

France Celebrates American and Allied Heroes of D-Day



Heads of Government and State attend the Normandy ceremony.

veterans, including an American, with the *Légion d'honneur* at the end of the ceremony. President Obama also affirmed that "the selflessness of a few was able to change the course of an entire century," and continued: "as we face down the hardships and struggles of our time, and arrive at that hour for which we were born, we cannot help but draw strength from those moments in history when the best among us were somehow able to swallow their fears and secure a beachhead on an unforgiving shore." Mr. Sarkozy similarly emphasized how a centuries-old alliance remains the hope of meeting this generation's challenges: "we know [...] what a unified Europe and an America faithful to its values can accomplish together."

The leaders convened among a gathering of thousands who had come to pay tribute to those soldiers of the "greatest generation" present on D-Day. Veterans of the invasion, active-duty troops, and Hollywood stars — such as Tom Hanks, who came ashore in the film "Saving Private Ryan" — filled a crowd that stretched the length of the beach. As a French warship undulated at anchor offshore, military personnel both young and old stood at attention during the playing of "Taps," the trumpet's soft call underscored by a 21-gun salute resounding across the Atlantic and a thundering flyover by American, French, and British fighter jets. Elsewhere in many of Normandy's villages, American and French flags flew side-by-side from official buildings and private homes alike. Please visit www.ambafrance-us.org for more information on the D-Day events, including a short video.

Reverberations of the ceremony in Normandy could be felt on this side of the Atlantic as *La Fête de Normandie* honored veterans at French Consulates throughout the U.S. In Washington, D.C., the Embassy of France hosted an intergenerational "Remember D-Day Commemoration." Consul General of France Michel Scaffhauser kicked off the picnic, welcoming veterans from the surrounding region and students from Lycée Rochambeau and Woodrow Wilson High School to "perpetuate the memory of courage and participation" of this "critical page" of the Franco-American relationship. Veterans engaged students in wartime memories of "living on the frontline" and "showing and receiving respect" from Europe and the Pacific. Donald McKee of the 29th infantry, one of five men from this unit present, reminisced about being

a combat medic during the Normandy Campaign.

During a return trip years later to give a speech, he was "amazed with how much [the French] thanked [him] and appreciated what [he] did for them." Military anthems, performed by West Point Alumni Glee Club graduates from classes '49 to '97, recaptured the images of "marching on the Normandy roads." The excitement and vivid memories extended into an educational forum composed of panelists from the Army, Air Force, Navy, Women Veterans, American Battle Monuments Commission, and United Service Organizations who chronicled experiences, the history of their particular service, and current developments to honor "the service, achievements, and sacrifice of U.S. armed forces." The overarching aim of the event was to cement the memories of this historical feat into the social consciousness of younger generations, thereby ensuring that, as President Sarkozy averred, "[France] will never forget" the sacrifices of the WWII veterans.



President Sarkozy decorated four veterans, one from the U.S., U.K., Canada, and France, with the Legion of Honor, France's highest award.



Children attending the picnic in Washington, D.C., learned about the history of WWII. Above, students discover the importance of the 1945 Daimler Dingo in military operations during the war.

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EUROPE ON THE POTOMAC



Representatives of the military mission discuss their role.

Go to Europe for free? On May 9, 26 European Union Member States in Washington, D.C., and the European Commission Delegation to the U.S., opened their doors to the public for the 2009 EU Open House, titled "Shortcut to Europe." From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., free public transportation shuttled visitors throughout D.C., allowing them to travel from the Czech Republic to Romania — no passport needed — giving them a rare "behind-the-gates" look at the European embassies. Shortcut to Europe provided visitors with a taste of Europe by showcasing national highlights such as music, art and food, as well as the opportunity to meet with representatives from various offices within the embassies who discussed the roles of their departments. Nearly 3,500 guests visited the Embassy of France, where they were treated to a documentary featuring members of the Chancery who discussed their perspectives on French-American relations and public diplomacy, mini-French lessons conducted by the Alliance Française, and children's workshops...all before basking in the sun at a *café parisien*.

ANIMATED INTEREST OVER TINTIN



Tintin, the cartoon boy adventurer whose exploits have captivated generations, took center stage at a record-breaking auction held on May 10. Hosted in the city of Namur in southern Belgium, the event raised over \$1.57 million from Tintin-related artwork and item sales, according to Agence France-Presse. Of the nearly 600 Tintin collector's items offered, a hand-drawn page from the 1963 book "The Castafiore Emerald" fetched the highest bid — more than \$424,000. These sales reflect a growing interest in the French-speaking cartoon hero. Tintin was created in 1929 by Georges Rémi, better known by his alias, Hergé. Since that time, the comics have sold over 230 million copies and have been translated into more than 80 languages. Today, one in every two families in France owns a Tintin adventure, according to Tintin.com. The adventurous cartoon hero has also captured the eye of the silver screen. Steven Spielberg is currently directing "The Adventures of Tintin: Secret of the Unicorn," to be released next year.

Current Events

Exploring the French Paradox

It's a phenomenon that piques the curiosity of many: it's the driving force behind some stereotypes, a fascination that preoccupies books and movies, and a way of life that attracts millions of tourists from around the globe. What is it? It's the French art of *savoir-vivre*. For some, France's penchant for leisure may seem paradoxical: how can the French eat so many delectable desserts, yet remain so thin? While scholars have analyzed it and travelers have enjoyed it first-hand, all explanations behind this phenomenon remain elusive. A recent study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) titled "Society at a Glance" quantifies some of the mystery surrounding the French way of life and sheds a little light on the benefits thereof.

