

## Douste-Blazy Chooses U.S. for First Official Visit

**F**RANCE'S NEW MINISTER of foreign affairs, Philippe Douste-Blazy, made his first official visit to the United States, July 4 through 6. During his three-day stay, he discussed Iran's nuclear program with Condoleezza Rice in Washington, D.C., talked with former president Bill Clinton in New York about health projects for developing countries and went to Chicago, IL, to meet with Senator Barack Obama and the city's mayor, Richard Daley.

The French foreign minister emphasized the importance of France's relationship with



French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

the United States. "I think that the strength of the friendship and common values shared by our two countries, our two peoples, are stronger than a cliché," Douste-Blazy said. "Just because we're not on the same wavelength on a foreign policy matter doesn't mean we don't agree on values."

He arrived in Washington for his official visit on July 4, a date that embodies French-American friendship. Indeed, France played a substantial role in helping the United States, a former British colony, win nationhood. Douste-Blazy celebrated Independence Day at the U.S. Federal Reserve, as a guest of its chairman, Alan Greenspan. On Tuesday, Douste-Blazy met with French business leaders living in the United States as well as representatives of the Jewish community, before meeting with his U.S. counterpart, Condoleezza Rice. The two ministers discussed their countries' cooperation in fighting terrorism, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and African aid initiatives. Later on Tuesday, the French foreign minister met with the head of the American Federation of Labor, John Sweeney.

Before returning to France, Douste-Blazy flew to New York, where he met with former president Bill Clinton to discuss aid projects to combat infectious diseases, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the American health system. Douste-Blazy, a cardiologist and the

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### FRANCE CONDEMNS LONDON ATTACKS, OFFERS FULL SUPPORT

On the morning of the terrorist attacks in London, President Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin and Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy all expressed France's sympathy and support toward Great Britain. At least 56 people were killed and 700 injured when four bombs went off in underground trains and a bus during rush hour on July 7. A second series of attacks, which fortunately caused no serious injuries, took place on July 21. President Chirac expressed the solidarity, compassion and friendship of the French to Londoners and to the British. Douste-Blazy wrote to his British counterpart, Jack Straw, to express his sympathy and condolences to the victims' families. The French foreign minister reaffirmed France's determination to fight terrorism in close cooperation with its allies. Expressing friendship and support for the British people, Villepin also emphasized that "more than ever, our democracies must come together and demonstrate unity in the face of the terrorist threat."

## Brazilian President Celebrates Bastille Day in France


**W**ITH FRANCE currently celebrating the "Year of Brazil," Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was French President Jacques Chirac's guest of honor during the Bastille Day festivities in Paris this year. Lula was accompanied by several of his ministers during his July 12 through 15 visit, including External Relations Minister Celso Amorim, Industry Minister Luiz Furlan and Culture Minister Gilberto Gil. A popular singer in his native country, Gil treated Parisians to a special rendition of Brazilian classics on the place de la Bastille on July 13.

On July 14, Lula da Silva observed the traditional Bastille Day military parade on the Champs-Élysées with his host, Chirac. Brazilian troops led the march, which included 5,000 French soldiers, 900 combat vehicles, 60 airplanes and 30 helicopters. The Brazilian government confirmed its purchase of 12 Mirage 2000 to modernize its air force, which currently consists of the Mirage III-E/BR. The tradition of French-Brazilian military cooperation dates back to 1919, when Brazil first sent young officers to train at Saint-Cyr, France's elite military school. Today, French air force pilots train on Brazilian aircraft.



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and President Jacques Chirac of France

As well as discussing military cooperation, the two heads of state addressed questions of common concern, such as U.N. reform (France supports Brazil's bid for a permanent seat on the Security Council), the situation in Haiti and development financing. Several bilateral agreements dealing with cooperation in the fields of aeronautics, energy, technology, the environment and film production were signed at the Elysée Palace.

The Brazilian president also attended a luncheon by the MEDEF (the French association of employers) and the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry on July 13, during which he emphasized Brazil's appeal as a dynamic emerging economy. Trade between the two countries has seen a substantial increase in recent years, with Brazilian exports to France amounting to \$2.19 billion in 2004 (up 27 percent from 2003) and imports reaching \$2.28 billion (up 29 percent). France is the fourth largest foreign investor in Brazil. 

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### ARMSTRONG WINS 7TH TOUR DE FRANCE!



America's Lance Armstrong secured his legacy as one of History's greatest cyclists by winning the Tour de France for the seventh consecutive time on July 24, a feat never before achieved. Armstrong accomplished this amazing exploit after having been treated for cancer in 1996. He will now retire from competitive cycling, but will stay involved in the running of his cancer foundation ([www.livestrong.org](http://www.livestrong.org)).

**SHARON VISITS FRANCE**

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon traveled to France on July 27 to meet with President Jacques Chirac. Chirac praised Sharon's "courageous and determined decision to evacuate the Gaza Strip," and the Israeli leader in turn thanked France for cracking down on anti-Semitic violence.

**VEL D'HIV COMMEMORATED**

Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin commemorated the 63rd anniversary of the raid of Vel d'Hiv during a moving ceremony in Paris, and called for renewed vigor and continued vigilance against all forms of hatred and terrorism: "Against all forms of anti-Semitism, racism or xenophobia, let us fight without respite." On July 16 and 17, 1942, French collaborationist forces rounded up 12,884 Jews in the Paris region and sent them to Nazi extermination camps. Villepin offered his respects for the victims and urged people to learn from the lessons of the past.

