Under the ten-year contract, CapGemini and TXU will form a partnership, CapGemini Energy Limited, which will provide numerous business support services to TXU and, eventually, other energy firms. The deal is worth more than \$3.5 billion.

## WORLD'S FIRST CEMENT-TESTING FACILITY UNVEILED

On May 13 the National Polytechnic Institute of Grenoble (INPG), Joseph Fourier University and the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) launched the world's first joint cement-testing facility. It is designed to perform a variety of tests that simulate, among other things, the stresses put upon concrete by avalanches, earthquakes, explosions and the impact of ballistic arms. Though concrete is among the most commonly used materials in the world, little is known about its physical properties!

# Work Begins on Site of Future Cancer Research Center

**T**HE TOULOUSE COMMUNITY and research workers from all over Europe have united to form a European research center dedicated to combating cancer. The

Great South-West France Canceropole, set up in 2003 by the cities of Bordeaux, Montpellier, Nimes, Limoges and Toulouse as one of seven national cancer research centers, launched an ambitious new project on March 31—the creation of a large new research campus in Toulouse. This interregional cancer-research campus will combine resources from Toulouse universities and research organizations, and will coordinate the work of many other research organizations and universities in the region. The Great South-West France Canceropole already brings

together about 170 teams and 900 scientists.

The construction of the research center is slated to take place over the next three years, in a process that will culminate in 2007. By then, the founders of the center plan to have over 2,000 research scientists from both the private and public sectors working on the 500-acre research campus.

Cancer ranks as the number one killer of people under the age of 65 in France. Every year, over 150,000 French men and women die from the disease, and 280,000 new cases are diagnosed. Leading cancer specialists have therefore welcomed the government's increased dedication to cancer research, in the hope that it will result in much improved preventive measures. ■



A computer-generated image of one of the future cancer center's buildings.

(Courtesy: Grand Toulouse)

# Santé! A Toast to the First Worldwide Cocktail Party

**A**T 6 P.M. ON JUNE 3 lovers of French gastronomy from Montreal to Moscow were toasting the first annual French cocktail party sponsored by the Society for the Expansion of the Sales of French Agricultural and Food Products (Sopexa). Seventeen international cities, including New York, celebrated the French tradition of *l'apéritif* at some of the world's hippest urban sites.

People have been whetting their appetites with kirs and conversation since the days of Hippocrates, who used vermouth as a medication. Today, the *apéritif* has become, as French Minister of Agriculture Hervé Gaymard pointed out, "a celebration for the

sake of celebration." France is the world's second-largest producer of foodstuffs, including many cocktail hour staples. Sales are suffering, however, from a common misperception that cocktail hour is for the sophisticated francophile only, *dahling*.

That is why this year's menu included some refreshing new recipes, such as a "Caribbean Melon" cocktail and even foie gras with potato sushi. "Aperitif à la Française" was designed to remind the world that everyone can enjoy one. A coming together of tradition and modernity, this event will now be held annually, on the first Thursday of June. For more information about partaking of this French tradition (including some interesting new recipes), visit [www.frenchcocktailhour.com](http://www.frenchcocktailhour.com). ■



## FRENCH FIRM TO RENOVATE WATERLOO

On May 12, the Walloon government signed a multi-million-euro deal with a Paris-based firm, Culture Espaces, to transform the now dilapidated Waterloo battlefield (the site of Napoleon's defeat against a vast European coalition) into a premiere heritage site. Monitored by a team of historians and inspired by the American Civil War battle-grounds of Gettysburg, the new plans will eliminate the blockhouse-style outbuildings and fast-food restaurants of the current site and replace them with a more scenic and pedestrian-friendly layout.

## FRENCH PROJECT TO TRAIN ISLAMIC PREACHERS

In order to help further the integration of Muslims into French society, the French government will be supervising a new project to train imams in the French language, and in the history and society of France, so that they may in turn pass on their new understanding to their congregations. The French Council of the Muslim Faith, the organization in charge of the project, will also be offering programs for people interested in learning about Islam.