The report, which surveyed 18 countries in the OECD, found that the French get almost nine hours of sleep a night — almost an hour more than the Japanese — and spend nearly twice the amount of time eating as Americans, Canadians and Mexicans. Besides simply confirming certain aspects of a well known cliché about French eating habits, the results demonstrate the importance that the French ascribe to community and spending time with



Thanks to beneficial social security programs, France boasts some of the highest fertility and longevity rates in OECD countries.

valuable access to medical and preventative services, in addition to offering highly beneficial advantages including child rearing and reducing stress levels.

While there may be many stereotypes about the French, anecdotal evidence suggests that their lifestyle and supporting social infrastructure could perhaps be a means of maximizing their enjoyment of leisure as opposed to leading a leisurely way of life that lends itself to paradoxes and results that seem to contradict the lifestyle.

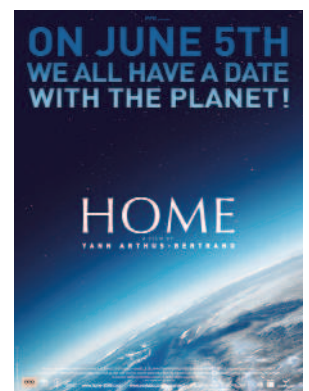
family. Those hours over lunch and dinner are not solely cherished for the food, but for the priceless moments families and friends enjoy in each other's company.

The emphasis on family is also reflected in the benefits derived from other areas relating to lifestyle and the public resources that support it. According to the report, France's social protection services account for one-third of the national income, compared with an OECD average of 24 percent. France's public spending on childcare programs is the third highest in Europe and the OECD. Similarly, France has one of the highest fertility rates in Europe and the OECD, suggesting a possible correlation between the advanced child care programs and the level of fertility. Additionally, with a life expectancy of 84.4 years, French women rank among the highest lifespans in the OECD. This longevity suggests an important role that social protection can play in public health by providing

Simulcast Film Brings Environmentalism "Home"

An audience of over 150 people assembled on the afternoon of June 5 at the Baird Auditorium of the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., for the premiere of "Home," French photographer and journalist Yann Arthus-Bertrand's feature-film addressing the pressing issue of climate change. In attending the simultaneous, free-of-charge multimedia release of the movie in over 50 different countries, tourists, passers-by, and activists took part in a greater, unprecedented global event marking this year's World Environment Day. The film's DC screening enjoyed the support of La Maison Française of Washington, D.C., the National Museum of Natural History, National Geographic Live!, Conservation International, and the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital.

To reach the widest audience possible, Bertrand insisted that the viewing remain free to all despite a movie budget of 10 billion dollars, and a three-year effort to produce up to 488 hours of footage compiled from 217 days of filming in 54 countries. The first-ever 100 percent aerial film's purpose is not simply to "shift people's perceptions" and raise awareness of the ecological issues, but with the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen on the horizon, the hope is to incite "concrete action" which Denis Carot of Élzévir Films asserts is "still too little, too slow." The film not only depicts the current situation, but also stresses that a solution exists and that "It's too late to be a pessimist." Film distributor Luc Besson hopes viewers will "realize that they can play their part" because ultimately, "the accumulated efforts, small or large, of thousands of people will make all the difference."



"Home" was broadcasted simultaneously throughout 54 countries.

Rodin Sculpture Surprises Visitors to US Public Park

Crown Point, N.Y. — a remote town on Lake Champlain — could lay claim to being the only campground in the United States with a sculpture by Rodin on permanent display. On May 3, "La France," a 25 ¼-inch-by-21 ½-inch bas-relief bust depicting a woman, was returned to its place on the Champlain Memorial Lighthouse, which reopened this spring following a more than \$2 million restoration. To many, finding a piece from the famed French sculptor of "The Thinker" on display in such a rustic location was a surprise: "It's one of those things that fell off everyone's radar," marveled Jennifer Thompson, an expert at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Likewise, the Rodin Museum in Paris learned of "La France" only a few years ago.

The artwork, which was donated by the French government in 1912, is actually one of many signs of France's presence in the Lake Champlain area. The lighthouse on which the sculpture is situated is itself a tribute to Samuel de Champlain, the French



Rodin's bust "La France" was discovered in Crown Point, N.Y.

explorer for whom the lake is named. Furthermore, Crown Point was home to a French settlement and fort from 1731 to 1759. Almost 96 years after this symbolic gift from the French to the Americans, one still finds a strong belief among the Crown Point townspeople that touching the "La France" bust will bring good luck.

Though the piece's out-of-the-way location raised many eyebrows, the discovery of another Rodin sculpture in the U.S. did not. "Very early on, there were many American artists and American collectors who were going to France for Rodins," Thompson observed, pointing out that Rodin, widely acknowledged as one of the greatest sculptors of the modern era, has long been popular in America. In fact, asserted François Gauthier, France's consul general in Boston, the sculpture is "a symbol of the French-American friendship."

2009 Alliance Française Recognizes Outstanding American Students

The Alliance Française awarded two outstanding American students for their academic excellence in the French language last month. Ms. Miura Hawkins from Greenhills School in Michigan was awarded the Prix de l'Alliance Française 2009 and Mr. Essau Landa from Sharyland High School in Texas was awarded the Rotary Academic Prize 2009. Both awards were organized by the Alliance Française in partnership with the American Association of French Teachers (AATF) and were reserved for American high school and middle school students who showed an excellent command of the French language and a thorough understanding of French culture.