**NEW AGENCY IN LYON TO BRIDGE "DIGITAL DIVIDE"**

The city of Lyon announced the creation of a "World Digital Solidarity Agency" (Agence de Solidarité Numérique) to promote digital and computer technology through programs linked with the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF). This agency will use DSF funds for training and research, under the direction of Louise Lassonde from the United Nations technology training program, Unitar. With the help of voluntary contributions from governments and companies, the DSF aims to reduce inequalities and bridge the "digital divide" between the industrial and developing worlds.

**BASTILLE DAY PARADE CELEBRATES SOLIDARITY**



The military parade on July 14 down the Champs-Élysées included units that helped the victims of last year's tsunami in Southeast Asia, as well as units that maintained peace in the Ivory Coast. Even the dogs of the 132nd battalion, who contributed to the operations in Kosovo, paraded next to their masters (see picture).

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**Douste-Blazy Visits U.S.** (continued from page 1)

former health minister of France, is very interested in health issues, and is particularly concerned with fighting the spread of AIDS in the Third World. "People are just beginning to think about this here in the United States with the ACCESS Program, President Bush is also helping this project and there's the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS,"



Former president Bill Clinton and Douste-Blazy

Douste-Blazy said. "I'd like us, the European Union and Americans, to work together on this because we have no right simply to go on as we are."

Douste-Blazy paid tribute to the ACCESS program for having treated over 430,000 patients with antiretrovirals, half of them in Africa, and he said he looks forward to a gathering in Paris at the end of the year when the European Union and the United States will meet representatives of major pharmaceutical laboratories in order to work out ways in which medicines can be provided more cheaply to developing countries.

**France Unveils 67 Centers of Competitiveness**

PRIME MINISTER Dominique de Villepin announced plans to spend 1.5 billion euros between 2006 and 2008 on 67 research and industrial hubs (dubbed "centers of competitiveness") throughout the country to boost employment and provide incentives for companies to stay in France. "The centers will help in the creation of new products," said Villepin. "And it is by creating new products that we can boost our growth." The centers would also ensure that key industries remain anchored in France.

This two-pronged plan of research and industrial innovation focuses on creating hubs where academic researchers can join forces with entrepreneurs and rapidly bring new innovations to the market. The government wants to increase economic growth by providing the monetary freedom for innovators to take risks.

The French government has identified six strategic areas that will receive priority support: a health cluster in Lyon, the aerospace industry near Toulouse, neurosciences research based in Paris, complex software system developers in Saclay (near Paris), a secure computer communications center in southern France and a nanotechnology group near Grenoble. These hubs are already world leaders in their fields, and the government hopes to help them maintain their lead.

The 67 industrial centers will be funded by a combination of tax breaks and research grants. Indeed, of the 1.5-billion-euro (\$1.8 billion) total, 300 million will be disbursed as tax

**TWO FRENCH SITES ADDED TO UNESCO'S WORLD HERITAGE LIST**



Le Havre's city center

UNESCO's World Heritage Committee added two new French landmarks to its collection of World Heritage Sites on July 15. The city center of Le Havre in Normandy and 23 bellfries in Nord Pas-de-Calais were among 17 cultural sites to be inducted into the collection by Chairman Themba Wakashe in Durban, South Africa.

Le Havre, destroyed by bombings in 1944, was reconstructed by architect Auguste Perret. The city was said to be "an exceptional example of post-war architecture and urbanism" by the Committee and was applauded for its modern design using exemplary construction techniques.

The 23 bellfries in northern France were added for their beautiful illustration of Roman, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque styles of architecture and were declared by UNESCO to be "highly significant symbols of the conquest of civic freedoms."

These two sites join the list of 28 other French sites already part of the World Heritage List, including the cathedral of Chartres and the banks of the Seine.

For more information, visit [whc.unesco.org](http://whc.unesco.org).

breaks, 400 million by various ministries and 800 to 900 million as grants from France's public research agencies.

**Coastal Conservation Agency Celebrates 30th Anniversary**

ON JULY 18, President Jacques Chirac attended a ceremony marking the 30th anniversary of the Conservatoire du Littoral (Coastal Conservation Agency), the organization he created during his term as prime minister in order to promote environmentally friendly and sustainable development along France's coastlines.

The Coastal Conservation Agency purchases coastal land in order to protect its fragile or endangered wildlife from the pollution and degradation that comes with urban sprawl. It currently oversees 70,500 hectares of land on 880 km of shoreline.

"Today, we have to go farther in the protection of our coasts," said Chirac at the meeting held in Rochefort. Due to the

current rise in land-ownership prices, and to the increasing number of people moving to France's shores (3.4 million new residents are expected by 2030), Chirac stressed the agency's need for a bigger budget in order to ensure its continued success.

He therefore announced that 80 percent—and eventually 100 percent—of the receipts from boat registration fees in France will be forwarded directly to the Conservation Agency. This would provide it with a reliable source of revenue and increase its budget by 40 percent, or 28 million euros yearly, beginning in 2006. The organization hopes to use these funds to reach its goal of preserving one third of France's coastlines by 2030.





## France and Texas Join Forces Against Cancer

**T**HE TEXAS CHILDREN'S Cancer Center (TCCC) in Houston, Texas, and the Institut d'Hématologie-Oncologie Pédiatrique (IHOP) in Lyon, France, signed a cooperative agreement in May, with the support of the French Embassy's Office of Science and Technology. The agreement brings together the largest pediatric cancer centers in the U.S. and Europe. "This relationship will foster collaboration in research that will open many doors and help speed efforts that may lead to cures for childhood cancers and blood disorders," said TCCC Medical Director Dr. David Poplack. The further development of a vaccine being pioneered at Texas Children's against neuroblastoma, one of the most common solid tumors of early childhood, is high among the agreement's list of goals, which also include collaborative research in cancer genomics and genetics.

