

## Prime Minister François Fillon Visits D.C. to Discuss International Economic Situation

Prime Minister of France François Fillon traveled to Washington, D.C., on May 1 and 2 for his first visit to the United States in his position as French head of government. Mr. Fillon's arrival marked the first time in 10 years that a French prime minister had come to D.C. The visit — prompted by the invitation of Mr. Fillon as the guest of honor of the American Jewish Committee's annual gala dinner — focused on the current state of the international economy and its consequences for the reform process in France. Mr. Fillon was accompanied by two high-level French officials: Minister of the Economy, Industry and Employment, Christine Lagarde, and Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Michel Barnier.

At the gala dinner of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), hosted at the National Building Museum, Prime Minister Fillon addressed an audience of more than 1,500 foreign dignitaries, Congress members, and leaders of the Jewish American community. In the spirit of President of the Republic Nicolas Sarkozy's visit in November, 2007, Mr. Fillon sent a message of friendship to the American people. He expressed French solidarity with Israel and called for "firmness and dialogue" with regard to an Iranian nuclear enrichment program, underscoring that "[France's] strategy is straightforward. Either dialogue or growing isolation - diplomatic isolation, economic isolation, financial isolation," Iran would face should it decide not to abandon its program. On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of creation of Israel, he also emphasized France's partnership with the U.S. to support this country "in its arduous journey toward a just and lasting peace."

Additionally, Prime Minister Fillon addressed a number of other issues, including the state of exchange rates and international trade, the change in climate for food, as well as the necessity of a new world governance: France advo-

icates the progressive enlargement of the United Nations Security Council and the G8, which should be transformed into the G13 to bring in the emerging countries.

On May 2, Mr. Fillon met with American bank and industry CEOs and with U.S. government officials Henry Paulson, Secretary of the Treasury, and Ben Bernanke, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank. The prime minister also met with former French finance minister and current Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Dominique Strauss-Kahn, and members of the French expatriate community.



Prime Minister Fillon hosts a press conference at the Residence of France during his visit to D.C. Pictured with him (L-R) are Ministers Lagarde and Barnier.

Speaking at a press conference at the Residence of France before his meetings with Bernanke and Paulson, the prime minister stressed that his dialogue with US officials would emphasize the need for a French-American alliance to face the current economic crisis. Recalling that exchanges between the U.S. and Europe accounted for 40% of global trade and 14 millions jobs, Mr. Fillon underlined the consequences of the economic difficulties in the U.S. on Europe's growth.

Mr. Fillon recalled the necessity to enforce measures decided by the G7 and the IMF to limit the effects of the financial crisis. He also pointed out that the "Euro zone could not bear alone the weight of all the other currencies' adjustment": "the high volatility of currencies is a danger for Europe, the U.S. and the world economy."

With American CEOs, the prime minister exposed the reforms undertaken by France over the last year, which have already helped to soften the consequences of the economic crisis, and leave France with numerous "factors of resistance."

cent in February. The Euro Area representatives challenged the IMF growth forecast for 2008, citing the robustness of European growth, particularly in employment figures. Minister Lagarde stated in an interview with French newspaper *Le Figaro*, "the European economy remains more supported than the IMF claims, and developing countries are continuing their positive growth [...] the scene is not as black as is generally portrayed."

The G7 ministers stated their concerns about the effects of recent sharp fluctuations in major currencies on economic growth, and reaffirmed their support for a strong international financial system. Minister Lagarde expressed a "collective will" to move toward a "more responsible and more transparent" operation of markets with "more legible" and "less derivative" financial profits.

When asked what was the most positive element of the Washington meetings, the French minister replied that it was "without a doubt the will for action and the diagnosis shared by all the members of the G7 regarding the nature of the crisis and the suitable responses. The atmosphere was particularly cooperative." The meetings concluded by setting goals for the coming year.

### INSIDE

- 2 Current Events**  
*Hijacking of French Yacht*
- 3 France & America**  
*Europe on the Potomac*
- 4 Profile**  
*Cannes Film Festival*
- 5 Business & Tech**  
*Tidal Energy*
- 6 Society**  
*Parent-Friendly Practices in the Workplace*
- 7 Culture**  
*Louise Bourgeois at Centre Pompidou*
- 8 France in America**  
*Napoleon Returns to Louisiana*



## French Minister of Economy Joins Other G7 Members for IMF and World Bank Spring Meetings



French Minister of Economy Christine Lagarde, center, visited the U.S. in mid-April.

nied to the spring meetings by Governor of the Bank of France Christian Noyet and a delegation of senior civil servants.

Mrs. Lagarde joined the financial ministers and national bank governors of the United States, Germany, Canada, Great Britain, Italy, and Japan, the seven most industrialized countries, at the G7 meeting on April 11 and at the IMF and World Bank meetings on April 12 and 13. The discussions focused on annual world growth, which the IMF has revealed to be at 3.7 percent for this year compared with a forecast of 4.1 per-

cent in February. The Euro Area representatives challenged the IMF growth forecast for 2008, citing the robustness of European growth, particularly in employment figures. Minister Lagarde stated in an interview with French newspaper *Le Figaro*, "the European economy remains more supported than the IMF claims, and developing countries are continuing their positive growth [...] the scene is not as black as is generally portrayed."