Alliance Française is a non-profit organization that works to encourage and develop knowledge of French language and culture in the United States. In addition, Alliance Française strives to cultivate friendly relations between French and American citizens by fostering cultural, intellectual, and artistic exchanges between the two countries. As recipients of the Alliance Française and Rotary Academic prizes, both Ms. Hawkins and Mr. Landa will be rewarded with a trip to Paris, where they can experience the French language and culture firsthand.

Ms. Hawkins will receive a one-week linguistic immersion trip to Paris sponsored by Air France, the FIAP Jean Monnet, Alliance Française de Paris, and Alliance Française USA. As part of the Alliance Française Prize, the Greenhills School will also receive a donation, in her honor, of 125 French books sponsored by Hachette FLE. As a recipient of the Rotary Academic Prize, Mr. Landa will receive a two-week linguistic immersion program in Paris sponsored by the Rotary Club Paris Académies and the Alliance Française USA.



Armide, 17th-Century Mind Games With Contemporary Staging



Originally written in 1686, *Armide* is revised in a more modern context.

known for his striking stage pictures and original choreography. With his unique vision, Rambert brought Lully's masterpiece into a contemporary context.

Under conductor Antoine Plante, Mercury Baroque lent its enchanting sound to the productions. In contrast to the contemporary staging, the ensemble performs on period instruments. The opera also featured the gifted French soprano Isabelle Cals in the role of Armide and Mercury Baroque favorite Zachary Wilder as Renaud.

Worlds collided and cultures clashed as French stage director Pascal Rambert, from Théâtre de Gennevilliers, joined Mercury Baroque with the collaboration of the Texan-French Alliance for the Arts to revive Jean-Baptiste Lully's opera *Armide* for its Houston debut May 15 and 16 at the Wortham Center's Cullen Theater.

Armide, which some consider Lully's finest work, first premiered at the Paris Opéra February 15, 1686. The opera was based on a popular epic poem brought to life by Lully and French dramatist and librettist Philippe Quinault. Unlike most of their operas, *Armide* is particularly compelling because it focuses on the emotional struggles of a single character, the sorceress Armide.

For the Houston premiere of *Armide*, Mercury Baroque enlisted French director and multi-disciplinary artist Pascal Rambert,

MARATHON READING OF *LES MIS*

France Chicago Center at the University of Chicago sponsored a marathon reading of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* in an effort to promote awareness of worldwide misery and poverty last month. With an appreciation for the relevance of this literary masterpiece to the current difficult economic times, the university hoped to incite others to reflect on society's morals and values. *Les Misérables* tells the stories of several French characters dealing with destitution in early 19th century France, after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo and during the Paris Uprising of 1832. The story conveys many themes which still hold true today, including struggle, justice and love. As Victor Hugo once said, "So long as ignorance and misery remain on earth, there should be a need for books such as this." Members of the faculty, student body, and community were encouraged to participate by reading *Les Misérables* for 30-minute intervals in its original French text. The university encouraged those of all levels of French to take part. Originally intended to be a three-day reading, the university extended the event to six days to accommodate an overwhelming positive response. While the event was free and open to the public, all donations from the marathon reading were given to Fonzoze, a non-profit organization which provides micro-credit loans to women in Haiti. Organizers of the reading hoped to raise awareness to the poverty and destitution that Hugo himself faced while writing *Les Misérables*, and to help those affected by it in their own countries and around the world.

TOURNÉES FESTIVAL HELPS FRENCH FILMS ROLL ON

Thanks to the Tournées Festival, college campuses across the U.S. have a helping hand in starting up their own French film festivals. The program, conceived by French-American Cultural Exchange (FACE) and supported by the French Cultural Services of the Embassy of France, distributes over \$200,000 in grants annually to allow universities to screen up to five French-language films. Schools have the option of showing films on either DVD or 35mm, with the added expense of the 35mm format covered by the grants. The Tournées Festival has already partnered with hundreds of universities and enabled more than 300,000 students to discover a broad selection of French-language films. Eligible universities are selected by a panel of distinguished experts in fields ranging from Francophone studies to film history. Universities planning to schedule films in the fall should apply by June 30, while those planning on a spring festival should apply by October 1. For more information, please visit: www.facecouncil.org.

Le Grand Paris Envisions Big Plans for the City of Light

Described as original and complex, and dubbed the most ambitious urban project since Baron Haussmann's modernization and renovation of the City of Light in the late 19th century, *Le Grand Paris* seeks to transform Paris into a more dynamic, competitive, attractive, and environmentally friendly metropolis. Plans to develop a "greater Paris" began in 2007, with the goal of making Paris a more competitive metropolis on the global scale by 2030. French President Nicolas Sarkozy hopes to advance economic growth and development in Paris and surrounding areas in a way that is conducive to the environment and that addresses challenges facing the economy as well as underserved areas. "The economic crisis can only be beaten by grand projects," he announced; "There could be no grander project than to create a greater Paris."



Baron Haussmann transformed Paris in the 19th century into the thriving city with wide boulevards that it is today.

