

France Rushes Help to Hurricane Katrina Victims

IN THE DEVASTATING WAKE of Hurricane Katrina, the French government quickly extended a helping hand to Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. On August 30, 80 percent of New Orleans was flooded when the city's levees broke, and some parts of the city found themselves under more than 20 feet of water. On September 4, international assistance (which had been promptly offered once the scale of the disaster became known) was formally requested by the United States government.

France's disaster relief supplies, located in Martinique (French Caribbean), were rushed to the scene of the hurricane onboard two military Casa 235 aircraft. Seventeen French military divers were also dispatched to help clear waterways (see article on page 4). To date, the French government has sent close to 20 tons of emergency supplies,

FRENCH AID TO EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

Soon after hurricane Katrina, France rushed humanitarian aid in response to the massive earthquake that hit Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India on October 8, killing tens of thousands. That very night, France sent a 20-member rescue team, dogs trained to search for injured survivors, and five experts to assess the region's urgent needs. Soon afterwards, an Airbus flew in with 41 emergency specialists and 18 military doctors, as well as additional supplies. Two C135 FR planes transporting surgical and medical equipment, including a field hospital, left on October 10 and 11 respectively. France also sent a plane loaded with 90 tons of humanitarian aid, including tents, blankets, lamps, jerry cans, electric generators and water tanks.

FRENCH CHEMIST WINS NOBEL PRIZE

The 2005 Nobel Prize in chemistry was awarded to French chemist Yves Chauvin, 74, and to Americans Robert H. Grubbs, 63, and Richard R. Schrock, 60, on October 5. They will split the \$1.3 million prize for their work on synthetically creating molecules, or, in scientific jargon, "the development of the metathesis method in organic synthesis." Chauvin, of the French Institute for Petroleum, laid the theoretical groundwork for explaining how metathesis works by outlining for the first time how metal compounds act as bond-breaking catalysts (metathesis entails using a catalyst to break the bonds of carbon-based molecules and then rearranging them to form new compounds). Based on Chauvin's findings, Grubbs and Schrock's work then identified the most effective catalysts.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, which awards the Nobel Prize, praised the trio's accomplishments, lauding them for creating more environmentally friendly production methods in advanced plastics and pharmaceuticals. The method they jointly developed helps the chemical industry make compounds with fewer resources at normal temperatures (thereby producing less harmful waste). According to the Nobel committee, "This represents a great step forward for 'green chemistry,' reducing potentially hazardous waste through smarter production." Their process is used on a daily basis in the biotechnology, chemical and food industries, and has led to the development of advanced herbicides, additives for polymers and fuels and research into new treatment for bacterial infection, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, migraines and HIV.

including tents, tarps, food rations, water purification systems, and hygiene and cooking kits. Twelve French logistical experts offered their assistance to the U.S. Red Cross, and the Association of Mayors of Major Metropolitan Areas of France opened a special account to donate funds to the Red Cross.

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Karzai Visits Paris, Praises French Role in Afghanistan

AFGHAN PRESIDENT Hamid Karzai made a three-day visit to Paris in the first week of October, during which he held talks with President Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, Foreign Affairs Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy and Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie. He was accompanied by several of his ministers, including Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah and his national security advisor, Zalmay Rasul. It was Karzai's first foreign visit since the Afghan elections of September 18, which were the first parliamentary elections held in war-shattered Afghanistan in more than three decades. Its results will be announced in late October. Karzai's last visit to France was in March 2002, when he inaugurated a superb exhibition of Afghan art at the Guimet Museum.



Afghan President Hamid Karzai and French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin in Paris.

During his Paris visit, he praised France's "multi-dimensional role" as it aids Afghanistan and helps set up its national army and police force. French leaders, including Chirac, assured him that Paris would maintain its military and civilian assistance, so as to allow Afghanistan to stabilize and re-construct its economy. All aspects of the Afghan-French partnership were dis-

cussed, including military cooperation, reconstruction efforts, and cooperation intending to further the establishment of democratic institutions in Afghanistan.

France now has some 200 special forces in Afghanistan, who, alongside their American allies, are battling loyalists of the Taliban government which was ousted in late 2001. Another 600 French troops are part of a 10,500-strong NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) based in Kabul.

On October 1, French jets provided air support to U.S.-led troops, and heavily bombarded Taliban positions in southeast Afghanistan. France will take command of the ISAF in Kabul in 2006.

LOEB WINS WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP



Sebastien Loeb won his second straight world title on October 2, finishing the season by coming in second at the Rally of Japan. The 31-year-old sports car driver, at the wheel of a French Citroën Xsara, became the fourth driver to win back-to-back titles. He is the first French driver to achieve such a feat, and boasts an impressive 18 wins out of 53 races. With three races still ahead, Loeb will have time to prepare for the next season on a new team, possibly Ford (Citroën will not be competing in 2006, but may return in 2007).

INDIA, FRANCE ANNOUNCE MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR DEALS

The French company Amaris, a subsidiary of DCN and Thales, recently signed a contract for the sale of six Franco-Spanish Scorpene submarines to India in a sale worth \$3 billion. The diesel submarine is exclusively destined for export markets, as France's submarine fleet is entirely nuclear-powered. The sale of 43 Airbuses for \$2.2 billion to state-run Indian Airlines had earlier been announced during a visit by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to France on September 12.

LAUNCH OF AIRBUS A350, WITHOUT AID, CONFIRMED

Airbus shareholders approved on October 6 the launch of the construction phase of the new Airbus A350 (see also NFF 04.14). In a gesture aimed at appeasing transatlantic tensions over aircraft subsidies, Airbus announced that, for the moment, it would not accept government loans to help finance its development costs. In the meantime, Chinese, Indian and Russian companies will probably help finance the new aircraft, which will cost \$5.4 billion. For more information, visit www.airbus.com.