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## FREE SWIMMING LESSONS FOR KIDS



7- to 12-year-olds will be offered free swim lessons this summer.

Characterizing swimming as a crucial skill that must be mastered — just like reading and writing — by all children, French Minister of State for Sports and Youth Bernard Laporte announced on April 28 the launching of *Operation Savoir Nager* (Operation Learn to Swim). Currently in France, only one out of two students entering middle school knows how to swim, a skill that helps prevent water-related accidents such as drowning. As of this summer, 7- to 12-year-old children will be able to take a dozen hours of free swimming lessons through this program. Minister Laporte hopes that the initiative, set to renew each summer through 2012, will reach 100,000 children. The lessons will be offered at approximately 100 sites — both swimming pools and lakes — throughout France. Presently, children in France already receive 20 to 30 hours of swimming instruction in elementary school.

## SOCIETY COMES TOGETHER TO FIGHT AIDS

In March, the French fundraising campaign Sidaction 2008 engaged in a momentous effort to raise money and awareness for HIV/AIDS. Over the weekend of March 28-30, Sidaction raised a total of 5.9 million euros (about \$9.3 million) for AIDS ("SIDA" in French) prevention and research. Eleven French television stations and five radio stations participated in the fundraising by bringing in international stars to perform in concerts and telethons, providing specialized programming, and screening movies such as Tom Hanks and Denzel Washington's "Philadelphia." Donors were able to contribute via Sidaction's Web site, by phone, or by text through April 11. The Sidaction campaign was launched in 1994, and has since become an annual success in raising both funds and awareness. According to UNAIDS, AIDS claimed 2.1 million lives worldwide in 2007, and 33 million adults are estimated to be infected with the syndrome. Even though the implementation of Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART), or "cocktail" therapy, has prolonged the life of many patients, emphasis still remains on prevention over treatment. For more information, please visit: [www.sidaction.org](http://www.sidaction.org).

## Current Events

### France Pursues Tough Stance on Piracy

After considerable efforts, the 288-foot French yacht *Le Ponant* and its 30 crew members were released on April 11 by Somali pirates who had held them hostage in the Gulf of Aden since April 4. The hijackers had stormed the yacht as it returned without passengers from the Seychelles on its way to the Mediterranean Sea.

The French government activated its counter-piracy plan as soon as the luxury vessel alerted officials to the hostage situation. French frigates *Le Commandant Bouan* and *Jean Bart*, with navy and gendarmerie commando units onboard, diverted from their regular mission in the Indian Ocean to track the yacht's movements and prepare to intervene if necessary. Upon the release of the hostages, the commando units brought them aboard the *Jean Bart* for medical evaluation.

With the cooperation of the Somali government, French military forces used a surveillance system to track down the pirates after their return to shore and fired warning shots to stop their vehicles and force them to surrender. Six were captured by French commandos and transferred to France.

This event marks the first time in a long while since a military operation has been carried out against an act of maritime piracy and done so successfully.

The hijacking of *Le Ponant* was accompanied by several related incidences of piracy in the area, including the capture of the Spanish fishing vessel *Playa de Bakio* on April 20 and the attempted hijacking of the Japanese oil tanker *Takayama* on April 21.

In 2007, 236 acts of maritime piracy were recorded, over 30 of which occurred off the Somali coast.

President Sarkozy has proposed taking action on this matter at the UN Security Council. The aim is specifically to crack down on acts of piracy by establishing a right to follow vessels from the high seas into territorial waters and to prevent acts of piracy. A draft UN Security Council resolution is under discussion.

Separately, France has undertaken a humanitarian initiative designed to escort World Food Programme (WFP) humanitarian ships sailing to Somalia. Mission *Alcyon*, launched by France on November 17, enabled the WFP to safely transport 30,000 tons of supplies from Mombasa, Kenya, to the ports of Merka and Mogadishu, Somalia. The planes *Commandot Ducuing* and *Premier maître l'Her*, in turn, assured the protection of this mission during two and a half months. The French national navy was relieved by the Danish navy on February 2.

### France Takes Action Against Eating Disorders

On the French catwalks, dangerously thin physiques are no longer *à la mode*. Last month, representatives from French fashion houses, advertising companies and media firms banded together to sign a memorandum of understanding to combat anorexia and bulimia on the runway and in advertisements.

Backed by the French Minister of Health, Youth and Sport, Roselyne Bachelot-Narquin, the memorandum seeks to promote a healthy body image, a message directed primarily at young women, and aims to "heighten public awareness about the acceptance of physical diversity." As a part of this commitment, signatories vow "not to accept using pictures of people, in particular youth, which could contribute to [or] promote a model of extreme thinness."

Private industries are not the only ones in France to take on anorexia. France's lower house of Parliament passed a bill that would make promoting anorexia



Members of the French fashion industry signed an agreement to combat anorexia and bulimia.

models that do walk the catwalk must first receive health clearance. On Web sites and blogs a criminal offense, punishable with a sentence of up to three years in prison. The French Senate is expected to vote on the proposed law in the near future.