This latest agreement follows in the footsteps of an earlier agreement, signed in February 2004 between the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and the Institut Gustave Roussy, two of the world's premier cancer institutions. That agreement, which built upon long-term professional relationships between physicians and scientists at both institutions, formalized a framework for cooperation and set the stage for joint clinical trials, the sharing of clinical data bases, and the creation of visiting professor positions and post-doctoral training and fellowship programs. Researchers from both institutions recently celebrated their collaboration's first anniversary in Houston, and deemed their joint effort to be a great success. ■

## Act French!

### Six Months of French Theater in New York

**A** SEASON OF NEW theater from France has just debuted in New York. It will feature six months of intriguing performances from the front lines of French culture. The series was launched by the Association Française d'Action Artistique and by the cultural service of the French Embassy in the U.S. Over 50 contemporary French plays are scheduled to take to the stage through mid-December in many high-end theaters emblematic of New York showbiz, including the Lincoln Center, the Public Theater and the Apollo.

The festival features productions by critically acclaimed stage directors such as Ariane Mnouchikine, Peter Brook, Patrice Chéreau and Claude Régy, working with stars like Isabelle Huppert and Marie-France Pisier and inspired by renowned playwrights (including Olivier Py and Valère Novarina).

"Act French" is the most ambitious festival of French theater this side of the Atlantic. In addition to showcasing the richness of contemporary French stage production, the festi-

### AIR MOBILITY RODEO 2005



A French airlift squadron was invited to participate in the Air Mobility Rodeo 2005 military exercise held at McCord Air Force Base (Tacoma, WA) in June. With 27 U.S. and six international teams—

Brazil, France, Germany, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom—competing, the Air Mobility Rodeo is known around the world as the premiere competition for bases, wings, squadrons and crews to find who's the best of the best. The competition included airdrops, air refueling, medical evacuations, short-field landings, and ground-support activities. Fourteen C-130s from seven nations competed for the title of Best C-130 Wing, which was won by the 6th Air Mobility Wing of MacDill AFB, Florida. The French C-160 aircraft's crew, ground personnel and parachute team also performed outstandingly well, and received a warm welcome from their hosts, the 97th American Airlift Squadron.

val also helps unite two dynamic cultures. It is a great opportunity to exchange ideas, ask questions and share enthusiasm over new discoveries. The organizers hope that this theatrical panorama will allow American audiences to become more familiar with all that today's French theater has to offer.

For a schedule of events, visit [www.actfrench.org](http://www.actfrench.org). ■

## Chaplin Exhibit in Paris

**I**N THE POPULAR imagination, Charlie Chaplin is nearly inseparable from the lovable "Little Tramp" he so often portrayed. From June through September, the Jeu de Paume museum in Paris is hosting an exhibition entitled "Chaplin in Pictures" that seeks to better understand Chaplin's universally recognized character, but also the man himself. Made possible by the recent public unveiling of family archives, the exhibition provides a glimpse of aspects of Chaplin's life previously hidden from the public. Through photos and movie clips never seen before, the exhibition traces Chaplin's life from his childhood in London to his career as a director and his exile in Switzerland.

Movie clips chronicle the transformation of Chaplin's



Chaplin in *The Tramp* (1916)

slightly malicious mute vagabond, starting with his first appearance in the 1914 film *Kid Auto Race in Venice*, to the more romantic character that developed in his later films. The exhibition also reveals Chaplin's dedication to perfection both behind and in front of the camera. As a director, Chaplin increasingly turned to more serious subjects, highlighting the plight of the underdog in the often bewildering world of industrialization and authoritarian governments. As the exhibit demonstrates through multiple studio out-takes and Chaplin's home videos, however, he never lost his love for humor or his desire to find the perfect sight gag.

To find out more about the exhibit, please visit the Jeu de Paume's Web site at [www.jeudepaume.org](http://www.jeudepaume.org). ■

### U.S. NAVY SHIP RESCUES FRENCH TEENAGER

The USS Cole, sadly famous for having suffered a deadly terrorist attack in 2000 off Yemen, recently rescued a French teenager with appendicitis from a civilian sailboat in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Even though the Cole was due in Philadelphia for its Independence Day celebrations, Commander Brian A. Solo turned the ship around 300 miles to rendezvous with a merchant vessel, the Chiquita Nederland, that had taken the ailing youth onboard. In the meantime, two Canadian search and rescue parachutists were dispatched by plane to provide urgent treatment. The 16-year-old French national was then treated onboard the Cole, and the destroyer made it to Philadelphia just in time for the festivities!

### MICROSOFT CHOOSES ALCATEL COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Genesys, a subsidiary of the French company Alcatel, announced on July 11 that Microsoft is using its Enterprise Telephony Software (GETS) to give its employees new desktop telephony-control capabilities. Microsoft has already deployed the technology across 40,000 computers in its headquarters. GETS enables users to manage their contacts and calls directly from their computers, receive email notification of missed calls, and dynamically transfer calls to their current location.

### PATTI SMITH RECEIVES TOP FRENCH CULTURAL HONOR

Minister of Culture Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres named Patti Smith a commander in the Order of Arts and Letters at an Aids benefit concert in Paris on July 10. Smith's debut album, *Horses*, is still regarded as one of the most influential rock albums, even now, 30 years after its release. It catapulted her onto the New York rock scene, leading to a formidable career. The culture minister deemed her "one of the most influential artists in women's rock 'n' roll" as he handed her the award.