NATIONAL MUSLIM CHAPLAIN APPOINTED FOR PRISONS

The first national Muslim chaplain for prisons was appointed by the French Council of the Muslim Faith in an effort to fight extremism within prison populations. The first task of Moulay El Hassan El Alaoui will be to assess the needs of the 28,000 Muslim inmates in French jails and to appoint regional chaplains. One of his top priorities will then be to teach "how to interpret the Koran." This appointment, the first of

its kind in Europe, was praised by prison administrators and Justice Minister Pascal Clement as "extremely important" in the fight against militant proselytizing.

NEW FORMAT FOR TV5

The international French-speaking channel TV5 will undergo major changes in order to attract new viewers and spread the French language. With an audience of 73 million people across the world, it is already the world's second largest network. According to the strategic plan presented on September 20 by its president, Jean-Jacques Aillagon, special emphasis will be placed on increasing its reach in Africa and to including English subtitles for non-French speaking audiences. For more information, visit www.tv5.org.

Villepin in N.Y. for U.N. World Summit

FRENCH PRIME MINISTER Dominique de Villepin attended the U.N. World Summit in New York, from September 14 to 16, during which world leaders met to discuss the progress of the Millennium Development Goals, set five years ago. As well as meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, President George W. Bush and Chinese President Hu Jintao, Villepin addressed the U.N. plenary meeting on financing for development. He stated that the Millennium Development Goals cannot "be achieved in many countries at the present levels of aid flows," and stressed the importance of quality aid, the fight against tax evasion, and the creation of international levies.



Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin speaks before the U.N.'s General Assembly on Sept. 15.

S. F. W. / AP / PHOTOS.COM

In particular, Villepin reiterated France's commitment to a new solidarity fund to be financed by a tax on international airplane tickets. The tax would only increase fares by a couple of dollars, but would rapidly give rise to substantial sums that could be used to increase development aid. Germany, Brazil, Chile, and Spain also support the project. Although the plan does not require every country's participation in order for it to go into effect, the amount of money it would generate would naturally depend on the number of participating countries.

Villepin also touched upon U.N. reform, declaring that "it is time to adapt the U.N. to a changing world in order to reinforce its legitimacy and its political effectiveness." ■ ■

French Troops Reshuffled in Africa

FRENCH OFFICIALS will soon unveil the specifics of a plan that redeploys France's African-based troops in a way that corresponds to the geographical zones identified by the African Union (A.U.). "This is a very important shift that corresponds to changes made by the Africans themselves, since the A.U. intends to organize itself into sub-regions," explained Defense Spokesman Jean-François Bureau during a press conference.

Currently, French troops are headquartered in five French-speaking nations: Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon and Senegal. These troops will now be regrouped into three main bases, to coincide with A.U. sub-regions: Senegal for West Africa, Gabon for Central Africa, and Djibouti for East Africa. Therefore, French troops currently serving in Cote d'Ivoire will be withdrawn to Senegal once their peacekeeping operations come to an end. Neither the total number of French troops based in Africa (7,000) nor existing defense agreements will be affected.

France is the only former colonial power to maintain permanent bases in Africa, and though French military contingents there have been reduced by a third over the past decade (so as to allow

for deployments in other parts of the world, such as the Balkans), France has no intention of relinquishing its presence in the continent. Rather, it wishes to cooperate more closely with the African Union, which is planning to create an African Standby Force of 25,000 men grouped into five brigades (one for each sub-region). France is in a unique position to react rapidly to crises in the region, and can provide highly needed training and logistical support to the African Union's peacekeeping forces. ■ ■

FRANCE WINS PLACE IN WORLD CUP

After a tough series of qualifying matches, France was trailing behind Israel and Switzerland in its group, and so risked missing next year's World Cup in Germany (only the first two teams of every group qualify). Needing a decisive victory on October 12 against Cyprus, les Bleus delivered, winning by 4 to nil. Zinedine Zidane opened the score that lifted his team from third to first place and kept France's hopes alive.

New Web Site Showcases French Debates

THE FRENCH MINISTRY of Foreign Affairs has launched a user-friendly Web site detailing cultural, political, and scientific ideas currently being debated in France. Free and noncommercial, www.ldeesdeFrance.fr provides Internet users with access to articles addressing today's debates in France regarding geopolitics, social and economic life, art and culture, and science and technology.

In addition to articles on current issues being discussed in the French media, the site exhibits several large interactive dossiers. Each dossier features summaries and pertinent reference documents, such as maps and charts. Current dossiers include topics such as "Who Is Afraid of Google?" and "Africa: The End of the Debt?" The dossiers provide a comprehensive overview of these debates to a general audience while enhancing and enriching the understanding of those already interested in the subject matter.

GUIDE FOR BLOGGERS

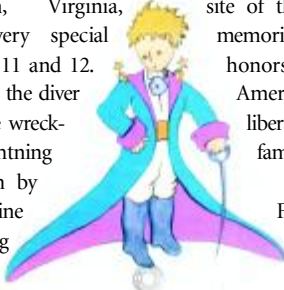
Deeming blogs "tremendous tools for freedom of expression," the French NGO Reporters without Borders (*Reporters sans Frontières*) published its *Practical Guide for Bloggers and Cyber-dissidents* on September 22. The handbook provides journalists in media-censored countries, and all those who wish to express themselves online, with technical advice on producing independent news and avoiding censorship. Bloggers are also advised on basic ethical and journalistic principles in order to enhance the credibility of their posts. Several testimonies of well-established bloggers in countries such as the United States, Iran or Nepal illustrate the different chapters, giving practical examples and insights into daily cyber-journalism. The handbook is available in five languages (including English) and can be downloaded for free at www.rsf.org.