## ISRAELI PARLIAMENT SPEAKER THANKS FRANCE

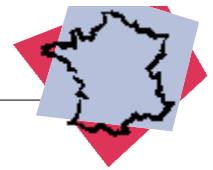
Speaking at the Jewish cemetery in eastern France where 127 gravestones were defaced in April, Reuven Rivlin, the speaker of the Israeli parliament, expressed his government's appreciation of French efforts to combat anti-Semitism. The April desecrations as well as more recent incidents of anti-Semitism provoked a wave of indignation across France—thousands of people marched in eastern Paris on May 16 to protest these acts and express their support for the Jewish community in France.

## FRANCE HOSTS FIRST INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM

On May 16 in the city of Nantes, France launched the first U.N.-sponsored international human rights forum, bringing together actors from all over the globe and all areas of international relations. The four-day event was held in honor of Sergio Vieira de Mello, the U.N. human rights commissioner killed in the attack on the U.N. headquarters in Iraq. Each day of the event was devoted to a particular topic: the threat terrorism represents with regards to the promotion of human rights (May 17), globalization and its role in the fight against racism and xenophobia (May 18), and poverty (May 19).

## 67 PERCENT OF THE FRENCH PRO-EUROPEAN

According to a new poll, over two-thirds (67 percent) of French citizens generally favor the European Union. Among those who expressed a negative view, only 6 percent actually believed that European construction had so far resulted primarily in negative effects, whereas the remaining 24 percent conceded that the E.U. is a worthy project, even if they didn't fully support it. Seventy-two percent of respondents support the adoption of a European constitution, and 67 percent believe that they are better off living in Europe than in any other region of the world.



# Social Security Remedies

*The Health Ministry recommends reforms to ensure France's health-care system stays first-class*

**T**HE NUMBER ONE health-care system in the world, according to the World Health Organization, is facing a possible \$15.5-billion deficit by the end of this year. French Health Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy has thus concluded that France's social security system needs to "provide better care while spending less," and in order to reach this goal, he recommended several reforms on May 17 that could result in savings of up to \$18 billion.

France's current social security system, a victim of its own success, has led to what health analysts call overconsumption. Indeed, since it does not cost a patient more to consult several different practitioners regarding the same problem, certain abuses are

inevitable, as individuals keep switching doctors until they hear what they want to hear. To prevent this, the reforms proposed include modernizing the computer and database systems used by members of the medical community in order for them to better exchange data, and so eliminate waste. A new personal medical card, for instance, would let doctors see the frequency of a patient's consultations.

The minister also called for a \$1.20 mandatory consultation fee, which would, in theory, lead patients to realize that health-care does indeed have a cost. Finally, the Health Ministry would try to increase the supply of generic medicines, which are generally cheaper, and encourage consumers to pick them through financial incentives. ■■

## PARIS, TOP CANDIDATE FOR 2012 OLYMPICS

Paris, London, Madrid, Moscow and New York have made it to the final round in the competition to host the 2012 Olympics. The biggest hurdle faced by the remaining cities will be the logistical details of security, transportation and accommodation. The International Olympic Committee is currently assessing each city's suitability in these categories. According to a May 18 report by the Committee's investigators, Paris is the current favorite due to its past experience as a host for the Olympic Games in 1900 and 1924, as well as for the Soccer World Cup final in 1998 and the World Athletic Championship in 2003. The other finalists are hardly down for the count, however. Madrid, in particular, is running neck and neck with Paris for the top spot. The former appears to have a slight edge in terms of infrastructure and transportation preparations, with Paris in the lead on security issues and past experience as a host. The final decision will not be made until July 2005, and much remains to be done to prepare for the final vote. Until then, all bets are off!

# Oldest Car Race Celebrated

**T**HIRTY-SOME ANTIQUE automobiles from France, Belgium, England and Germany commemorated on May 15 the 110th anniversary of what is probably the oldest official car race in the world. Indeed, the Paris-Rouen race of July 22, 1894, organized by sports journalist Pierre Giffar, marked the first time cars competed in an officially-sanctioned contest. Several informal races had already been



sponsored or car manufacturers.