### FIRST FRENCH REMAKE OF U.S. MOVIE

By remaking James Toback's 1978 film *Fingers* into *De Battre Mon Coeur S'est Arrêté* ("The Beat That My Heart Skipped"), Jacques Audiard has become the first French director to remake an American movie. Hollywood has long been inspired by French movies, such as *La Cage aux folles* (which became *The Birdcage*) or *La Totale* (reborn as *True Lies*), but the opposite had not been true until now. A hit in France since its March release, the new film, out now in certain U.S. cities, maintains the essence of the original story about how a criminal rediscovers his passion for the piano.

# SARTRE VS. ARON

OFIL

# INKERS



*They would have been 100 years old this year. They studied together, debated together, and both shaped the 20th century with their thoughts.*

## Aron and Sartre: Two Great Minds Collide

**S**ARTRE AND ARON began their 50-year acquaintance studying in an elite French school, l'Ecole Normale Supérieure. Each in his inimitable way displayed the defiance both loved and reviled in intellectuals: Aron fancied Anglo-American liberalism before it became fashionable, while Sartre remained a communist sympathizer long after the fashion had passed.

In terms of political lucidity, Aron wins the game by far. In the mid-thirties he warned against the rise of Nazism, a threat underestimated by Sartre. After the war, the two school-fellows fought on issues such as communism, Gaullism, the transatlantic relationship, the Cuban missile crisis, May 1968, Maoism ... in fact, on just about everything and anything.

Aron wrote cool, smooth prose about the most heated geopolitical conflicts, while Sartre could turn any triviality into an existential crisis. Yet they often stood

together against the French political establishment. Both joined the Resistance when France was under Nazi rule, and both called for Algerian independence.

The two intellectuals developed contrasting, but equally controversial, styles of destroying received beliefs. Aron used to demonize his fellow intellectuals as alarmists, rather than admitting that the Cold War could very well end in a nuclear holocaust. Sartre criticized those who failed to resist oppression.

Aron exaggerated the power of reason, while Sartre inflated the power of action. Each wanted to take French society in radically different directions, and they never

ceased to be critical of the status quo. In the end, both seemed to have thought in and out of their time, perhaps the greatest testament to their extraordinary legacy. ■ ■



Sartre and Aron, a cordial rivalry (1979)

## Aron: Going Against the Grain



**R**AYMOND ARON, one of the most famous French writers and thinkers of the 20th century (he was a sociologist, philosopher, and journalist), was born on March 14, 1905. A graduate of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, his work was greatly influenced by the time he spent in Germany, especially in the early 1930s during the rise of Hitler's national-socialism. There, he witnessed the burning of thousands of books by the Nazis, an event that marked his work as a politically involved thinker.

Though he quickly joined the French Free Forces led by Charles de Gaulle in London, his support for the general and future French president was not absolute: Aron was never one to shy away from being sharply critical of all sides of the political debate. But his strong political convictions meant that he himself was often part and parcel of these debates (he joined the center-right forces of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in 1981).

He remains famous for his anti-Marxism and his lucidity. His analysis of totalitarianism is still considered one of the most insightful ever. He defined it as a complex mix of a state monopoly of politics, truth, communication, economic action and ideas. His book on the matter, *Democracy and Totalitarianism* (1965) remains a classic in political science classes. Aron also carried out in-depth analyses of international relations. A member of the "realist" stream, he nevertheless took into account ideas, ideals and values as well as state interests.

Aron dedicated a good part of his life to teaching not only in the best universities in Europe, but also in the United States. Indeed, Henry Kissinger, perhaps the key American diplomatic figure of the 1970s, was his student. Speaking of Raymond Aron, Kissinger declared: "No one has had a greater intellectual influence on me." A politically involved thinker, Raymond Aron was also a very active journalist: he was chief editor of the center-right newspaper *Le Figaro*, worked for the weekly magazine *L'Express* and for the radio station Europe 1. Raymond Aron passed away in 1983. ■ ■

### WHAT IS EXISTENTIALISM?

"A philosophy that emphasizes the uniqueness and isolation of the individual experience in a hostile or indifferent universe, regards human existence as unexplainable, and stresses freedom of choice and responsibility for the consequences of one's acts."

-The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language

## Sartre: a Life of Commitments

**J**EAN-PAUL SARTRE, born on June 21, 1905, studied in Paris at the Ecole Normale Supérieure from 1924 to 1929. First a Professor of philosophy in Le Havre, and then in Paris, he went to Berlin in 1932 to study famous German philosophers like Husserl and Heidegger. He became a prisoner of war in 1940, but soon returned to his teaching position and served in the Resistance, alongside the famous female novelist, Marguerite Duras. After the war, he started his writing career in earnest.

Sartre wrote theoretical essays (*L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme*, 1946) but also novels (*Les Mots*, 1964), theater pieces (*Huis-Clos*, 1944) and political pamphlets based on his Maoist convictions. He was considered one of

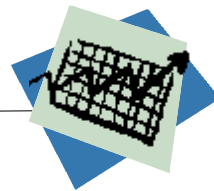


Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre in Rio de Janeiro, 1960

the most brilliant authors of post-war France, and was offered the Nobel Prize for literature in 1964 (but he turned it down). His original philosophy of existentialism, mainly developed in his masterpiece *L'Être et le Néant* (1943), soon came to be one of the main inspirational sources of modern literature. Sartre was inspired in turn: his personal and intellectual life were greatly enriched by his long-term relationship with the famous writer Simone de Beauvoir.