Sarkozy's initiative finds significant political backing from various influential political figures. Édouard Balladur, former prime minister of France (1993-1995) and currently in charge of the "Committee for the reform of local communities," initially submitted a proposal to merge the four Parisian departments into one and create, by law, a "community of the Greater Paris." Another strong supporter is Pierre Mauroy, former prime minister in the time of François Mitterrand and currently the senator of the north and member of the Balladur Committee for territorial simplification. In addition to ardently promoting the proposal to fuse all four Parisian departments into one, he encourages more creativity and asks for the submission of more ideas and proposals. Bertrand Delanoë, French politician of the Socialist Party and Mayor of Paris since 2001, has for a long time been a firm believer in a "mode of governance" that would allow Paris to expand and break out of its current frame. In his view, this would ultimately solve the challenge of a growing demand of space for housing, transport, and various urbanism projects.

One of the primary goals of the project is to extend economic growth to low-income suburbs. With over 12 million inhabitants, the Île-de-France region is the largest urban agglomeration in the European Union. However, the current transportation infrastructures have isolated some of the areas on the outskirts of Paris. President Sarkozy intends for *Le Grand Paris* to connect these once neglected suburbs to the heart of the city. He has vocalized ambitions to create 1 million jobs over the next 20 years, reform the current zoning legislation, and build 70,000 new homes a year in the greater Paris area. "We need a change in our philosophy of urbanization," Mr. Sarkozy underscored.

In March, the president selected blueprints by 10 world-renowned architects and urban planning agencies that incorporate the goals of sustainable development, ending isolation, and reorganization of the transportation network. While the French Ministry of Culture commissioned these project proposals, it is members of the scientific community who oversaw them. These projects are on display until November 22 at the Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine in the exhibition titled *Le Grand Pari de l'Agglomération Parisienne*, after which a final selection from the 10 proposals will be made. "What I'm proposing is certainly ambitious and difficult," Mr. Sarkozy said at the unveiling of the designs in April; "It's about preparing for the future."

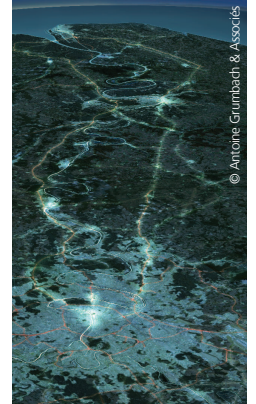
Sustainable Development

While striving to increase economic growth and longevity, the Greater Paris development project will also adhere to the environmental objectives laid out by the Kyoto Protocol. Thus, sustainable development will be key. The project's aims include reducing commute times in transportation networks and improving the balance between nature and the urban environment. Dutch architect Winy Maas advocates the use of solar paneling and planting forests directly into the metropo-

lis. British architect Richard Rogers aims to cover the railways that divide Paris with lush parks. He has also suggested transforming the city's 250 miles² of rooftops into green spaces. The enhancement and widening of green spaces throughout the metropolis would not only add beauty to the urban center, but also decrease carbon emissions. In its own unique way, each plan strives to create a bigger, greener Paris.

Ending Isolation

Perhaps the biggest challenge of the Greater Paris project is connecting the center of Paris to its isolated suburbs. Originally, the *boulevard périphérique*, a beltway which was built around Paris in the early 1970s, was intended to increase traffic into the city. It now serves as a barrier separating Paris from the suburb regions, including Versailles, Saint-Denis, and Rouen. Development plans hope to extend the beauty, grandeur, and economic growth of Paris to the underserved suburbs. French architect Antoine Grumbach suggests transforming Paris into a valley of the Seine, creating an urban area that extends to Le Havre. He draws inspiration from the words of Napoleon, who once said, "Paris-Rouen-Le Havre: one single city with the Seine as its main road." French architect Roland Castro envisions that making these suburbs more attractive is bound to break these outdated, isolating barriers. He suggests, for example, building an opera house at Gennevilliers, creating a business district in Vitry, and moving the Élysée Palace to the north-east. His vision is to turn the metropolis into an "eight-petalled flower" with each suburb having its own cultural identity.



Antoine Grumbach & Associés proposes a greater Paris extending to Le Havre with the Seine river serving as the "great avenue."

Reorganizing Transportation

Improved transportation between the city's center and suburbs is paramount in uniformly connecting the Île-de-France region. President Sarkozy's development initiative calls for a new high-speed rail line to the coast, a new underground station at La Défense, and a renovation and extension of the existing metro lines. In addition, Mr. Sarkozy envisions an automated, 90 mile-long metro that would run above ground all day and night. Aiming to make this vision a reality, French architect Christian de Portzamparc proposed an elevated railway that would run above the *boulevard périphérique*. The raised railway system would connect suburbs to universities, housing clusters, shopping districts, and industrial centers, allowing all elements of the metropolis to mingle together. Portzamparc also suggests a new railway station to replace the Gare du Nord and the Gare de l'Est.

As American architect Mike Davis explains, "The Paris of today will adapt to the challenges ahead, becoming *Le Grand Paris* of tomorrow, a metropolitan Paris better equipped to face the ecological, socio-economic and urban challenges of the future city." In addition to equipping Paris for the challenges to come, *Le Grand Paris* will create an entirely new regional identity for the metropolis.

For more information on the exhibition or the various proposals, please visit: www.citechaillot.fr.



Atelier Castro Denissof Casi envisions a "poetic" Greater Paris that encourages strolling, and nonchalance as one travels through it.