With these new initiatives, France joins the ranks of several European countries who have taken a stand against the rising trend of eating disorders. In September 2006, Spain banned models with an unhealthy Body Mass Index (BMI) from participating in Madrid's *Pasarela Cibeles* fashion show. Last year, Spanish fashion houses *Zara* and *Mango* installed size 8 mannequins in their window displays. In Italy, an agreement signed in February 2007 banned girls under the age of 16 from runway shows. In addition, Italian

### Promoting Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Development

From April 1-7, France hosted the 6th Sustainable Development Week during which more than 2,600 initiatives were exhibited throughout the country that focus on sustainable production and consumption, ranging in nature from eco-construction tours to recycled art exhibits.

Launched by the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Planning and Development, the event raised public awareness about the different components of sustainable development, including economic development, environmental protection, and social progress. A central aim of the operation was to foster support for changes in behavior that would educate individuals on how to reduce their ecological footprint.

On April 4-6, *Le Jardin des plantes* in Paris welcomed more than 9,000 visitors to "*Le Village du développement durable*." Guests were invited to participate in interactive installations that

were divided into six thematic zones: habitat, energy and waste, transportation, tourism, biodiversity and water, and daily purchases. Each zone, managed by an NGO, an association or institutional organization, each with a partner from the private sector, challenged participants through different activities to prove their level of eco-friendliness.

In association with *Gaz de France* and *SNCF*, Paris Expo at *Porte de Versailles* hosted the *Planète Durable* (Sustainable Planet) trade show on April 10-13. With a focus on eco-consumption beyond the usual concepts of recycling and clean energy, one innovative presentation proposed creating a "sustainable dance floor" that converts the movement of dancers into energy to power its own sound and light systems.

For more information on the initiative, please visit: [www.semainedudeveloppementdurable.gov.fr](http://www.semainedudeveloppementdurable.gov.fr).

## Europe on the Potomac: EU Embassies Open Their Gates

Go to Europe for free? It sounds too good to be true, but on Saturday, May 3, 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 2008 EU Open House, kicking off the Passport DC festival.

From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., free public transportation shuttled visitors throughout D.C., allowing them to travel from the U.K. and Slovenia, to Sweden and Romania—no passport needed—giving them a rare "behind-the-gates" look at the European embassies. With festivities ranging from sampling German traditional cuisine to demonstrations on flamenco dancing at the Embassy of Spain, the EU Open House 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 services.

Nearly 3,000 guests to the Embassy of France, for example, were able to discuss French military strategy and actions with members from the Military Mission, then explore everything



Members of the Military Mission at the French Embassy discuss with guests during the 2008 EU Open House.

only ones to get a taste of Europe on the Potomac. One mother of two young girls, ages 6 and 7, traveled over an hour for the second year in a row to provide her daughters with the opportunity to put their French lessons to use, while others seized "the wonderful opportunity to get a sneak-peak at a country before going there for the first time," as another guest remarked.

Coordinated by Cultural Tourism DC, the EU Open House took place within the framework of a two-week festival, Passport DC, which celebrated the diversity, richness and rhythms of international culture with various events, including Europe Week (May 3-10) and World Week (May 11-16), as well as the International Children's Festival (May 10), and Around the World Open House (May 17). For more information, please visit: [www.passportdc.org](http://www.passportdc.org).

from advancements in research and technology with the Office of Science and Technology, as well as receive information on any questions they might have about France, such as the last presidential elections or tips on travel...all before wetting their palettes to a full course French meal or while basking in the sun at a *café parisien*.

DC residents were not the

## Boston Savors the Arrival of Le Cordon Bleu

The long-standing and vibrant tradition of French cuisine in New England has received another ingredient with the opening of Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Boston. The school is the 14th affiliate of Le Cordon Bleu Schools North America, which is already well-established in the cities of Chicago, Atlanta, and Minneapolis, among others. Classes at Le Cordon Bleu in Boston commenced on April 7.

The culinary arts college aims to continue the tradition of excellence established by Boston's most prestigious chef, the late Julia Child, who was a graduate of the Le Cordon Bleu in Paris.

The school's affiliation with its Parisian counterpart symbolizes the strength of French-American culinary

exchange. Students in Boston take classes in the fundamentals of classic French cuisine, as well as courses in French language and culture to fully understand and appreciate these techniques and traditions. In the spring of 2009, a full-service, student-staffed restaurant appropriately named *Technique* will open in Cambridge, allowing the public to taste their accomplishments.

The first Cordon Bleu culinary arts school was founded in Paris in 1895 by Marthe Distel, the publisher of *La Cuisinière Cordon Bleu Magazine*. Today Le Cordon Bleu has expanded to 29 schools on 5 continents, with over 20,000 students enrolling each year.

## French Architect Wins Prestigious Pritzker Prize



Jean Nouvel won this year's prestigious Architecture Prize.

One of France's foremost architects, Jean Nouvel, has been named the 2008 recipient of the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize, awarded annually to a living architect by the Hyatt Foundation. Often called the "Nobel Prize of architecture," winners receive a \$100,000 grant and industry-wide acclaim. Nouvel will be recognized during

a ceremony at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., on June 2.