Sartre's vigorous political activism continues to have a strong influence on French political life. Indeed, his strong commitment to the revolutionary Maoist movement and his difficult relationship with the Communist Party gave rise to an ongoing debate about the tensions between intellectuals and politics. He took part in the launch of the newspaper *Libération* in 1944, which has become one of France's leading left-wing papers. Despite the controversial aspects of both his works and political views, his funeral in 1980 drew an enormous crowd. ■ ■





## Parisot First Woman to Head MEDEF

**T**HE FRENCH EMPLOYERS' association, MEDEF (Mouvement des Entreprises de France) appointed Laurence Parisot, 45, as its first female president on July 5. In addition to being MEDEF's first female president, Parisot, as the CEO of the opinion polling group IFOP, is the organization's first leader from the service sector.



Photo: EFFE

"For the first time, a woman has been elected to head this organization," said Catherine Vautrin, France's minister for equality. "She will serve as a symbol for our country's movement toward more professional equality between women and men." But there is still much work left: on the same day as Parisot's election, a study commissioned in part by the MEDEF showed that only 4.5 percent of women held leadership positions in French companies last year.

Parisot was elected in the first round of voting, with 271 votes out of 508 ballots cast, beating two other candidates, Yvon Jacob

of mechanical engineering group Legris and Huges-Arnaud Mayer, president of textile company Abeil. Parisot will serve a five-year term, succeeding Ernest-Antoine Seillière, who headed MEDEF since it replaced the former bosses' association in 1998. MEDEF represents over 750,000 businesses throughout France, from large multinationals to small family-run operations.

In her first announcement as MEDEF's new president, Parisot urged open social dialogue and a conciliatory stance toward unions. She also spoke of the need for reforms in the French economy so as to lower unemployment rates, increase wages and make changes in the French labor code to help small companies.

"For a small company, hiring an additional staff member can sometimes be a mortal risk," Parisot said. "We have to give more importance to the hiring of new people so that we can see a rapid and significant decrease in unemployment."

For more information, visit [www.medef.fr](http://www.medef.fr). ■ ■

### HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL PARTIAL PRIVATIZATION OF GAZ DE FRANCE

More than 3.2 million Frenchmen have become shareholders of the company Gaz de France ([www.gdf.fr](http://www.gdf.fr)). French Finance Minister Thierry Breton expressed his satisfaction regarding the enthusiasm generated by this partial privatization of the state-owned company. Half of the company's employees have acquired shares and about half of the sold capital will be owned by individuals rather than institutions. The operation's proceeds will be largely used to sustain industrial development in France.

### NEW FRANCO-JAPANESE AUTOMOBILE PARTNERSHIP

France's PSA Peugeot-Citroën and Japan's Mitsubishi Motors Corporation agreed to launch a joint SUV development project on July 11. The companies will focus on keeping gas consumption and emissions as low as possible, to address the concerns of European consumers who are increasingly buying SUVs. The new vehicle will be launched in Europe in 2007, and production will take place in Japan, where Mitsubishi is set to produce 30,000 vehicles per year. To learn more, visit [www.psa.fr](http://www.psa.fr).

### MOBILE VIDEO PORTALS

For the first time in Europe, SFR subscribers will be able to access video clips on their cell phones, which will in effect become interactive televisions. SFR and Universal Music, both subsidiaries of Vivendi

Universal, signed an agreement on July 7 concerning the launch of Label Studio TV. Universal Music will provide video clips (such as music videos and exclusive interviews with artists) that SFR users will be able to download and view on their phones later this year. For more information, visit [www.sfrcegetel.fr](http://www.sfrcegetel.fr).

### TO AVOID CANCER, DO SPORTS!

The results of a seven-year European study named Epic, presented in Paris on June 22, show that regular physical activity protects from colon and breast cancer. Risk reduction ranges from 20 percent for breast cancer to 34 percent for colon cancer. Inversely, inactivity and obesity unleash a series of hormonal reactions that seem to favor cancer cells. The researchers conclude that it is therefore essential to practice a serious physical activity on a daily basis ([www.iarc.fr/epic](http://www.iarc.fr/epic)).

## France Télécom, Microsoft to Design Advanced Cell Phones

**D**URING A JOINT news conference in Paris on June 29, France Télécom and Microsoft announced a new partnership with the intent of co-developing innovative products that combine computer and mobile phone technologies. Microsoft is eager to penetrate the telecom market as people increasingly rely on their phones for Internet access. According to Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer, "the new digital world requires new kinds of partnerships." Likewise, France Télécom CEO, Didier Lombard, believes that this collaboration will facilitate his company's transition from a traditional phone company into a provider of a broad range of services.

The two companies are currently working to develop products that deliver voice, data, and video over phone networks. The initial proposal is to build HomeZone, a device with cellular, WiFi wireless, and voice-over-internet protocol technologies, which may eventually evolve into a Windows-based smart phone. This cell phone-like device is

### BERNARD ARNAULT FRANCE'S NEW TOP DOG



who come in at third place with \$12.05 billion. Microsoft founder Bill Gates remains the world's richest person, with a net worth of about \$48.5 billion.

Bernard Arnault, president of Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessey, has recently been named the richest man in France by *Challenges* magazine. His empire of luxury products, worth an estimated \$17.29 billion, topped the list of France's 500 largest fortunes this year, dethroning the Bettencourt family (of L'Oréal fame) who have dominated the spot for the last several years. Now in second place, their fortune amounts to \$14.06 billion and they are followed by the Mulliez family, owners of the Auchan supermarket chain,

scheduled to be ready within 12 to 18 months.

Another of their initiatives is LivePhone, a phone that uses WiFi wireless technology to bring together TV, video phones, instant messaging, and other services so that they may be used simultaneously, and with great flexibility. Theoretical examples of possible applications, which are still about two years away from reaching the market, include instant messaging via television and sending video clips recorded from a TV to a cell phone as a text message.