French Telecom Introduces User-Friendly Computers for Seniors

Say hello to senior-friendly technology. "Hello," a new computer developed by French telecom company Orange, is designed to simplify the computer experience for seniors. With a simplified interface and keyboard, and an improved customer service package, the computer becomes much more attractive to those intimidated by technology. Orange CEO Jean-Louis Constanza explains that there are three categories of citizens who do not use the internet: those who cannot afford it, those who can but chose not to purchase it, and those who find the technology too daunting. By creating the most basic device possible, while still including all of the amenities that the modern computer has to offer, Constanza hopes to open the internet to this third, hesitant category.

"Hello" boasts internet access, e-mail, photo downloading, basic editing software, and word processing, while Orange WebTV allows video streaming, listening to music and radio access, and playing videogames. The



"Hello," a user-friendly computer aims to reduce the technology gap between generations.

interface of "Hello" is designed to make each program easy to find. Larger program icons and simplified application names, such as "text" for word processing allow all to navigate their way through the computer with ease. Even the keyboard of "Hello" has been adapted for persons unfamiliar with computers. Words and pictures make keys easier to identify, such as "val-

idate and next line" instead of "enter" or a picture of a pair of scissors in place of the word "cut." With "Hello," Orange is targeting those who want to break the technology barrier and "move with the times" by ultimately bridging the gap between grandparents and grandchildren. According to sociologist Serge Guérin, "the technology still represents a barrier to overcome.[...]Simplicity of use is therefore a strong point which they are particularly sensitive to: Orange has designed Hello in order to better meet their expectations."

Taking Transportation to New Heights

The French-based cable car company Pomagalski, or Poma, is taking cable car transportation to new heights. Originally developed in the 1930s as a chair lift and cable car service for winter sports resorts in the French Alps, Poma has extended its services to tourism and transportation on a global scale.

In Beijing, Poma has begun work on capsules for the "big wheel," which will be the world's largest Ferris wheel, set to open in 2010. The wheel is composed of 48 air-conditioned capsules which will each hold up to 40 people. Not your average Ferris wheel ride, the capsules will also be used as reception rooms for business meetings, cocktail parties, weddings, and other events. Similar projects have included capsules for the London Eye Ferris wheel in London and sight-seeing cable cars in Jordan, Australia, Vietnam, and Ecuador, among others. In Rio de Janeiro, Poma has installed mechanical cable lifts to act as an alternative to underground transportation systems. Similar transportation systems have been built to serve Medellin in Colombia, Taipei, and Taiwan.

As Poma continues to reach out to markets worldwide, one of its newest endeavors is equipment renewal. Company president Jean Gauthier explains, "We don't rebuild them exactly as they were. Renewal involves fewer cars with greater capacity, needing fewer pylons, which reduces the visual impact and allows us to make our contribution to safeguarding the environment." One of



One of Poma's latest projects includes rebuilding the Roosevelt Island Tramway in New York City.

Poma's latest projects is the rebuilding of the Roosevelt Island Tramway in New York. Poma hopes to improve the current tramway system while still maintaining the original structure. New features include creating a gap between cable cars to increase stability in windy conditions, and creating a new, innovative safety system. Poma's current success in the U.S. is the fruit borne from an already long-existing relationship. The detachable chair lifts found throughout winter sports resorts are so widespread that they are referred to as "Poma lifts."

FROM PITTSBURGH TO PARIS, WITHOUT PIT-STOP

It is now possible to fly non-stop from the Steel City to the City of Light, thanks to a new service offered by Pittsburgh International Airport, Paris Charles de Gaulle International Airport, and Delta Air Lines. The announcement of the next G-20 summit rides on the tail winds of the announcement of the new direct service between Paris and Pittsburgh. As of June 3, Delta Air Lines flies to and from Paris five days a week; flights depart for Paris at 6:15 p.m. and for Pittsburgh at 10:40 a.m. Pittsburgh International Airport trumpets the service as "the most convenient way to travel to Europe," as it "lifts travelers above [connecting] at east coast airports" and carries them to a location with expedient air, rail, and auto access to other major European cities. The new option is offered in cooperation with Air France. For more information, please visit: www.flypittsburgh.com.

EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY LAUNCHES ITS MOST ADVANCED SATELLITES YET



ESA and Arianespace launched the complex satellites on May 14.

The European Space Agency (ESA) launched the most complex satellites ever constructed in Europe on May 14, in an effort to explore possible origins of the universe. The spacecrafts, named "Herschel" and "Planck", were propelled into orbit on an Ariane 5 launch vehicle — from which they separated 26 minutes into the journey. The satellites have unique specifications to fulfill their *raison d'être* of looking back through time. "Herschel" is equipped with the largest mirror ever launched into space, to study the birth of phenomena such as stars and dust-clouds and to search for water in remote parts of the universe. "Planck" is designed to map irregularities in fossil radiation left over from the very first light in the universe, as well as to study mysterious dark matter and dark energy. "Herschel" and "Planck" began to wind down the critical Launch and Early Orbit Phase (LEOP) of their mission on May 21; they are now en route to their final orbits and are functioning smoothly. After two months in separate orbits at an average distance of about 1.5 million kilometers from the Earth, the satellites are set to begin their scientific observation. Speaking of the promise this phase of the program holds, ESA Director General Jean-Jacques Dordain averred: "'Herschel' and 'Planck' will enable us to go very far back in time."