Nouvel is the second French architect to receive the prize, after Christian de Portzamparc in 1994. Born in Fumel, France, in

1945, Nouvel showed an interest in art from an early age, and his pragmatic parents encouraged him to pursue architecture, which they viewed as a more secure but still artistic living. By age 25, Nouvel was well on his way to a distinguished career. In 1981 he was selected to design the Institut du Monde Arabe (Arab World Institute) in Paris, whose completion six years later with its clever use of natural light earned Nouvel international acclaim.

The Pritzker Prize honors Nouvel's entire body of work — more than 200 projects — for the "persistence, imagination, exuberance, and, above all, insatiable urge for creative experimentation" demonstrated by the architect. Among his most famous projects is Le Musée du Quai Branly, built to showcase the arts and civilizations of Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas in the heart of Paris. Nouvel has also contributed his unique vision to the U.S.: his Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis features a cantilever bridge overlooking the Mississippi River and a silo-inspired shape to reflect the region's agricultural heritage.

## FRENCH RUGBY TEAM TO FACE OFF AGAINST U.S. MEN'S NATIONAL TEAM



France's ASM Clermont Auvergne Rugby club will scrimmage the U.S. national team in August.

Rugby fans can start gearing up for a French-American rugby match in the late summer. On August 9, Michelin and the Charleston Battery will co-host ASM Clermont Auvergne, a rugby club founded by Michelin in 1911, in a match against the U.S. Men's National Team. ESPN Classic will broadcast the match live from the Blackbaud Stadium in Charleston, South Carolina. Greenville, S.C., is home to Michelin North America's headquarters, and the state boasts 7,000 Michelin employees and nearly 3,000 Michelin retirees. For more information on the match, please visit: [www.asm-rugby.com](http://www.asm-rugby.com) and [www.usarugby.org](http://www.usarugby.org).

## SPRING FILM FEVER CONTINUES IN THE U.S.

From April 17 to May 3, the Twin Cities joined the ranks of cities hosting springtime film festivals by presenting the 26th annual Minneapolis-St. Paul International Film Festival. The Minnesota event is the region's biggest film event of the year, boasting over 150 films, including eight from France and a handful of French co-productions. The number of films shown this year has multiplied thanks to the festival's expansion from its traditional one screen to five. This year's French selection reunited the talents of famous French directors and actors such as Catherine Breillat, Claude Lelouch, Cécile de France, Jean Dujardin, Fanny Ardant, and Dominique Pinon. Matthieu Demy (son of directors Jacques Demy and Agnès Varda) and Julie Depardieu (daughter of Gérard Depardieu) starred in "*Qui m'aime me suive*" ("If You Love Me, Follow Me"). Two weeks earlier and one thousand miles east, the City of Brotherly Love welcomed *cinéphiles* and *francophiles* from April 3-15 for the 17th annual Philadelphia Film Festival. The 260 films screened ran the gamut of cinema, including five French films. One French film, Philippe Faucon's "*Dans la vie*" ("Two Ladies"), was selected as one of seven "Festival Favorites." For more information, please visit: [www.mspfilmfest.org](http://www.mspfilmfest.org) and [www.phillyfests.com](http://www.phillyfests.com).

## Limelight Shines on the South of France for the 2008 Cannes Film Festival

*Lights, Camera, Action!* Stardust has once again showered the Côte d'Azur as the film universe descends upon the French Riviera to commemorate the 61st Festival de Cannes, one of the world's largest and most glamorous cinematic events. From May 14-25, the festival will showcase a selection of the year's best films, including several international premieres. Film industry VIPs, ecstatic fans, and media from around the globe will partake in the event to celebrate the magic of movies.

As filmmakers and celebrities enjoy screenings and *soirées*, a number of awards recognize top achievements. The *Palme d'or*, Cannes's highest honor, will be bestowed upon the winner of the "In Competition" category, consisting of an eclectic group of 19 films. The 2008 jury is led by American actor, director, and screenwriter, Sean Penn. To assist in the deliberation process, Penn is joined by a vibrant group of cinema veterans including Israeli-American actress Natalie Portman, Mexican director Alfonso Cuarón, and Italian actor, director and screenwriter Sergio Castellitto, among others.

This year's festival attracted a whopping 4,025 film submissions for consideration. Amidst a slew of international competitors, American cinema will be well represented this year, with Charlie Kaufman's *"Synecdoche, New York,"* and Clint Eastwood's mystery thriller *"Changeling,"* starring Angelina Jolie, all battling it out in the "In-Competition" division. Steven Spielberg's highly awaited *"Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull"* will debut in "Out of Competition" along with Woody Allen's comedy, *"Vicky Cristina Barcelona."* Representing the French are Laurent Cantet (*"Entre les murs"*), Philippe Garrel (*"La Frontière de l'aube"*), and Arnaud Desplechin with his family drama, *"Un Conte de Noël,"* featuring French star Catherine Deneuve. Additionally, with their drama *"Le Silence de Lorna,"* the Belgian Dardenne brothers introduce another French-language film to the competition. In the running for the prized *Palme d'or*, these venerated French and American film veterans will face some tough competition from international Cannes favorites like Egyptian-born Canadian Atom Egoyan (*"Adoration"*), Brazil's Walter Salles (*"Linha de Passe"*), Turkey's Nuri Bilge Ceylan (*"Three Monkeys"*), and German director Wim Wenders (*"The Palermo Shooting"*). Newcomers Brillante Mendoza (the first Filipino director to compete in 24 years), Israeli Ari Folman, and Hungarian Kornel Mundruczo will all have their eyes set on the golden prize.