For more information, visit [www.francetelecom.com](http://www.francetelecom.com). ■ ■

## Site of Nicotine Addiction in Brain Tracked Down

**A** TEAM OF FRENCH researchers narrowed the search for the chemical triggers in a human brain responsible for nicotine addiction. Their discovery establishes the first specific target for the treatment of a deadly addiction that is expected to cause 100 million deaths in the 21st century.

Jean-Pierre Changeux and his colleagues from CNRS/Institut Pasteur in Paris have spent a decade unraveling the mysteries of genes and their interactions with behavior. Scientists have long known that the brain recognizes nicotine through a complex set of chemicals created by nicotine receptors in the brain. However, with so many subtypes of receptors, it has been difficult to narrow down which specific neurons are

responsible for the brain's response to the nicotine stimulant.

Changeux's team bred mice lacking a specific subunit of the nicotinic receptor Beta 2, which is normally found in a particular region of the brain. When bred without these receptors, the mice had no interest in nicotine. But, when reintroduced, the receptors rekindled the mice's cravings for the toxic substance.

This discovery proved that the two main properties of nicotine—its stimulating effect and addictive nature—are tied to the same brain region, which is also known to be the site of several cognitive abilities. Since the same chemical system exists in both mice and humans, this study introduces the possibility that it may one day be possible to treat nicotine addiction in humans by acting on the Beta 2 nicotinic receptor. ■ ■

## CLAUDE SIMON LEAVES LEGACY OF LITERATURE

French Nobel Prize winner Claude Simon passed away on July 6 at the age of 91. Simon emerged in the 1950's with the *nouveau roman* or "new novel" style, dispensing with literary norms and punctuation for a free-flowing style, which he first used in *La Route des Flandres* (set during World War II). He won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1985 for his novel *Les Geographiques*, which depicted his experience with the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. Simon was born in Madagascar to French parents in 1913. After losing his parents at a young age, he was sent to live with his grandmother in Perpignan, which inspired his last novel, *Le Tramway*, based on his life from childhood to old age.

## LAPTOP PROGRAM RENEWED

The minister of education, Gilles de Robien, has decided to renew Operation Student Laptop for the upcoming school year. This program gives students an opportunity to buy laptops at very advantageous interest rates (equivalent to one euro a day) which are offered by partner banks (see NFF 04.11). Started in September 2004, the operation was judged a "great success:" almost 150,000 university students used it to buy laptops equipped with Wi-Fi technology. This year, the operation will be especially aimed at poor and handicapped youths.

## URBAN BEACHES SPREADING

It seems that many cities have been inspired by the resounding success of "Paris Plage," the French capital's summertime beach event. Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë's idea to create a giant beach along the banks of the Seine has spread to several other French cities since its launch in 2001, including Toulouse, Besançon and Clermont-Ferrand. Even cities from other countries are joining in the fun, with Berlin and Budapest planning urban beaches this summer as well!

## POGNON SETS FRENCH 100-METERS RECORD

French sprinter Ronald Pognon provided the biggest surprise at the international track meet in Lausanne this July, by winning the men's 100 meters ahead of American Olympic champion Justin Gatlin. In the process, he set a new national record and became the first French sprinter to run this distance in less than 10 seconds (9.99 seconds to be exact!). Pognon is the 46th athlete to run the 100 meters in under 10 seconds, and France is the 14th country to achieve this feat.



# The French Look for a Change in Scenery

**T**HE FRENCH are increasingly on the move, according to a recent study published by the National Institute for Statistics (INSEE). It confirmed a new high rate of mobility for the French, citing that in the five-year period between 1999 and 2004, 19.5 million inhabitants five and older changed residence and 3.8 million of those moved to another region. In fact, a greater percentage of the population relocated in the last four years than during all of the 1990s.



Nice Nice Appeals to All

The most popular regions, receiving the most new-comers, are those in the south and the west, with Languedoc-Roussillon at the top of the list, followed by Aquitaine and the Midi-Pyrénées. Other regions experiencing a surplus of new residents include Brittany, Poitou-Charentes, the Pays-de-la-Loire, Auvergne, Limousin, Corsica and Rhône-Alpes.

The seemingly less attractive locations are those in the north, including Normandy, Franche-Comté, and Ile-de-France (the region that includes Paris). Nevertheless, Ile-de-France remains by far the most populated region of France, and the one with the most expensive real estate. In addition, a closer study reveals that different regions appeal to different ages. For example, despite Ile-de-France's slight overall decline in population, it nevertheless attracts many young adults who come there to study or

to work. Youths also prefer Rhône-Alpes for its universities and economic dynamism. Brittany, Aquitaine, Limousin and Auvergne, on the other hand, tend to attract families. And the French Riviera naturally remains a favorite among retirees, who, like millions of tourists every year, seek its balmy weather and sunny beaches.

## No More "Illegitimate" Children

**T**HE "CODE NAPOLEON" (the French civil code which dates back to 1804), has, for over two centuries, differentiated between children born to a married couple and those born out of wedlock. On July 4, the government adapted the code to take into account evolving familial structures. Indeed, until the 1960s, the percentage of children born out of wedlock in France was stagnant at 10 percent. Less than twenty years later, the percentage had increased fourfold.

Abolishing the terms "legitimate" and "illegitimate" brings France's civil code in line with those of other European countries such as Belgium and Germany, which passed similar laws in 1987 and 1997, respectively. Nowadays, children born out of wedlock are fully integrated into society and no longer face the discrimination that existed only a few decades ago; over 95 per-

cent of these children are eventually recognized by their father. The decree results from a broader reform, launched in 1972, that sought to end the differences between legitimate and illegitimate births. From 2001 to 2002, several laws were passed to abolish any remaining laws disadvantageous to children born out of wedlock. The current decree, which will take effect in July 2006, creates full equality among children regardless of the conditions of their birth.