ECO-EXHIBITION

This summer Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine is holding an exposition of sustainable and environmentally friendly architecture. *Habiter écologique* will showcase around 20 architecture projects designed for green cities. Designs are intended to be socially equitable, ecologically maintainable, and economically viable. The goal of the exposition is to give energy consumers, especially the younger demographics, the desire to come together to solve global environmental issues. Each design uses space in its own way, varying aesthetically and offering an array of both simple techniques and high-tech innovations. *Habiter écologique* will be on display at Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine until November 1.

WOLF PARK PROMISES HOWLING GOOD TIMES



The new park aims to educate about interaction with wolves.

"Running with the wolves" is more than a metaphor at the Alpha-Scénoparc of Saint Martin Vésubie in southeast France, where humans can come face-to-face with these famous creatures of the wild in their natural setting. Initiated by Gaston Franco, the mayor of Saint-Martin-Vésubie, the park aims to educate visitors on all forms of interaction with wolves. Tours of the park have two stages: first, guests watch three 20-minute "Scénovisions," shows that illustrate various encounters between humans and wolves. Then, visitors themselves have a chance to meet the wolves, through an immersion activity supervised by an animal behavior specialist. The park takes its name from the international nomenclature for a dominant couple in a wolf pack — alpha. Mayor Franco explained that "the Scénoparc was created...to introduce you to a fascinating animal in the most outstanding environment," as well as to share what wolf experts — such as herders, ethologists, and hunters — have to say about the dynamic between man and wolf. These professionals' perspectives are dramatized through the form of characters grappling in different ways with the return of the wolf to their area. Franco declared that the Alpha-Scénoparc allows visitors to interact with wolves in a way "no one has ever told you about," or "showed you before."

Society

French Government Decorates Christina Ginsburg

Close friends and family of Christina (Ina) Ginsburg, along with other distinguished guests including, Supreme Court Justices Kennedy, Breyer, and Scalia, gathered at the Residence of France on May 21 for the conferment of "Knight" in the *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* upon Mrs. Ginsburg, a close friend of France and of the French Embassy. A prominent figure in the arts, Ina Ginsburg has served on the board of the Washington National Opera, the American Film Institute, and was a founding member and former chairman of the Fine Arts Advisory Panel of the Federal Reserve Board.

During her impressive career, Mrs. Ginsburg served as the Washington editor of *Interview Magazine*, interviewing kings, queens, heads of state, and even former French first lady Mrs. Danielle Mitterrand. Known for her charisma and charm, Mrs. Ginsburg is well respected in many circles and has entertained many French and American film notables, including Jimmy Stewart, Charlton Heston, Donald Sutherland, Jeanne Moreau, Catherine Deneuve, Alain Delon, and many more. The subject of one of Andy Warhol's masterpieces herself, Mrs. Ginsburg also enjoyed a close friendship with the iconic artist and served as his personal guide throughout France as well as in D.C., where she introduced him to President Carter, along with other members of government and the media.

"If I were to summarize your wonderful career," French Ambassador Vimont stated during the reception, "I would simply say that you are a true artist." The ambassador continued, "You once said 'Billions are spent on public diplomacy, but sometimes the small ways can be very effective.' It is this personal grace, this way of genuinely connecting with others that so characterizes everything you do. In all of your endeavors, I have found the same elegance and refinement."

In her acceptance speech, Mrs. Ginsburg conveyed a sincere appreciation of her French experience and recognition of the tremendous influence it had on her overall perspective on life: "After I first met Andy Warhol and his entourage, he told me that they had been sizing me up during the entire evening and that they all agreed that they would like for me to join them. They told me that they wanted to 'show me life.'" Although she was honored, she admitted that "a certain part of me had to laugh to myself, because having lived in France, I had [already discovered life]. I learned to look at things in a different way, paying attention to the aesthetics..."



Ina Ginsburg stands with Ambassador Vimont after the ceremony.

Celebration for First Hot-Air Balloon Ride Takes Off

On June 4, 1783, the first hot-air balloon was launched by Joseph and Etienne Montgolfière in their hometown of Annonay, France. A few months later, Louis XVI commissioned the brothers to fly a hot-air balloon from Annonay to Versailles, this time carrying a sheep, some poultry, and a duck. In November of the same year, the Montgolfières launched their first passenger flight from Paris.

Piloted by physician Dr. Jacques Charles and Nicolas Robert, the flight covered around 6 miles (10 km) in 20 minutes, making the hot-air balloon the oldest successful flight technology to carry humans. The monumental first flight is celebrated each June in *Place des Cordeliers* of Annonay with a festival honoring the Montgolfière brothers and the art of flight.



Every year, hot-air balloons speckle the skies of Annonay in memory of the first hot-air flight.

Since its bicentennial in 1983, *La Fête de la Montgolfière* has given tourists an opportunity to discover the history of the first hot-air balloon flight. Members of the "Montgolfières d'Annonay" Association reenact the famous flight while on-lookers don period dress, enhancing the atmosphere of the event. Over 40 hot-air balloons are launched throughout the weekend, giving those who

have never experienced hot-air balloon travel the opportunity to take their first flight. As balloons of all shapes and sizes travel overhead, and musical performances, art shows, and fireworks enhance the colorfulness and liveliness of the moment, tourists and locals alike relive the marvels of this 220-year-old innovation.