Visitors are encouraged to respond to the articles in the site's forum, where key issues relating to the articles are raised. Launched on October 10, 2005, ldeesdeFrance.fr is destined to be a resource for Francophiles around the world. Already available in English, it will soon be available in German, Arab, Spanish, and Mandarin as well. ■ ■



Discoverer of St. Exupéry's Plane Visits VA Students

STUDENTS FROM the James River High School in Buchanan, Virginia, hosted very special events on October 11 and 12. Philippe Castellano, the diver who discovered the wreckage of the P38 Lightning fighter plane flown by French author Antoine St. Exupéry during World War II, told the students about his amazing discovery.



© Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

The students' connection to Castellano dates back three years, to the diver's discovery of a downed World War II plane (also a P38) flown by American pilot Lt. James Riley. Castellano contacted Riley's widow, Jean Martin, who lives near the Virginia school. Martin asked its French language students to translate the letter for her. Whenever Castellano discovers an

American plane, he personally invites the pilot's family members to visit the site of the downed aircraft for a memorial service. In this way, he honors and thanks all the American soldiers who helped liberate France, as well as their families.

When Martin visited France, she brought with her poems written by the students about the discovery of St. Exupéry's fighter (the class had just finished reading St. Exupéry's most famous work, *The Little Prince*). The poems made such an impression that Françoise Bastide, the former vice-mayor of Cannes, visited the American students last June to thank them, and Castellano also decided to stop by while on his way to Denver, Colorado, to attend the reunion of an Air Force squadron for whom he has located a missing plane. ■



FRENCH AMBASSADOR BRIEFES CONGRESS ON FRENCH EFFORTS AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM

French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte joined the Anti-Defamation League, the Slovenian Ambassador to the United States, and NetCoalition on September 8 to brief the Congressional Task Force Against Anti-Semitism on international efforts to combat hate on the Internet and discuss how the U.S. and its allies can work with organizations and industry to develop and implement practical strategies to advance these efforts. From right to left: Representatives Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Tom Lantos (co-chairs of the Congressional Task Force Against Anti-Semitism), Ambassador Jean-David Levitte, Christopher Wolf (chair of ADL's Internet Committee and chair of the International Network Against Cyber Hate), and Markham Erikson (director of federal policy and general counsel, NetCoalition).

THALES TEAMS WITH SIKORSKY FOR NEW CHOPPER

French defense giant Thales has been selected by Connecticut-based Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation to design the cockpit for its remodeled S-76D helicopter. The S-76 line is one of the most popular civilian helicopters in history, with nearly 600 now in use in 60 countries. The Thales "TopDeck" cockpit will be state-of-the-art and is expected to feature an intuitive design structure and large LCD displays arranged to provide the greatest possible visibility and situational awareness. Thales hopes that the contract will help it develop a foothold in the American aeronautics and defense markets. The first S-76D is expected to be delivered in late 2008. For more information, visit www.thalesgroup.com.

EADS, NORTHROP GRUMMAN JOIN FORCES FOR AIR TANKER CONTRACT

European aerospace company EADS, makers of Airbus, joined with Northrop Grumman Corp. on September 7 to place a bid for a new air tanker contract for the U.S. Air Force. EADS, a French-German-Spanish company, felt it needed an American partner to strengthen its bid as it competes with Chicago-based Boeing, and EADS and Northrop Grumman have already worked together in the past, notably to jointly build a helicopter (see NFF 04.10). Ralph Crosby, president of

EADS North America, characterized the partnership as "a significant step in our strategy of penetration of the American defense market." Also making the partnership more appealing to the Pentagon is the fact that EADS would assemble the tanker on American soil. Indeed, EADS has said that it will open a manufacturing plant in Mobile, Alabama, should it win the contract (see NFF 05.08). For more information, please visit www.eads.com.

TONY PARKER PUBLISHES PHOTO BOOK



Tony Parker, the French basketball star and point guard for the San Antonio Spurs, has published his first book, *On/Off*. The 128-page book, released September 28 by Canal+ Editions, is a collection of photos taken by Parker with extensive captions in French. Parker has been a key member of the Spurs since he was drafted, having been named to the All-Rookie Team in 2001 at the age of 19 and having won two NBA Championships since then. This September, Parker led the French national team to an upset Bronze medal in the 2005 Eurobasketball Championships.

Scholarship Fund Created in Honor of French Victim of 9-11

DENING LOHEZ lost her husband Jerome in the tragedy of September 11. The young software engineer, originally from France, worked on the 26th floor of One World Trade Center. In his memory, Lohez decided to create a scholarship fund for French students attending the Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey—where she and Jerome first met.

At Stevens, \$600,000 is required to endow a self-sustaining scholarship. To raise this money, Lohez held fund-raisers at the French Consulate in New York, where she raised \$6,000 in 2003 and \$23,000 in 2004. In addition to Jerome's life insurance money, Lohez contributed \$100,000 of her own money (a portion of the sum she received through the Victim Compensation Fund).

The foundation is to be called the "Jerome Lohez

September 11th Foundation." For now, the scholarship will be awarded to French exchange students from the Ecole Pour l'Informatique et les Techniques Avancées (EPITA). "Jerome was a student from EPITA and he came to Stevens as an exchange student," says Lohez. She plans to eventually open the scholarship to all French students pursuing higher education in the United States and in need of financial assistance.

The first recipient of the scholarship, which pays for one year of tuition, was Guillaume Yvon. Lohez hopes that French corporations in the U.S. will provide funds, internships, and employment to the exchange students. For more information, visit www.stevens-tech.edu/epita/site_epita.swf. ■

SOUND SCIENCE IN D.C. ON OCTOBER 28

Come to La Maison Française at the French Embassy in Washington, D.C., on October 28 for an evening celebrating science's contribution to the renewal of musical aesthetics. Singers and instrument makers will be present, as well as research engineers who will discuss their work on the human voice and stringed instruments. The conference (4:00 pm - 6:30 pm) will be followed by a concert (7:30 pm), featuring the fascinating Meta-Instrument, and a short reception. For reservations, please contact elise.yakuboff@cnrs-usa.org before October 21. For more information, please visit www.drei.cnrs.fr/rub3/Ameriques/washington.