### *The Action of the Festival From the Comfort of Home*

For those who cannot make it to this year's Festival but would still like to experience the glamour and action from the red carpet, TV5MONDE USA, the U.S.'s only 24/7 French language channel, offers front row seats to the 61st Cannes Film Festival from the comfort of your own home through its series of "live coverage" of the event, "The 25th Image." The series will air Monday-Friday at 8:30 p.m./EDT and Sunday at 1:30 p.m./EDT (check local listings for availability).

"The 25th Image" will feature live interviews directly from Cannes with some of the hottest celebrities in town, along with the latest film news, as well as festival fashions and celeb gossip directly from the Palais des Festivals and La Croisette. In addition, the entertainment program will showcase films that were previously screened in various categories during past festivals, including *"Le Huitième Jour"* (airing May 22 at 8:30 p.m./EDT — this dramatic comedy earned Best Actor awards for Daniel Auteuil and Pascal Duquenne at the 1996 Cannes Film Festival), and *"Les Chansons d'amour"* (airing May 25 at 8:30 p.m./EDT — this musical competed in the "In Competition" category at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival and earned a *César* award for Best Music Written for a Film).

For more information on programming, please visit: [www.tv5.org/usa](http://www.tv5.org/usa).

### *Le Palme d'Or*

*Le Palme d'or*, or Golden Palm, awarded at the closing of the festival, is one of the most prestigious awards in the film industry. Each year, approximately 20 films vie for the honor. In 1955, American director Delbert Mann won the festival's first *Palme* for his film *"Marty"*— the only film to have won the the *Palme d'or* and the Academy Award for Best Picture. In the award's 50 some-year history, 18 of the winners have been American, with Italian and French filmmakers following behind. Last year, Romanian director Cristian Mungiu took home this golden prize for *"4 Lume, 3 Saptamini Si 2 Zile"* (4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days), a story about two university students in Bucarest.



Approximately 20 films vie for *Le Palme d'or*.

## History of the Festival

The Cannes Film Festival has come to be synonymous with glamour and prestige. The host city's pleasant climate, appreciation for cross-cultural art, and international reputation as a privileged venue for filmmakers are only a few of its distinguishing characteristics.

The festival's roots stem from a much more idealistic foundation than people often

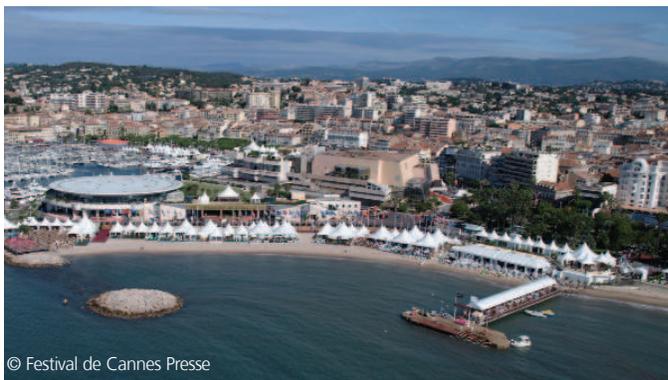
realize. The framework for the Cannes Film Festival began in 1938 as a protest to propaganda films sweeping the most popular festivals of the time. French, British and American jury members withdrew from Mostra di Venezia, the Italian film festival that gave its highest award to a Nazi propaganda film by Joseph Goebbels. Later that year, critics and filmmakers established the Cannes Film Festival with the goal of creating a festival free of political bias and censorship. These leaders included Robert Favre Le Bret, who later became the festival's longest-serving president, and Louis Lumière, who is often credited as being the father of cinema along with his brother, Auguste.

The first Cannes celebration began on

September 1, 1939, but the outbreak of World War II brought festivities to a halt. The event took a hiatus until 1946 when it featured films from Walt Disney and Alfred Hitchcock. At that time, cinema and art appreciation were gaining importance in France. The festival received the support of the new National Center for Cinematography the following year.

By the 1950s, Cannes had flourished to achieve the renown that it enjoys today. The festival was moved from September to May, a change that set it apart from other competitions taking place in the fall. As a result, the festival came to mark the kick off to summer and the tourist season along the Côte d'Azur. According to a spokesperson, the festival at that time became "the privileged venue where great directors present their latest opuses." The list of attendees expanded, and the festival gained recognition as a venue for international exploration in film. Louis Malle of France and Federico Fellini of Italy were regular attendees, as well as Walt Disney.

The scope of Cannes has continued to swell and has grown to encompass seven major sections: "In Competition," "Out of Competition," *"Un Certain regard,"* *"Cinéfondation,"* "Critics' Week," "Directors' Fortnight" and *"Marché du film."* The first two categories indicate whether or not a film will be eligible for the top honor, the *Palme d'or*. *"Un Certain regard,"* the largest category of the festival, was created in 1978 to promote world cinematography and to incorporate several side events. While it does not offer any awards, *"Cinéfondation,"* which presents short films, does give out three prizes. "Critics' week," established in 1962, is run by the Union of French Film Critics, and "Director's Fortnight" is open to feature-length and short films. Films, as well as foreign rights, are bought and sold at the *"Marché du film,"* or Film Market. From its origins in protesting political bias and censorship, Le Festival de Cannes has become one of the largest media events in the world and is attended by 4,000 journalists and over 1,600 media members representing more than 75 countries.