FASHION AT ANY PRICE

What's more fashionable than affordable, *chic* clothing? For a limited, four-day period, the French fashion Web site www.brandalley.fr offered a "pay what you want" promotion to boost sales. The sale, branded an "anti-recession formula," allowed buyers to choose their price on up to two items beginning at the

base price of one Euro. BrandAlley offers a wide variety of clothing, shoes, accessories, and beauty products, with original prices ranging from 20 to over 200 Euros.

BrandAlley CEO Sven Lung explained that the goal of the sale was to attract new customers: "It's a sale that will boost consumers' purchasing power at a time of crisis, raise our profile, raise traffic on our site and create

an online buzz which is essential for any e-vendor." Lung hoped their new customers would be willing to purchase goods even when they returned to normal prices, boosting the site's future revenue despite the current economic crisis.

News From France does not endorse the content, views and opinions of authors expressed in the aforementioned Web sites.

The Wall, from Berlin to Paris

Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, remnants and memories occupy the space where the iconic structure once stood. In celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the fall, 30 sections containing pieces of original wall are on display at Paris's Palais Royal through June, creating a colorful representation of the era. The sections belong to the private Verger collection, assembled between 1990 and 2005. "I first bought a part of this collection in 1992 from an association. Then, I completed it thanks to the acquisition of a piece of the no man's land wall, when it was destroyed by Germany in 1998," explains Sylvain Verger. Once the raw material of the original wall was purchased, Verger reassembled the materials into his own mold to create a rendition of the structure and invited artists to paint freely on its surface.

An artistic interpretation of the iconic edifice, Verger's wall features paintings that play upon the idea of separation, dichotomy, freedom and isolation, of closing and of opening. These themes serve as



Tourists peruse the interpretive wall.

a reminder of the past, as well as a testament to the advancements in democracy and an overall progressive evolution in the geopolitical landscape. Both colorful and unusual, traces of Thierry Noir's illustrations on this version represent one of the few French artists who painted on the original wall in 1989.

The fragile interpretations, weighing approximately 440 lb. each, are protected from nature and additional graffiti by a Plexiglas wall. They will be displayed for a month in Paris, and then will travel to

Deutsches Historisches Museum of Berlin, followed by the Moscow Contemporary Art Center in Winzavod.

Guo Li, second violoncello of the philharmonic orchestra of China, was invited by French Minister of Culture Christine Albanel to perform alongside Verger's wall on June 6. The musician played the three first violoncello sequences of Jean-Sébastien Bach, a gesture which referenced Mstislav Rostropovich's impromptu performance in front of the Berlin Wall during its fall on November 11, 1989.

Fête de la Musique Brings Music to the Streets

Dancing in the streets! Cities worldwide will enjoy spontaneous musical creativity on June 21, as the 28th annual *Fête de la Musique* (www.fetedelamusique.culture.fr) takes the stage, bringing music lovers out to play. On this day, public spaces will transform into non-stop musical performances, and communities will come together through song, dance, and general festivities.

First launched in France in 1982 by former French minister of culture Jack Lang, *La Fête de la Musique* takes place annually on June 21, the day of the summer solstice — maximizing the amount of entertainment that can take place in one day. It originally began as an informal celebration, with professional and amateur bands playing *ad hoc* in the streets and on sidewalks, and has since evolved into a key cultural event in more than 300 cities worldwide, including 14 in the United States alone.

Across the U.S., *La Fête de la Musique* is gaining popularity from coast to coast. While the festival has been celebrated for years in some cities such as Washington, D.C., it recently debuted in others, like New York with its own "Make Music New York" festival initiated in 2007. In addition to featuring French performances, the event also aims to showcase other Francophone cultures as well as local talent. "Make Music New York" takes the concept of public venues to a new level by sponsoring performances on streets, sidewalks, stoops, and cemeteries. Their goal is to make the festival "open to anyone who wants to take part, enjoyed by everyone who wants to attend." Similar festivals appeared across the country last year with "Make Music Pasadena" in Southern California and "Make Music Cambridge" in New England. This year Houston joins the band with "Make Music Houston," bringing French culture and entertainment to the Lone Star State. *La Fête de la Musique* in Miami offers an open mike segment before scheduled performances to give local musicians a chance to experience the spotlight. Please visit www.ambafance-us.org for a list of events in your area and click on the interactive map that pertains to your region.

"A Pass" Offers Window into the Capital of Stained Glass

Long renowned for its sights and splendors, the medieval town of Chartres now offers to facilitate tourists' voyages. Chartres Pass 2009 is a cultural and educational tourist passport that gives visitors access to five of the city's monuments and museums as well as discounts and promotions throughout the town. The goal of the pass is to encourage visitors to maximize their experience in Chartres while discovering the rich history of the city in an affordable way.

Less than 50 miles outside of Paris, Chartres is famed for its namesake cathedral. Dating back to the 12th century, the Cathedral is seen as a pinnacle of Gothic architecture and is adorned by some of the most extravagant stained-glass windows in France. The city also boasts beautiful parks and gardens, charming historical districts dating back to the Middle Ages, and the honor of being named the "capital of stained glass." In fact, the specific shade of blue used in the windows of Chartres Cathedral, often compared to the blue of the autumn sky, has since been dubbed "Chartres Blue."

The Chartres Pass 2009 (www.chartres-tourisme.com) allows

visitors to discover more than just the famed cathedral. Users will be granted access to the International Stained-Glass Centre, the Fine-Arts Museum, the Agricultural Conservatory, and will also receive a complimentary guided tour of the old city by train or on foot. In addition, the pass will grant special offers for a visit of the cathedral's crypt, the North Tower of *la cathédrale*, Little Venice, and the Stained-Glass Gallery, as well as discounted rates at the Chartres Theater and various restaurants, bars, and hotels.