Featured wines will be available for order with exclusive prices offered by Calvert Woodley. Tickets cost \$45 per person before November 7, and \$55 thereafter. For tickets and more information, please visit www.FrenchWineSociety.org or call 202-944-6389. FWS is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting French wine in the United States. ■

French Wine Affaire in D.C.

THE FRENCH WINE SOCIETY (FWS) invites you to take a wine tour of France and taste over 200 wines from Alsace, Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne, Loire, Rhone, and the south of France. Featured wines will range from such well-known brands as Louis Latour, Jadot, Guigal, Chapoutier, Domaines Barons de Rothschild Lafite, Gosset and Heidsieck Monopole Champagnes to smaller producers selected by renowned importers such as Robert Kacher Selections, Kysela Père & Fils and Vintage 59. Guests will enjoy an exquisite buffet prepared by the French Ambassador's chef, as well as a rich selection of French cheeses brought to you by Calvert Woodley's La Cheeserie.



French Response to Katrina Disaster

France Rushes Aid (continued from page 1)

Government authorities are not the only ones contributing to the relief efforts. To date, French private companies have donated a total of \$17 million to rescue and reconstruction operations. Aeronautics company EADS has donated \$2 million, provided a mobile hospital, and offered the use of an Airbus Beluga and two other air cargo planes to carry humanitarian goods (see boxed article for more information). Lafarge has offered \$1 million to support its affected employees, and has provided materials to the Army Corps of Engineers for rebuilding levees.

Pharmaceutical company Sanofi-Aventis has donated \$3.8 million in emergency medicine and vaccines. Schneider Electric has given \$1 million to non-profit organizations, including Habitat for Humanity and the Salvation Army. Food and facilities management firm Sodexo donated \$3.5 million in the form of 500,000 free meals, while water company Suez donated water purification systems and services.

Zodiac has donated \$250,000 and provided five technicians and 20 boats to the U.S. Navy and the Coast Guard. The donated boats are backed by Zodiac Academy, which has employees on-site to train recovery personnel on the use of the boats, and to help put them into service.

Many French companies, including Air Liquide, AXA, BNP Paribas, Dassault, L'Oréal, Michelin, Suez, Thales, Total, and Veolia, have each contributed \$100,000 or more to the American Red Cross, and many are also matching their employees' donations.

Indeed, private citizens in France have responded very generously to calls for contri-

butions, and several French organizations and artists continue to organize events to help fund the rescue and reconstruction efforts in Louisiana. Ambassador Jean-David Levitte and his wife will host a benefit cocktail reception, "Weathering the Storms Together: France Lends a Helping Hand," on the evening of November 1 at their official residence.

New York's "French Tuesdays" (see NFF 04.05) and Club Cain, a trendy hotspot in Manhattan, held a special event backed by François Delattre, the consul general of France in New York, on September 7, and raised over \$100,000 for the Red Cross. Meanwhile, in France, singers Francis Cabrel and Zachary Richard will host a "Concert de Solidarité Louisiane" at the Palais des Congrès in Paris on November 7, which will feature appearances by popular artists such as de Palmas and Garou. For more information, visit www.palais-congres-paris.fr.

Finally, French universities have accepted students from Loyola University, whose campus was severely damaged, so as to give them a chance to pursue their studies. ■■

A WHALE OF A RESCUE



Toulouse-based aeronautics company EADS sent assistance to the victims of Hurricane Katrina and offered hope from above in the form of a plane—a very large plane. On September 8, an Airbus A300-600 Super Transporter, also known as a Beluga because of its whale-like shape, departed from Toulouse and landed in Mobile, Alabama. The aircraft carried over 12.7 tons of emergency equipment donated by France and Britain. Another Beluga departed on September 11 with a TransHospital mobile medical care system, on loan from EADS's German affiliate. While some aircraft are capable of bearing heavier loads than the Beluga, none match its internal volume: the Beluga boasts a freight compartment that is 7.4 meters in diameter and 37.7 meters long—larger and deeper than a standard community swimming pool. Only five have been constructed, and all are in regular service, carrying massive Airbus parts from suppliers to the main assembly center. For more information, visit www.airbus.com.

FRENCH DIVERS HELP CLEAR LOUISIANA WATERS



Seventeen mine-sweeping divers sent by France's Defense Ministry arrived in the U.S. on September 11. They were immediately placed under the direction of the U.S. Navy, which assigned them their first mission only a few hours after their arrival at Pascagoula naval base. For the first five days, the divers cleared the port areas surrounding Pascagoula. They then joined the American and Canadian divers at Port Michoud, where they worked to release sunken boats that obstructed river and canal waterways, preventing the arrival of emergency supplies and the

evacuation of victims. The mission was a difficult one. "We had to dive in water that was very polluted by hydrocarbons," explained Emmanuel Mocard, the head of the French deployment. "This requires specific diving procedures, the wearing of watertight diving suits and wraparound masks." Considering the heat in New Orleans, this attire only added to the divers' discomfort.

Ambassador Levitte Visits Louisiana

AMBASSADOR Jean-David Levitte visited Louisiana from September 29 to October 2 to survey the damage and meet with French and American officials so as to determine how France and French companies can best assist in reconstruction efforts. Levitte announced that the Louisiana Foundation will receive \$50,000 that will be donated to French schools and Cajun parishes in the area. Cajun musicians, jazz artists, and schools that emphasize French culture and language are all eligible for relief from a special Hurricane Katrina assistance fund. "All of the French have Louisiana in their minds and want to help make New Orleans better and more beautiful than ever," Levitte said. "Louisiana is, in a way, part of the history of France."