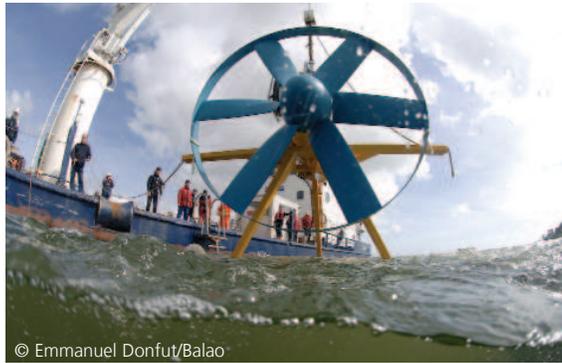
Aerial view of the festival zone in Cannes.

## Using the Power of Tidal Currents to Generate Electricity

A prototype of an *hydrolienne*, a tidal power device that was submerged March 31 off the coast of Brittany (northwestern France), may be the future of a new form of renewable energy for the country. A first in France, the machine uses power from tidal currents to generate electricity. The *hydrolienne* was baptized at Bénodet on March 28 by Jacqueline Tabarly, the widow of a well-known

sailor, Eric Tabarly (see article on "Cité de la Voile" on p.7). The machine received the name Sabella DO3, inspired by a sea worm, the sabella, that uses currents to catch its food. Implanted at a depth of 62 feet, the prototype — at just 18 feet tall and 10 feet in diameter — is one-third the projected size of future *hydroliennes*. Following this test phase, construction of a full-size machine will begin in 2009 for installation in 2010.

SABELLA Consortium includes four local companies (Sofresid Engineering, Hydro-helix Energies, In Vivo



© Emmanuel Donfut/Balao

The Sabella D03, a mechanism that harnesses tidal energy, was submerged off the coast of Brittany on March 31.

Environment, and Dourmap). The project's developers are taking great care to minimize the impact on the environment. During the test phase, cameras will monitor fish behavior and acoustic tests will be conducted by the oceanographic institution Ifremer to ensure that the *hydrolienne* does not negatively impact sea life.

President of Brittany's *conseil régional*, Jean-Yves Le Drian, characterized Sabella as a crucial

step for Brittany, which he hopes will take full advantage of marine energy production. He is also encouraging the creation of a national center for research and testing in Brest. Seeking to blaze a path for marine energy production in France, he hopes this project will provide 10 percent of Brittany's electricity by 2010. On a national scale, the technology has the potential to satisfy two percent of France's energy needs.

For more information, please visit: [www.region-bretagne.fr](http://www.region-bretagne.fr) or [www.hydrohelix.fr](http://www.hydrohelix.fr).

Using a needle that moved in response to sound, the device recorded a pattern of sound waves onto paper previously blackened by the smoke of an oil lamp.

On March 1, the French Academy of Sciences sent digital scans of Scott's papers to researcher David Giovannoni, who, in collaboration with other audio historians, took on the task of transforming the paper tracings into sound. Scientists at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) in California used a "virtual stylus" to read the very high-res digital scans they had made of the sooty paper.

The resulting sound, said to be "like a ghost singing to you," was played at the annual conference of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections at Stanford University and was also posted on the Web.

## U.S. Experts Bring Oldest Voice Recording to Life From France

Striking a chord in the history of recorded sound, an 1860 voice recording of a French folk song was recently discovered and translated into sound by American experts. The clip is believed to predate, by 17 years, Thomas Edison's "Mary Had a Little Lamb," formally credited as the oldest recorded voice.

Last month, First Sounds, a group of audio historians, recording engineers, and sound archivists who work to preserve mankind's earliest sound recordings, announced that the one-line excerpt of the song is believed to be both the earliest recognizable record of the human voice and the earliest recognizable record of music.

The 10-second clip of "Au clair de la lune" was produced by the Parisian inventor Edouard-Léon Scott de Martinville, who created visual recordings of sound waves with a phonograph.

## French Doctors Create Robotic Anesthesiologist



Courtesy: Foch Hospital

An anesthesiologist at the Foch Hospital uses the *robot anesthésiste* to monitor a patient's level of consciousness.

happened during their surgeries. Excessive doses of anesthesia are also known to limit life expectancy in certain cases.

The anesthesiologist robot is currently employed in two out of twelve operating rooms in the Foch Hospital, and a total of 50 examiners across France and Europe are also participating in this biomedical research.

French doctors at the Foch Hospital in Suresnes, a western suburb of Paris, recently invented a new system to control the administration of anesthesia to surgery patients. The first *robot anesthésiste*, or anesthesiologist robot, is able to administer precise dosage and to manage a patient's level of consciousness.