The 128-kilometer long race between France's capital and the Norman city of Rouen helped launch the era of city-to-city races that preceded the creation of dedicated race tracks. A whopping 21 vehicles participated in the 1894 race—representing about 7 percent of the mere 300 cars that could then be found throughout the whole of France. Only 11 cars made it to Rouen, with the steam-powered Dion and Bouton car leading the pack, at a blazing speed of 19 km/h. At the time, automobiles did not all run on gasoline; indeed of the 21 on the starting line, only 14 were gas-powered. ■■

# Move Over, Metro! The Tramway Is Coming to Town

**W**HAT WOULD PARIS BE without her metro? Yet, many French cities, including Paris, are re-introducing the metro's aboveground cousin as a preferred form of transportation. Tramways, which run on tracks and are powered by suspended electrical cords, have been carrying French commuters for over 160 years. By 1907, however, only three rundown systems still existed in France. In 1975, junior cabinet minister Marcel Cavaillé called for a tramway renaissance.

Marseilles, Lille, and St. Etienne spent large sums to revamp their old networks, while cities like Rouen, Paris,

Orleans, Nantes, Lyon, Grenoble, Montpellier, and Bordeaux each developed brand new systems. The result? A changed



The Marseilles tramway

(Courtesy: Leif Spangberg - [www.tramways.com](http://www.tramways.com))

urban landscape, with more room for pedestrians and parks. Car lovers are reluctant to forfeit some of their road space to the tracks, but trams can carry many people, cheaply and without producing any local pollution. Additionally, a nice tram system is the *beau monde* compared to the not-so-fresh smell and traffic hassles of buses and the underground gloom of metro trains. Paris will keep her metro, but it looks like tramways are *à la mode* ■■

for the 21st century in other French cities.



## Rolling Out the Red Carpet at Cannes

*Palme d'Or goes to American director Michael Moore*

**T**WELVE STAR-STUDDED DAYS came to a close on May 23 as the internationally renowned Cannes Film Festival announced its major awards, with top honors going to three French *auteurs*. Algerian-born French director Tony Gatlif was honored with the Best Director Award for "Exils" ("Exiles"), his story of a young couple's journey from France to Algeria. French duo Agnès Jaoui and Jean-Pierre Bacri came away with the Best Screenplay Award for their writing in "Comme une Image" ("Look at Me"). The film, which Jaoui also directed and acted in, was a favorite to snag the Festival's top prize, the Palme d'Or. However, the international jury (which was presided by American director Quentin Tarantino) crowned "Fahrenheit 9/11," a controversial documentary by American director Michael Moore, as the top film of 2004.

The Festival's Grand Prix was given to Park Chan-wook for "Old Boy" while the Jury Prizes went to Irma P. Hall for her role in "The Ladykillers" and Apichatpong Weerasethakul for "The Tropical Malady," the first Thai film to enter into competition at Cannes. Top acting prizes went to Maggie Cheung for "Clean" and 14-year-old Yuuya Yagira for "Nobody Knows."

Festival highlights also included events that took place out of the spotlight. In particular, American director Quentin Tarantino, head of the Festival's jury, was named an Officer of Arts and Letters by French Minister of Culture Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres. Tarantino, a self-described "francophile," credited French films and directors as some of his most important influences. For more information, please visit [www.cannes-festival.com](http://www.cannes-festival.com).

### MODERN ART IN MATIGNON

For the first time in its history, the Hôtel Matignon, the official residence of France's prime ministers, is hosting a modern art exhibit in its gardens. The public was able to view the 10 steel sculptures by Anilore Banon on June 4, 5 and 6, and will again be allowed on Matignon's grounds on September 18 and 19, during the "Journées du Patrimoine." These sculptures revisit the Ten Commandments, with names such as "Responsible, You Shall Be," or "Injustice, You Shall Fight." When inaugurating the exhibit, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said he hoped the artwork would inspire his ministers in their tasks.

### ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF FRENCH MUSIC EXHIBIT

You are listening to old records of French singers—Jacques Brel, or Charles Aznavour—on old vinyls spinning 'round. No, you have not been sent back decades in time, but are enjoying an afternoon in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, which is presenting an exhibition entitled "One Hundred Years of French Music," until December 31. Audio-visual documentaries will provide the curious music lover in all of us with information about the great names in French music during the past century. For more information, visit [www.bnf.fr](http://www.bnf.fr).

### ROUBAIX GOES JAMAICAN

On May 15, the city of Roubaix, in northern France, launched a festival around the political and musical history of Jamaica, from its independence to the 1981 death of Bob Marley, the world-renowned figure of reggae music. The exhibit "Island Revolution: from Ska to Reggae," by the "Experience Music Project" group of Seattle, features some emblematic instruments of the reggae movement. The exhibition also gives visitors some insights to the political context of the reggae movement and the "rasta" culture. The festival will be held until July 18, at the Condition Publique concert hall and cultural center. For more information, visit [www.laconditionpublique.com](http://www.laconditionpublique.com).

### 1.2 TONS OF FRENCH CHINA FOR SPANISH ROYAL WEDDING

The Spanish royal family celebrated, May 22, the wedding of Prince Felipe de Bourbon and former journalist Letizia Ortiz. To mark the special occasion, the royal palace bought 3,000 pieces of Limoges china-ware, mainly dinner plates, coffee cups and soup bowls, which were used during the wedding dinner. The pieces, weighing in at an astounding 1.2 tons, were all adorned with the red-and-gold-crest of the Spanish royal family.

## Portraits of Refugees by U.S. Photographer in Paris

**T**HE HENRI-CARTIER-Bresson Foundation in Paris is presenting two photography series by Fazal Sheikh until July 25. Born in New York, Fazal, whose father is Kenyan, shares his grandfather's Indian name and resides part-time in Switzerland. His multinational past plays an important role in his work, in which he depicts Somali refugees in Kenya and Afghans seeking refuge in Pakistan. He does not, however, portray them in groups, preferring to use individual portraits to identify each person,

thereby focusing on their particular hardships. He chooses this approach because these men and women—who happen to be refugees—all have a name, a story, a past and, it is hoped, a future. The photographs usually consist in facial portraits, though sometimes bodies are depicted as well, and next to each picture is the subject's name as well as a statement describing what he or she has experienced. These brief comments bring the often somber portraits to life, presenting more to the audience than just a striking image.



Salim in "The Victor weeps"  
(Courtesy: Fazal Sheikh)

## Père Lachaise Cemetery Celebrates Bicentennial

*The world's most visited cemetery is the final resting place of many famous figures*

**M**OLIÈRE. LA FONTAINE. Edith Piaf. Frédéric Chopin. For two hundred years, French luminaries such as these have been buried in the Père Lachaise cemetery. The 200th anniversary of the popular tourist destination was celebrated on May 21 with the unveiling of a commemorative obelisk by Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë.

The cemetery, which was established in 1804 by Napoleon Bonaparte, was named after the confessor of Louis XIV, Père François de la Chaise. Originally unpopular because of its location in a poor district, Père Lachaise's administrators persuaded civil authorities to move the remains of Molière and La Fontaine to the new cemetery in an effort to increase its marketability. The scheme was highly successful and in a matter of years, burial at Père Lachaise became the ultimate status symbol for the wealthy and influential.



Chopin's tomb in the Père Lachaise cemetery  
(Courtesy: Amaury Laporte)

In 1817, the doomed medieval lovers Pierre Abélard and Héloïse were reburied at Père Lachaise under a monument whose canopy was composed of fragments of the abbey of Nogent-sur-Seine. Shortly thereafter, demand for burial at Père Lachaise became so great that the cemetery was forced to expand. Today, a plot at the famous cemetery costs \$9,500.

Though the cemetery exudes tranquility, Père Lachaise has seen its share of drama. During the last days of the 1871 civil war known as the Paris Commune, *communards* forces made a final stand among the graves of Père Lachaise. On the morning of May 28, 1871, the surviving *communards* were lined up against the cemetery's eastern wall and executed by victorious government troops.

Reputed to be the most frequently visited cemetery in the world, Père Lachaise welcomes an estimated two million people per year.