Because so many jazz and Cajun musicians were displaced or harmed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, French government officials have drafted a plan to aid them. In Paris, a panel will select a number of Louisiana musicians, who will be invited to tour France from November through January in a special concert series. All of their living and traveling expenses will be paid for, and they will return to New Orleans in time for Mardi Gras. Said Levitte, "This city is based on

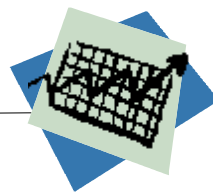
A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

Louisiana's ties with France go back a long time. In 1682, Louisiana, a huge expanse that encompassed ten of today's U.S. states, was named after King Louis XIV and claimed as a French territory. Napoleon later envisioned a great and prosperous French empire in the New World. When he needed funds to finance his European campaigns, however, the French emperor decided to sell Louisiana, and U.S. President Thomas Jefferson jumped on the opportunity. In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States.

Today, New Orleans retains much of its original French identity. Cajuns, who are the descendants of 18th-century French immigrants from Nova Scotia, make up a sizable proportion of New Orleans and the surrounding areas. They speak their own French dialect, Cajun. The French Quarter, or Vieux Carré (French for "old square"), is the site of the original city, and has been relatively undamaged by the hurricane. It contains many of the historic and architecturally unique buildings for which New Orleans is famous. France maintains a very close relationship with Louisiana, providing French teachers, supporting local schools, and financing cultural exchanges.

the economy of tourism... the musicians are now out of work. If we don't do something, in six months' time they will be gone for good."

Levitte emphasized that private French companies have sent more than \$17 million to aid hurricane victims (see our main article for more information). Warren Perrin, head of the state's Council for the Development of French in Louisiana, remarked, "His visit is a very important symbol... it will give hope to the people here." According to Perrin, the French culture of New Orleans is critical to the success of its considerable tourist industry. ■■



“Pourquoi Pas” Sets Out to Sea

THE *POURQUOI PAS*, France's newest oceanographic vessel, was christened on September 27 in the Atlantic port of Brest by Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie. Built by Alstom Marine, the 66-million-euro ship was financed in part by Ifremer (France's ocean research institute) and in part by the French military (45 %). The two will share the multi-purpose vessel: for 150 days of the year, it will be operated by the navy, and Ifremer will run it for the rest of the year.

By pooling their resources, the partners were thereby able to



afford one of the world's most advanced research vessels. With a crew of 32, and room for 40 researchers, the *Pourquoi Pas* is capable of operating several types of unmanned submarines, including the *Victor 6000* and the *Nautilus*. It will also be equipped with the Newtsuit diving suit system, which can be used for rescue operations up to a depth of 250 meters. Meanwhile, the ship's state-of-the-art silent electric propulsion saves space, improves overall efficiency, and maximizes maneuverability with minimal noise and vibration levels.

Bears, Bison Being Reintroduced to French Wild

FRANCE IS GRADUALLY repopulating its wilderness areas with endangered mammals, hoping that this will help revive the species' dwindling populations, restore balance to its ecosystems, and attract tourists.



A brown bear taking it easy

Ecology Minister Nelly Olin announced on September 21 that five female brown bears will be moved from Slovenia to the Pyrenees mountain region in the spring of 2006. The bear population in France is believed to be fewer than 15, most of them "imported" from abroad. The last French-born female bear, named Cinamon, was shot by a hunter in 2004. Olin has promised ranchers she will repopulate the bears gradually and respect their concerns in the process.

Bison, meanwhile, have been extinct in the Alps for six centuries. There are only about 3,000 European bison—not to be

confused with the smaller and rounder American bison—left worldwide. Thirteen bison, specially selected for their genetic strength, were moved from Poland to the privately run Haut-Thorenc Reserve in August by a group of ecological enthusiasts who are seeking to reconstitute France's ancient fauna. Several Przewalski horses, the last species of wild horse, will soon be relocated to the same site. To learn more: www.haut-thorenc.com.

100 BILLION BICS SOLD!

Both inexpensive and indispensable, the BIC pen is often pilfered from office desks. And yet there are more than enough to go around: BIC has just announced that it has sold its 100 billionth pen! BIC's most popular design has not changed much over the past 50 years—it remains sleek and streamlined, classic and straightforward, with none of the fancy features other brands claim. But behind the BIC's simple form lies the intriguing story of its invention.

The number-one pen manufacturing company in the world was launched at the end of World War II, when Marcel Bich (1914-1994) and his friend Edouard Buffard bought an empty factory just outside of Paris. Bich's knowledge of the ink business led him to believe that there was a market for a cheap, disposable ballpoint pen. Indeed, existing ballpoint pens were expensive and unreliable, with an unfortunate tendency to leak. The first BIC pen appeared in December 1950. From the start, it was a resounding success—and after conquering the French market, it became available in the United States in 1958. The company went on to create disposable razors and lighters, two products that also quickly became popular with consumers around the world. To learn more, visit www.bicworld.com.

Because of the discovery that many more stars were formed early in the history of the Universe than previously believed, current galaxy formation and evolution theories will need to be taken in new directions.



NEW LACROIX LOOK FOR TGV



The SNCF (France's railway company) unveiled a new interior for its high-speed TGV trains on September 8. Designer Christian Lacroix responded to suggestions from passengers who wanted a more comfortable interior both visually and physically. Lacroix uses gray and green for sophisticated first-class cabins, whereas second-class carriages, in red and violet, are more playful. New cabins will also be devoted to business people, the handicapped and families. Half of the SNCF's TGV carriages will be remodeled by 2007, costing a total of 350 million euros.