The machine monitors the brainwaves of individuals during surgery through an electrode placed on the forehead. Tracking the patient's vital statistics to ensure safety, the robot induces sleep, maintains the patient's appropriate level of consciousness, and subsequently wakes him or her up. The BSI, or bispectral index, determines consciousness level, with 0 corresponding to an absence of cerebral activity, and 100 representing full consciousness. Individuals undergoing surgery should sustain a level of cerebral activity between 40 and 60.

The project was initiated after several instances of insufficient anesthesia doses in France and the United States when patients were able to recall what



Air France will offer cell phone service on select routes.

As airline companies begin expanding in-flight communication to facilitate travel, Air France has hopped aboard the trend with a test launch of its new Mobile OnAir voice system. On select routes, passengers with cell phones employing the European-developed GSM mobile standard can connect mid-air with those down below. Once the plane reaches an altitude of 9,800 feet, up to six simultaneous calls can take place. According to OnAir CEO Benoît Debains, Air France is the first global company to offer full mobile phone service on its flights. The addition of voice service follows in the tailwind of a successful test period that allowed passengers to send and receive unlimited e-mails and text messages while in-flight. Like the first test run, the voice trial period is slated to last three months and will allow the company to gauge public interest in the program by analyzing passenger feedback. If neighbors' conversations are judged to be distracting, some passengers may instead prefer access to mobile messaging, in which case Air France would revert to a data-only service.

## TRIGGERING LIGHTNING WITH WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL LASER

On April 14, a French-German-Swiss research team assembled by the TéraMobile Project published the results of a field test on the Optics Express Journal's Web site. In their experiment, performed at the Langmuir Laboratory at New Mexico Tech, the team used a laser to create microdischarges in a storm cloud, a revolutionary finding that may allow scientists to trigger lightning in the future. The research station, located at an altitude of 10,783 feet in the Rocky Mountains, is often used to study lightning due to the frequency of storms in the area. For the experiment, the group used the most powerful laser in the world, the TéraMobile laser. By ionizing the air, the laser is able to set off small blue charges called "corona discharges." In order to move beyond these initial discharges and trigger lightning, however, researchers will need a stronger laser. Scientists are now working to develop a laser ten times more powerful, which should be completed within the next two years.

### LIFE EXPECTANCY IN FRANCE REACHES NEW HIGHS

As life expectancy skyrockets ever higher, France now boasts over 20,000 citizens over the age of 100. The large concentration of centenarians results from overall acceleration in life expectancy rates over the past five years. French women can expect to live about seven months longer than projected in 2003, to a ripe age of 84.5 years, while French men have a life expectancy of 77.6 years, according to the Institut national d'études démographiques (National Institute of Demographic Studies — INED). An INED study reveals that the rise in life expectancy may be related to lifestyle changes undertaken in response to the 2003 summer heat wave, with families taking extra measures to ensure that their elderly relatives are safe, well monitored, and well hydrated. INED projects that France will have over 60,000 centenarians by 2050. For more information, please visit: [www.ined.fr](http://www.ined.fr).

### ENCOURAGING HEART FITNESS

On April 26-27, the French Cardiology Federation (FCF) organized the 33rd annual *Parcours du Coeur*, a nationwide festival to promote long-term regular physical activity for cardiovascular health and to raise funds for the FCF's research. The *Parcours* takes place in cities across France and gives people the opportunity to "move for your heart" through activities ranging from sports and bike rides to martial arts. In 2007, more than 880 cities and 90,000 people participated in the *Parcours* by spending a day roller-blading, biking, playing soccer, or just walking. This year, 170 new cities participated by organizing *Parcours* programs for their residents. Many cities organized a *Parcours* "village," a centralized area where residents could partake in sports games and other activities. In Paris, a village was set up around the Hôtel de Ville (town hall), inviting passersby to engage in Tai-Chi and obstacle courses. The city of Lyon offered general health information and nutrition counseling in addition to athletic activities at its *Parcours* village in Gerland Park. April 27, 2008, also marks the 40th anniversary of the first heart transplant in Europe, performed by Dr. Christian Cabrol at the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital in Paris. This medical advancement opened the door for additional organ transplants, including the cardiopulmonary transplant in 1982 and the first artificial heart implantation in France in 1986, both performed by Dr. Cabrol. For more information, please visit: [www.fedecardio.com](http://www.fedecardio.com).

## Promoting Parent-Friendly Practices in the Workplace

On April 11, Xavier Bertrand, Minister of Labor, Labor Relations, and Solidarity, and Nadine Morano, Minister of State, responsible for the Family, along with members of the business community, signed the *Charte de la parentalité en entreprise*, a memorandum of understanding to promote parent-friendly practices in the workplace.

The agreement encourages companies to establish managerial policies and measures that respect working parents' responsibilities, such as prohibiting business meetings after 6 p.m., and promoting both paternity and maternity leave. These



The new agreement creates measures to allow working parents to meet their family responsibilities.

policies aim to create a better "équilibre de vie" (a balanced life) for employees, particularly women, due to 2007 statistics by SOS Préma that showed a possible correlation between 8 percent of premature births and work-related stress.

The agreement, initiated by SOS Préma and L'Oréal, was signed by 30 companies, including France Télécom's Orange, The Boston Consulting Group, PSA Peugeot Citroën, Groupe Carrefour, and Starbucks Coffee.