The Chartres cathedral is renowned for its stained glass.

TURKISH FANFARE IN FRANCE

To mirror the French Spring program which took place in Turkey in 2006, France and Turkey have organized a Turkish cultural season in France that begins this July and ends in March 2010. The program of Turkish cultural events aims to make the French public aware of the vitality, diversity, and cultural treasures of Turkey, as well as draw attention to the long-standing relationship between the two countries. The French embassy in Turkey was the world's first permanent diplomatic mission, and evidence of the Franco-Turkish relationship is still visible in Turkey today, with traces of French culture found in Turkish art, literature, architecture, and education. Three major exhibitions will honor Turkey throughout the course of the year: an exhibit on the history and cultural life of Istanbul at the Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, an exhibit on the textiles and kaftans of Topkapı Palace at the Louvre, and an exhibit on the City of Troy at the Cité des Sciences. Turkish writers and artists will also be present at festivals and cultural institutions throughout France. The Turkish Cultural Season in France will culminate with the naming of Istanbul as the "European Capital of Culture" in March.

ALAIN DUCASSE HEATS UP CLASS



Alain Ducasse à l'école.

For years, renowned French chef Alain Ducasse has been training fellow culinary artists in his elite cooking schools, but now, for the first time, he is offering his services to the public. *École de Cuisine Alain Ducasse* opened this May in Paris and will offer cooking classes designed for all levels of experience. The school offers 10 genres of classes including "traditional cooking," "cooking to feel well," wine tasting, pastry, and children's cooking classes. One class even includes a trip to the market where patrons will learn how to buy the best ingredients, which they will then bring back to class to learn how to cook. The Alain Ducasse cooking school aims to teach dishes which are both simple and accessible. "Our challenge is to be able to deliver this gourmet cuisine in a way that is understood to the general public," explains teaching chef Romain Corbière. To make gourmet cuisine more accessible, chefs teach tricks and shortcuts to elaborate dishes, and make an effort to explain how and why each technique is performed. Classes are open to the public, and will be offered in English as well as French.

"News From France" would like to clarify that I.M. Pei is Chinese-American, which was not accurately reflected in the article titled "A Pointed Anniversary of the Louvre's Pyramid."

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St. Louis Exhibition Is *Moving Through Time and Space*

This summer, the Contemporary Art Museum of St. Louis is honoring the life and work of Belgian filmmaker and video artist Chantal Akerman in the exhibit *CHANTAL AKERMAN: Moving Through Time and Space*. In the first museum survey of Akerman's work, the exhibit explores how the artist has created a cross-over genre of film and art. Her films use a *mélange* of techniques found in documentary filmmaking and video installations. *D'est: Au bord de la fiction* is a collection of still images of Eastern Europe shot without narration to capture the essence of the region during the Cold War rather than focus on historical details. *De l'autre côté*, in an unsentimental and unobtrusive tone, tells the story of Mexican immigrants through omniscient long-camera angles. *Femmes d'Anvers en Novembre*, a new film commissioned especially for the exhibit, is shot in a horizontal split-screen format and tells the story of two women



In "*Moving Through Time and Space*," Chantal Akerman explores the complexities of human social interplay.

© Jean-Michel Vaeminx

through silent social interplay.

Moving Through Time and Space will feature five works, including *Sud, Là-bas, D'est: Au bord de la fiction, De l'autre côté*, and *Femmes d'Anvers en Novembre*. Each film explores Akerman's highly personal yet simultaneously distant point of view which has made her films strikingly unique. Chantal Akerman is acclaimed not only for her groundbreaking style, but for the content of her films which tends to focus on the relationships between women

and the art of storytelling. Akerman has made over 25 films in her lifetime and has been awarded the Lumière Award, France's equivalent of the Academy Award, the FIRPRESCI Prize from the International Federation of Film Critics, and has served as artist in residence for Harvard University. *CHANTAL AKERMAN: Moving Through Time and Space* will be displayed at the Contemporary Art Museum of St. Louis until August 2.

Return to Function Makes Debut in Madison

Return to Function, a new exhibit at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (MMoCA) in Madison, Wisconsin, examines how everyday objects are perceived by 20 contemporary American and international artists, seven of whom are French. Their works strive to shed light on everyday tasks, and address society's obsession and need for objects in our daily lives, including objects such as a camper, a soccer ball made of right angles, and a cell phone that doubles as a piece of exercise equipment. Through these works, artists aim to give an unexplored perspective on familiar, everyday objects.

The unconventional works are divided into four categories: transportation, shelter, clothing, and commodity. Each work



Courtesy of Lucy Orta

Refuge Wear Habitant brings new thought to functionality.

introduces innovative ways of approaching old tasks. For instance, Paris-based artist Lucy Orta created a poncho that can also be used as a tent titled, "Refuge Wear Habitant." The poncho/tent defies the barrier between utility and luxury, and has been described as "sleek, sexy and operational."

The Madison Museum of Contemporary Art prides itself on its ability to organize such a colorful collaboration of international talent. Museum director Stephen Fleischman says that the museum is

"honored to present work by this group of artists. Many have never shown in the United States before, while others have never before exhibited in the Midwest." *Return to Function* will be on view at MMoCA until August 23.

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