On June 23, fans of French cuisine will have an opportunity to learn the culinary secrets of a top chef, and to do so in the comfort of the French ambassador's own residence! Journalist Gail Scott will introduce participants to Ambassador Jean-David Levitte's personal chef, who will demonstrate signature dishes and give advice. General admission for the event is \$140. For more information, please call (202) 357-3030 or visit [www.residentassociates.org](http://www.residentassociates.org).

# "Millet to Matisse" in Kalamazoo

*French artworks from the Kelingrove collection are on display in the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts*

**T**HE "MILLET TO MATISSE" exposition is a trip through a century of French art. Organized by Glasgow Museums and the American Federation of Arts, this 64-piece display from the Kelingrove collection in Scotland has come to North America for a year and is landing in Kalamazoo, Michigan, from May 22 to August 15.

The exhibit brings visitors on a chronological journey of works by French painters from the Barbizon School, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and Fauvism. These works have rarely been seen outside of Scotland since they were brought there by Glasgow art dealer Alexander Reid in the late 1800s. As promised by the exhibition's title, Jean François Millet launches one's travels into the mid-19th century with his famous piece, "Going to Work." Millet and other members of the Barbizon School—such as Jean-François-Camille Corot—challenged the artistic authority of the European Academies by rejecting traditional historical and mythological subjects for scenes of nature and rural life.

The landscapes of Barbizon opened the gate to the great outdoors for French painting of the late 19th century, which British writer Osbert Sitwell described as "one of the supreme moments of the world ... Never was there such an outburst of exuberant fertility, never were the gifts of such immense variety." Lovers of

summer will find their passion reflected in the exhibition's collection of impressionist landscapes such as those by Camille Pissarro, Claude Monet, Pierre-August Renoir, and Alfred Sisley.

The landscapes of Vincent Van Gogh and Paul Gauguin, however, coax one away from the traditional with their own unique versions of impressionism. Post-impressionist Georges Seurat presents one with an equally original painting style. The *petits points* ("small points") he used may be merely colorful specks from up close, but a few steps back are sufficient to reveal the masterful presentation of summer scenes in works like "Boy Sitting in the Grass" and "The River Banks."

The end of the journey finds one alongside "The Flower Seller" in the colorful world of Picasso and amongst the paintings of 20th century French artists such as Edouard Vuillard, Pierre Bonnard, André Derain, Raoul Dufy, and finally the port of call: Henri Matisse. The non-naturalistic col-

ors used by these Fauvist painters are even said to create light instead of just imitating it.

Travel from "Millet to Matisse" this summer by heading to the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts. For more information about the painters, exhibition hours and entrance fees (\$10 general admission), call 1-269-349-7775 or visit:

[www.kiarts.org/index.shtml](http://www.kiarts.org/index.shtml).



"Going to Work" by Jean-François Millet, c. 1850-51.

(Courtesy: American Federation of Arts)

## News from FRANCE

### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Nathalie Loiseau

### EDITOR

Emmanuel Gagniarre

### MANAGING EDITOR

Amaury Laporte

### SENIOR WRITER

Aude Rabault

### WRITERS

Dalia Abu-Eid, Caroline Auger, Nicolas Blarel, Claudia Garver, Cathleen Hamel, Emily Miller, Cara Moody, Carine Morin, Mark Overmann, Lisa Petzold, Angela Stowell, Frederic Jean-Baptiste Surville

To change your address, subscribe (for free) or unsubscribe, please contact:

### FRENCH EMBASSY PRESS & INFORMATION SERVICE

4101 Reservoir Road, NW  
Washington, DC 20007-2182  
Tel: (202) 944-6060  
Fax: (202) 944-6072

E-mail:

[info.washington-amba@diplomatie.fr](mailto:info.washington-amba@diplomatie.fr)

<http://www.ambafrance-us.org>

<http://www.france.diplomatie.fr>

PRESCRIBED  
FIRST CLASS PERMIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Washington, DC  
Permit No. 7030

FRENCH EMBASSY PRESS AND INFORMATION SERVICE  
4101 RESERVOIR ROAD, NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20007-2182