MARS EXPRESS EXTENDED FOR ANOTHER TWO YEARS

The Mars Express mission has been extended by one Martian year, about 23 months, by the European Space Agency. In orbit around the planet Mars since 2004, the spacecraft has provided valuable information that has more than justified the continuation of its mission. It will resume its night-time measurements in December 2005, carrying on its subsurface prospecting for liquid and frozen water. For more information, visit www.esa.int/marsexpress.

FRENCH POST GOES ELECTRIC

The French national postal service received its first electric cars on September 26. Eight *Cleanova II*, designed by the Société des Véhicules Électriques, a subsidiary of Dassault and Heuliez, will be tested in the cities of Bordeaux and Paris for postal deliveries. The environmentally friendly vehicles will have a riding autonomy of 130 miles, while their estimated running cost of one euro per 100 kilometers will be six times less than that of a traditional car. Other public organizations, such as EDF (the national electricity company) as well as some local authorities, are also considering these cars for the near future. For learn more, visit www.cleanova.com.

A Vigorous Young Universe

A TEAM OF FRENCH and Italian scientists announced, in the September 22 edition of *Nature*, the discovery of hundreds of galaxies that formed between 1.5 and 4 billion years after the Big Bang, 10 to 12 billion years ago. These unexpected observations reveal that galaxies were two to six times more abundant and formed two to three times more stars during the universe's youth than researchers previously believed (each galaxy gave birth to about one star a year, which is ten times more than today).

The astrophysics team led by France's Olivier Le Fèvre (of the Astrophysics Laboratory of Marseilles) and Italy's Gianpaolo Vettolani was able to make these discoveries due to new technology they developed: the Visible Multi-Object Spectrograph (VIMOS). This instrument was installed on previously existing telescopes, allowing scientists to measure the distance in addition to the location of about a thousand remote galaxies. Le Fèvre said the effect of VIMOS was like "moving from 2D to 3D."

BRAINSTORMING AT THE MUSÉE DE L'HOMME

The Musée de l'Homme in Paris is holding a new exhibition on the human brain until January 22. "Brain Planet: A World to Explore" is an interactive presentation of the human brain, of its evolution and constitution. This complex organ made of 100 billion nervous cells is still very much unknown to the general public, which will have the chance to discover numerous scientific facts about its anatomy and its influence on human psychology. Visitors will have the opportunity to test the capacity of their own brains as well as learn more about diseases such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's. Different conferences will be organized on the theme of health and the brain. To learn more, visit www.planete-cerveau.fr.

NEW LOOK FOR "LE FIGARO"

Le Figaro, France's leading daily, unveiled a major makeover on October 3. In an effort to modernize, it has added a daily section on culture and fashion as well as on science and medicine. It has also reduced page width by 1.34 inches, and displays photographs more prominently. The 139-year-old newspaper has revamped its format in order to provide a "clearer editorial line" that will appeal to women and youths.

RESTOS DU COEUR CELEBRATE 20TH ANNIVERSARY

On December 21, 1985, the first "Restos du Coeur" (literally, Restaurants of the Heart) opened their doors. Funded by Coluche (a well-known humorist) and 5,000 donors, they delivered 8.5 million meals to the homeless in their first year. Since then, the charity has grown considerably: it now delivers 67 million meals a year. It has also branched out, launching projects such as "A Roof for All," which provides housing to the homeless. To learn more, visit www.restosducoeur.org.

IMMIGRATION TRENDS

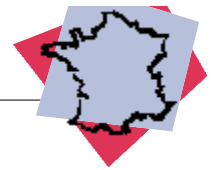
The National Statistics Institute recently released a report on immigration trends in France which shows that immigration rates have stabilized since 1975 (immigrants continue to represent about 7.4 percent of France's population). However, the face of immigration has changed: 30 percent of those immigrating to France are of North African descent, twice as many as 30 years ago, and there are five times as many Asians than before. The number of female immigrants has also increased, with women now constituting half of the immigrant population. Finally, the new immigrants tend to be better educated than their predecessors.

ALLONS ENFANTS DE LA PATRIE

As of this September, the "Loi Fillon" requires teaching both the lyrics and the history of *La Marseillaise* as part of students' civic education. *La Marseillaise* began life as a war song in 1792, when revolutionary France had to defend itself against the combined forces of Europe's monarchies. It became France's anthem in 1879.

FRENCH SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM

The results are in! In a recent survey conducted by *Version Femina*, the French were polled about what kind of dessert they prefer. Ice cream and sorbet surged ahead as the favorites, garnering 13 percent. The next most popular choices were fruit tarts (10 percent), followed by chocolate mousse (8 percent), *profiteroles* and *tiramisu* (7 percent each).



Pining for Babies

The government announces new measures to encourage families to have more children

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT announced on September 22 that it would be implementing new financial incentives, in addition to the already existing ones, to encourage couples to have more children.

France's current birth rate is 1.916 children per woman. While this is higher than the average birth rate in the European Union—and second only to that of Ireland—it is not the rate of 2.07 required for the population to renew itself. The new plan, announced at an annual family conference, aims to boost the birth rate to this "replacement level," thereby preventing population decline.



Who wouldn't want one?

Under the reform, families will receive 750 euros per month for one year after the birth of their third child. Currently, families in which one parent stops working to take care of a newborn receive monthly installments of 512 euros per month for up to three years. The new measure will co-exist with the old one: a family can receive 750 euros per month for the first year, followed by two years with 512 euros per month, provided one of the parents stays at home during this time.

The government also announced that families with young children will receive increased tax credits to hire home help, and families with three or more children will benefit from more extensive discounts for travel, entertainment, and sports.