## SAVING HONEY ISLAND KEEPS COUPLE BEE-SY



Two French beekeepers have undertaken a project to protect an isolated island in the Indian Ocean and the legendary honey that is produced there. Mentioned in the Koran and renowned throughout the Middle East, the honey

produced on Socotra, an island 220 miles off the coast of Yemen, is celebrated for its use as a medicine and as an aphrodisiac. Thierry and Camille Sergent first visited the island after hearing rumors about the mythical honey. While the honey and the island's rich ecosystem surpassed all their expectations, the Sergents were horrified by the destruction caused by the natives' apiculture and goat herding. With money from the French Embassy in Yemen, the Sergents have started a program to train local inhabitants to harvest honey in a way that won't damage the island's rich, but very fragile, ecosystem. Filmmaker Richard Harmon is working on a documentary about Socotra and its honey that will premiere on French television in September.

## Another Record Bac Year

**A**CCORDING TO the Ministry of Education, a record 80.2 percent of this year's 610,600 Bac candidates were admitted, which represents an increase of 0.5 points over last year. The number of successful *bacheliers*, as a percentage of their year's total student population, has also risen, from 61.7 percent to 62.5 percent.

The Baccalauréat institution was established by a decree on March 17, 1808. The exam actually dates back to the Middle-Ages, but it was institutionalized under the Empire, and its durability since then stands as a testament to its success.

The diploma is obtained at the end of 12th grade (*terminale*), when students are 17-18 years old, and it is the essential credential for entry into any of France's national universities. The examination consists of a set of tests, one for each subject the candidate is studying. The tests, which often consist of essay questions demanding excellent analytic abilities, can take from two to five hours.

Each subject has a different level of difficulty and is accorded a different grading coefficient based on the student's Baccalauréat track. Indeed French high school students must select one of three main tracks when they start 11th grade: economics and social sciences; literature; or biology, physics and mathematics. In order to obtain the Bac, a candidate is required to achieve an average grade of at least 10 (out of 20).

For more information, visit [www.education.gouv.fr](http://www.education.gouv.fr).





# Clever Designs at Beaubourg

**T**HE MODERN ART MUSEUM of Beaubourg, also known as the Pompidou Center, has just unveiled the hands-on exhibit "D-Day: Design Today" that will run through October 17. The exhibit, spanning over

deals with environmental issues. Indeed, several of today's designers are teaming up with NGOs in order to create new ways of distributing water (Watercone, by Stephan Augustin), producing solar energy (cookers, by CookKits and SK14), or even reprocessing human and animal waste (Superflex).



*Dispensaire nomade* by Gaston Tolila and Nicholas Gilliland (2002)

A portable health center that could rapidly move from village to village.

1,200-square meters and bringing together new creations by artists from 15 different countries, aims at revealing to museum-goers the amazing ways in which design is used and is useful to us. Several companies, such as Peugeot and Motorola, are displaying their most cutting-edge designs.

"D-Day" covers topics as broad as humanitarian action, sustainable development, consumption, biotechnologies, well-being and self-fulfillment. One of its most promising sections

The extent to which technology and materials have evolved over the past decades offer a large array of possibilities for investigation and discovery. In fact, many of the exhibits are interactive, and all five senses are called upon. For example, French startup Exhalia is demonstrating its scent-marketing technology, which makes it possible to create scents on demand (see NFF 04.14).

For more information on the exhibit, please visit: [www.cnac-gp.fr](http://www.cnac-gp.fr).

## MUSÉE MAILLOL CELEBRATES ROBERT COUTURIER'S LONG CAREER

The Musée Maillol in Paris is celebrating sculptor Robert Couturier's 100th birthday with a retrospective exposition of his work. It includes 100 sculptures and 20 drawings spanning his long career, and he himself attended its inauguration on June 23. Couturier is the last representative of the French art culture of the fifties, and he emerged from a generation of artists who were inspired during World War II to change the way man is represented in art. The distinguishing element of his artistry lies in the way he combines and manipulates different shapes. He is also well known for his feminine nudes, which have continuously evolved. The exposition will run through September 12. For more information, visit [www.museemaillol.com](http://www.museemaillol.com).

**145 COLONS D'OR**  
**NEW DE GAULLE MUSEUM TO BE BUILT**  
 Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises, the village where Charles de Gaulle is buried, is about to start construction on a museum in commemoration of the former French president and wartime leader. Until now, the village, located to the east of Paris, had only one memorial to France's towering 20th-century figure, a 140-foot double-barred Cross of Lorraine (the symbol of the French Resistance). The upcoming museum is due to open on June 18, 2008, to mark the 68th anniversary of de Gaulle's dramatic address to the nation from his exile in London after the fall of France in World War II.

**"PARIS EST À NOUS" GUIDE CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY**  
 The famous Parisian guides *Paris est à nous* will celebrate their tenth anniversary this year. If you have visited the French capital, you have probably come across these innovative and modern-looking pocket guides. Covering topics as broad as "Chocolate Paris," or "The Best Places to Kiss in Paris," *Paris est à nous* has tried to bring Paris back to Parisians, by showing them original aspects of their city that tend to be overlooked by tourists armed with conventional guides. The collection has not exhausted the secrets of Paris's streets and will certainly go on discovering new gems at the rate of six releases a year.