Large families are time-consuming as well as expensive—the new measure attempts to temporarily relieve the pressure to return to work immediately and allow parents to spend more time with their children. According to a poll published by *Ouest-France*, one in two French citizens under the age of 40 say that the reform motivates them to have a child. ■

PARIS TO GET SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin announced on September 29 that France will open a new school of economics in the center of Paris, which will be headed by economist Thomas Piketty. Villepin hopes this new school, which will receive an initial endowment of 10 million euros, will give French economic research more international visibility and provide students and scholars with the best expertise on the subject. One of the goals of this new structure is to enhance France's capacity to share its thinking at the international level. Supported by the Sorbonne, the Ecole Normale Supérieure and the National Center for Research, the Paris School of Economics will foster exchanges with foreign universities such as the London School of Economics, MIT, Harvard and Princeton.

120 Years of Antiques

The Saint-Ouen flea market, the world's largest, celebrates its 120th anniversary

THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND of October 6-9, the flea market at Saint-Ouen (les Puces de Saint-Ouen) celebrated its 120th anniversary while holding



the Second World Antiques Fair. Vendors from around the world came to set up shop in the streets, giving the flea market a feel of yesteryear. The world's largest flea market has become an international institution: antiques buyers from America represent over 60 percent of sales in terms of value.

BOOK VENDING MACHINES IN PARIS



Books are now available around the clock on the streets of Paris, with the introduction of vending machines that dispense neither candy nor soft drinks, but Homer and Baudelaire.

Low-cost French bookstore chain and publisher Maxi-Livres came up with the idea and installed the first machines in June. For a mere \$2.45, buyers can choose among 25 Maxi-Livres best-sellers that include a range of interests, from *The Odyssey* to *Verb Conjugations*. And fear not, the books will not be ruined as they tumble down to the dispensing tray: a mechanical arm grabs the book and carefully delivers it to the buyer.

Almost 400,000 visitors attended the event, which included numerous exhibits and games for children. Photographs of the *puces* by both anonymous and famous artists over the course of the past 120 years decorated the rue des Rosiers.

Indeed, the flea market of Saint-Ouen has a rich history: it all began when the "rag and bone men" of Paris—who searched the city's trash for old objects to then resell them in local markets—were driven out of the city by authorities in the late 1800s. They were forced to move their activities just outside the city gates, in the northern suburbs. With time the traders grouped together and formed specialized markets that assembled regularly, such as the Scrap Metal Market. According to legend, a visitor surveying the market in 1880 exclaimed "My word, it's a veritable flea market," and the expression has stuck ever since. In 1885, the authorities of Saint-Ouen strove to make the area safer, and in doing so the markets were finally coordinated. Today, the permanent market of Saint-Ouen covers 7 acres and is comprised of 13 distinct sub-markets.

The flea market's anniversary theme of "extraordinary journeys" will continue until November 14. To learn more, visit www.parispuces.com. ■



Grand Palais Welcomes Back its Visitors

AFTER A 12-YEAR rehabilitation, the Grand Palais, built in 1903 for the Universal Exhibition in Paris, is now open to the public. More than 100 million euros have been spent to restore the glass-and-metal-

framed hall of the building located on the Champs-Élysées, and another estimated three years will be needed to complete the restoration of its glass roof. The building is to house many events, thereby assuming the role it had a century ago. When originally designed, the Grand Palais was to be home to cultural exhibitions. Throughout the years, authorities took advantage of the building's size and ideal

location to organize agricultural and horse shows, or car and aeronautic exhibitions, right in the center of Paris.

After the opening inauguration on September 17, access to the main hall was opened to the general public for two weeks, concluding with an all-night visit on October 1, as part of the Parisian cultural celebration "Nuit Blanche." Visitors were



The Grand Palais's main hallway

invited to walk on the roof and admire the beauty of the Champs-Élysées at night. Classified as a Historical Monument in 2000, the Grand Palais will be open from now on to the public for temporary exhibitions and special events, while the Galeries Nationales (art exhibits) and the Palais de la Découverte (Science museum) will welcome visitors all year long.

Visit www.rmn.fr/galeriesnationalesdugrandpalais for more information.

New National Cinema Center

A NEW TEMPLE to French cinema was inaugurated on September 26 with the opening of the French Cinémathèque (national library for cinema) in the former American Center, designed by architect Franck Gehry. The inauguration's American connection was rounded off by the attendance of Martin Scorsese, whose Film Foundation restored *Le Fleuve* by Jean Renoir, the first film to be played at the Cinémathèque.

The U.S. director was among the many French and foreign movie directors who gathered in Paris to celebrate France's cinematographic heritage. The new Cinémathèque will screen movies, organize film-related events and host the French Film Library. "At last French cinema has settled down in its own location, where cultural diversity will be promoted and

movies loved like masterpieces," rejoiced Cultural Minister Donnedieu de Vabres. At the minister's side during the comments was Claude Berry, the newly appointed director of the Cinémathèque.



The Center's opening exhibit

Located across from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (the national library), the center opened to the public with an exhibition dedicated to the paintings and films of Renoir, father and son. "Renoir/Renoir" is the first event bringing together 32 paintings by impressionist painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir and all 38 movies directed by his son, Jean Renoir. Until January 9, art amateurs will be able to compare the styles and mutual influences of two masters who helped shape the French artistic scene at the turn of the 20th century. For more information, visit www.cinematheque.fr.

Fantastic Fall Exhibits in Paris



A Champa sculpture at the Guimet museum

PARIS IS HOME to a cornucopia of artistic exhibitions this October, and rather than focus on one or two, *News from France* has selected the following highlights, most of which will be on display between October 2005 and January 2006.

The "Jacques-Louis David" exhibit at the Jacquemart-André Museum presents 60 portraits and historic scenes of late-18th- and early-19th-century France by one of France's greatest painters (www.musee-jacquemart-andre.com).

The Centre Pompidou hosts the first major exhibition since 1966 devoted to the avant-garde "Dada" movement born out of the turmoil of World War I. More than 1,000 works by 50 artists are on view (www.cnac-gp.fr).

The Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais present "Melancholy—Genius and Madness in the Western World." Two hundred works show fury, gentleness, violence and exhaustion, as depicted by various artists including Goya, Picasso, and Kiefer. (www.rmn.fr/galeriesnationalesdugrandpalais).

Asian culture is showcased with "Art Treasures from Vietnam: Champa Sculpture" at the Guimet Museum. About 100 sculptures are on display (www.musee-guimet.fr). Arab culture is also honored, with the exhibit "The Golden Age of Arabic Sciences" at the Institute of the Arab World. It shows the incredible scientific developments in Arabian countries between the 8th and 15th centuries, a period often termed the "Arabic Miracle" (www.imarabc.org).

JAPANESE ARCHITECTS TO BUILD LOUVRE II

Sanna, a Japanese architectural firm, was chosen out of 120 entrants to design the Louvre II, an outpost of the famous French institution that will be built in Lens, Nord-Pas-de-Calais. This northern city, a former mining town, was chosen in 2004 (see NFF 04.14). The purpose of the annex is twofold: to display some of the original museum's large collection of unseen treasures, while helping to revitalize the small town.

The design for the second Louvre includes reflecting aluminum facades and a flat glass roof. "It is a project of great beauty, crystalline and open to the sky," said former culture minister Jack Lang, who is vice-president of the regional authority of Nord-Pas-de-Calais.

The Tokyo-based firm led by Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa has designed the museum of contemporary art in Kanazawa and the Christian Dior building in Tokyo. "To my knowledge it is the first time a woman will build a major public monument in France," said Lang.

The gallery will cost 117 million euros (\$140 million), with 60 percent coming from the Nord-Pas-de-Calais regional authority, and it is slated to open in 2009. For more information, visit www.louvre.fr.

CHOCOLATE BIBLE



Chocolate lovers take heed! Renowned pastry chef, Pierre Hermé, has published a chocolate "bible," a book filled with

simple, difficult and classic recipes, all featuring the delicious ingredient chocolate.

The "Larousse du Chocolat," a play on the famed French encyclopedia, Larousse, contains 380 recipes for cakes, tarts, candies, mousses and other treats that have been tried and tested by the master chef. Hermé used and adapted some popular chocolate recipes while creating his own recipes specifically for the book. The chef also invited more than 50 French and foreign chefs to contribute their own recipes.

In addition to delicious recipes, the book contains the history and origin of the cocoa bean and the tools and techniques of the chocolate maker. There is even a chapter on the dietary benefits of chocolate.

Hermé has two shops in Paris and three shops in Tokyo, one of which features a chocolate bar. He has already published a Larousse on desserts.



NEW WEB SITE FOR ALLIANCE FRANCAISE DELEGATION

The Delegation of the Alliance Française of Paris has launched a totally revamped web site, www.alliance-us.org. It provides news and information in English and French about cultural events sponsored by the Delegation, pedagogical materials for teaching French, a directory of U.S. Alliance chapters, and more! Alliance-us.org also offers an e-newsletter (L'Af en Bref) and an extranet open to all Alliance Française and French cultural services staff members (to register, write to: dgp@alliance-us.org).

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Napoleon at National Geographic

NAPOLEON had a humble background, but he showed the world that hunger and drive can raise one from meager beginnings to becoming the Emperor of a powerful country. Documenting this rise to power, French researcher and collector Pierre-Jean Chalençon presents, from his own private collection, 250 rare and personal belongings of Napoleon and his Imperial Court. After spending a lifetime studying and collecting artifacts concerning Napoleon, Chalençon takes us on a journey through Napoleon's awe-inspiring career by looking at art, clothing, and personal items in an exhibition entitled "Napoleon, An Intimate Portrait." This traveling exhibition is on display at the National Geographic Museum until January 2.



Portrait of Napoléon I in Coronation Robe, by Baron Gérard (c. 1805)

Exhibited from Aug. 19 to Feb. 2005

Some items on display include the signed letter written by Napoleon at the age of 14 from his Paris military school, which is one of the earliest known letters in Napoleon's hand. In addition, one can see the hat Napoleon wore during the Battle of Essling in May 1809, and his personal map of the French Empire in 1812, with the evidence of pinholes where he charted military maneuvers. The famous portrait of Napoleon in his coronation robe, painted by François Gérard in 1805, is also on display.

For more information, please visit www.nationalgeographic.com/museum. On Friday November 11 there will be a special screening of Monsieur N, directed by Antoine de Caunes, which is about the final years of Napoleon's life. The screening will be held at the National Geographic Society's headquarters at 7pm.

Pioneering Photos on Display in Philadelphia

LOOKING AT ATGET," a collection of 120 photographs by French photographer Eugene Atget, is currently on display at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A self-proclaimed documentarian, Atget (1857-1927) was considered the father of modern photography by his contemporaries and peers. He produced a vast collection of about 10,000 photographs throughout his career.



Versailles - Bassin du Sud, 1904. Eugène Atget

© 2005 French Embassy Press and Information Service

Atget was an actor in Paris before he found his true calling. He started as a commercial photographer in the 1890s, making studies for artists, but began to cater to other clients as well, such as libraries and antiquarians who wanted visual records of art and architecture from Paris and its surroundings. He photographed

various subjects, including shop fronts, tradespeople, crowds, Versailles statuary, the Tuileries and Parisian prostitutes. He thought of his photographs as historical documents, not as art.

The exhibition focuses on how art dealer Julien Levy and American photographer Berenice Abbott, who together introduced Atget's work to the United States after his death, responded to his work. Levy, whose large collection of Atget's photos forms the backbone of the exhibit, considered the French photographer a surrealist, whereas Abbott thought of him as an artist who

could not be classified as belonging to any specific art style. The exhibit runs through November 27. For more information, please visit www.philamuseum.org.

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