*Femme Pistache*

# Men's Fashion Taking Off

*A relaxed, elegant wardrobe for summer 2006*

**T**HE INFLUENCE and impact of the men's fashion show in Paris has reached a new zenith as the fashion world pays increasing attention to the hairier half of humanity. But while designers say that fashionable men are more and more willing to branch out in their sartorial choices, this year's overall trend, described as inspired by the effortless elegance of the 1930's sportsman, remains relatively classical. It would appear Marc Jacobs (of Louis Vuitton), Emanuel Ungaro, and Karl Lagerfeld are dressing men for their next summer vacation yachting around the Mediterranean, a traditional look but with bold patterns and bright colors. Indeed, summer is about fun, casual outfits amenable to a lifestyle of

island hopping or relaxing along the Côte d'Azur. But chic is still a prerequisite: shorts, tank tops, and sandals come in suede, silk, and crocodile leather, and after sunset, nothing short of a mohair tuxedo will suffice for a night on the town. Those who are too shy to wear Yves Saint Laurent's floral prints on lime green sports coats can rely on Hermes to provide subtle-yet-hip cardigans, polo shirts, and trousers in muted shades. Grab your sunglasses guys, and get ready to experience *la belle vie!*

# Dragons Take Over Medieval Castle

**D**RAGONS HAVE FOUND a new home in the medieval castle of Malbrouck at Manderen in the Moselle region (northeastern France). Through the end of October, an exhibition organized by the National Museum of Natural History, and under the patronage of President Jacques Chirac, gathers paintings, sculptures, manuscripts, gold and silver work, all centered around this mythical beast. Present in folkloric traditions throughout the world, the dragon has nevertheless taken many different guises: in Europe, dragons are scaly, evil beasts that hoard gold and eat damsels, whereas the

Chinese view them as beautiful, noble creatures, portends of good luck and fortune. Art works from Indonesia and the Middle East, both regions with vibrant dragon traditions, are also on display. The exhibit covers a vast time span, from antiquity (the myth of dragons first emerged in China, over 3,000 years ago) to the present, and an especially rich collection of iconography from the European Middle Ages can be viewed. At the time, dragons often represented paganism, which was steadily eradicated by brave Christian warriors, such as Saint Michael. For more information, please visit [www.chateau-malbrouck.com](http://www.chateau-malbrouck.com).



*Saint Michael and the Dragon*, by Aubin Vouet (early 17th century)

## SWEAR WORD DICTIONARY

The art of swearing is at risk, or so thinks Pierre Enckell, who has compiled a dictionary of thousands of French swear words and colorful expressions in order to help preserve it. Many of the words in the *Dictionnaire des Jurons* are not in use anymore, and some of the most interesting expressions date back to Molière or even the Middle Ages. Some foreign swear words, such as "*caramba!*" or "*damned!*" are also included in the book, because they are now considered part of France's everyday vocabulary. As long as there are reasons for swearing, the *Dictionnaire des Jurons* will be a valuable addition to libraries everywhere.



**DAUMIER MOCKS FASHION IN LOS ANGELES**

Honoré Daumier, the socially-conscious 19th-century French painter and caricaturist, is known for mocking the key government and aristocratic personalities of his day, but he didn't stop there. An exhibit of his work at the UCLA Hammer Museum (in Los Angeles) focuses on his critique of fashion, a concept which he found rather ridiculous. While many around the world revered Paris as the epicenter of couture and the epitome of elegant dress, Daumier found those who fussed over ephemeral trends to be full of folly. The "Cutting Edge of Fashion" exhibit features drawings and lithographs of wardrobe malfunctions from the series *Croquis Parisiens* published in the satirical, anti-monarchist newspaper, *Le Charivari*, in 1857. Examples from the collection include the mayhem that ensues when the steel bar supporting a hoop skirt breaks, or when the excessive fabric of a lady's dress catches the wind and blows her away. The irony lies in the fact that the very essence of what makes these ladies fashionable, their clothing, ultimately makes them the object of ridicule, thereby undermining their efforts to be elegant. Also displayed are related works by many of Daumier's peers. The exhibit will run through August 14, but be wary of wearing your hoop skirt to the museum, or you just might blow away! For more information, visit [www.hammer.ucla.edu](http://www.hammer.ucla.edu).

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# The Essence of Line: Ingres to Degas in Baltimore

**T**HE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART (BMA) and the Walters Art Museum (WAM) have joined forces to present the "Essence of Line: Ingres to Degas," a joint exhibition, on view at both museums, that will run until September 11. The "Essence of Line" features more than 150 rarely shown drawings and watercolors from influential French artists of the 19th century, including Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Eugène Delacroix, Honoré Daumier, Paul Cézanne and Edgar Degas. The works on display show the course of French art over a century of inno-

vation (from neoclassicism to symbolism to impressionism), juxtaposing, for instance,

Ingres's neoclassic drawings of definite lines with the romantic splashing colors and expression of Géricault. The art selections range from highly polished drawings created for public display, such as Theodore Carulle d'Aligny's *Pastorale*, with its refined rendering of tones in charcoal, to working preparatory drawings, such as Gericault's expressive ink

study of three heads for his famous painting *The Shipwreck of the Medusa*. The collections in the exhibits at both the WAM and the BMA can be searched and viewed in the online catalogue at [www.frenchedrawings.org](http://www.frenchedrawings.org).



*Dancer*, by Edgar Degas (1897-1900).

**DEGAS EXHIBIT IN NEW MEXICO**

Explore the world of bronze at a Degas and New Mexico sculptors exhibit through October 2 at the New Mexico Museum of Fine Arts. Degas's bronze sculptures of dancers, women and horses present issues and themes that continue to influence contemporary sculptors, such as New Mexican artists Dunham Aurelius, Daisy Youngblood, Dean Howell, Harmony Hammond, Susan Rothenberg and Kiki Smith, whose works are also on display.

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