For more information on the agreement, please visit: [www.chartedelaparentalite.com](http://www.chartedelaparentalite.com).

## France Télécom Offers Multi-Platform Entertainment Service



Orange's new platform brings the big screen to "three screens."

customers to view programs between all three platforms, while also endeavoring to discourage individuals from illegally downloading programming.

The service will be available to all Orange mobile, tele-

vision, and Internet customers. Subscribers will have access to six television and film stations, as well as on-demand movies and shows. Paid programming will include new releases from Warner Brothers, old and current HBO series, and French films from production companies Gaumont and Fidélité Films. The service also boasts a feature that allows customers to rewind a program if they tune in late or miss the beginning of a program.

France is currently the leader in Europe for on-demand video services via broadband, and the "three-screen" *cinéma séries* aims to expand on this technology to deliver entertainment in an innovative and convenient way. The service will initially be released in France, but Orange anticipates extending the program to other European countries later this year.

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BLOG CAPTURES SIGHTS OF THE CITY OF LIGHT

Feeling some withdrawal symptoms after your last trip to France? Never been, or want to sample a bit of Paris? Parisian native Eric Tenin authors a blog, *Paris Daily Photo*, in English with a smattering of French, for those trying to improve their vocabulary. Each day, Tenin posts a new photo offering a unique view of the French capital, often including cultural trivia or information on upcoming events. Entries range from historical (an image of a bust of Chateaubriand accompanied by a brief biography) to culinary (a delectable photo of *foie gras*) to repre-



Paris Daily Blog features images ranging from daily life to events taking place in the City of Light.

sentations of current events and nightlife. The blog's depth of images runs the gamut, regularly featuring scenes of streets, profiles of interesting shops and even impromptu concerts or other cultural activities. The site is part of the

*City Daily Photo* online community, which includes over 500 daily photo blogs of international cities ranging from Charlottesville, Virginia, to Subang Jaya, Malaysia. Each month the bloggers unite with a "Theme Day" on which each site posts a photo relating to a specific theme — that of April was water. In addition to the Paris blog, there are daily photo blogs for over 30 other French cities, including Marseille, Lyon, Avignon, and Bordeaux. For more information, please visit: [www.parisdailyphoto.com](http://www.parisdailyphoto.com).

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

## Louise Bourgeois at Paris's Centre Pompidou



Louise Bourgeois poses in 1990 with her marble sculpture, "Eye to Eye" (1970).

Followers of the French-American art scene have a new reason to travel to Paris this spring. From March 5 to June 2, the Centre Georges Pompidou, in conjunction with the London Tate Modern, is hosting an extensive retrospective of the work of Louise Bourgeois, a renowned French-American artist known for pushing the envelope of artistic language. Featuring 200 sculptures, paintings, drawings, and engravings produced by the 96-year-old Bourgeois between 1940 and 2007, the exhibit focuses on her work over the past ten years and the idea of artistic reinvention.

Described by critics as intense and unclassifiable, Bourgeois is best known for her sculptures of spiders, the largest of which, "Maman" ("Mother"), stands 30 feet tall, and her "Cells" series, cages constructed out of steel, wood, and glass. In 2002 Bourgeois was named a Laureate of the Wolf Prize in Arts for Painting and Sculpture.

Bourgeois was born in Paris in 1911, where she lived and studied art until 1938, when she moved to New York City, her current home, with her husband, American art historian Robert Goldwater.

## "Watch" Out for Marie Antoinette's Legendary Timepiece

A timeless treasure, the Breguet n° 160 watch, known as the "Marie-Antoinette," has reclaimed its fame as a legendary timepiece from the opulent days of French royalty. Its extreme complexity has haunted the minds of watch collectors and aficionados for almost two centuries. After it was stolen from the L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art in Jerusalem, the watch reappeared twenty-five years later in "perfect working condition" at the end of 2007. Almost 200 years later, the renowned watch has witnessed its second incarnation with the creation of the Breguet n° 1160.

In 1783, to the delight of the queen, and her penchant for *luxe*, an admirer commissioned horologist Abraham-Louis Bréguet to create for her the "most complicated and most sophisticated" watch possible. Fabricated mostly of gold and rock crystal, the watch's construction is



The Breguet n° 1160 — the replica of the Marie-Antoinette watch — was unveiled in 2008.

Paris. Hayek unveiled his replica of the gold pocket watch at the Baselworld Watch Fair in Basel, Switzerland (March 26-April 2).

extremely complex: it comes equipped with a calendar, thermometer, and a chiming mechanism. The production was not completed until 1827; 34 years after Marie Antoinette's death and 44 years after the project had begun.

In 2005, Nicolas G. Hayek, chairman of Swatch Group, embarked on the challenge of producing an identical version of the queen's piece. It was not until this spring that he completed the task after conducting extensive research in the archives found at the Breguet Museum and other high institutions of culture like the Musée des Arts et Métiers in

## Burgers à la française



The Prince de Galles hotel's Bar Regency dishes up an eclectic assortment of burgers à la française.

Pan-fried *foie gras*, chanterelle mushrooms, tender filet of beef — a four-star meal to be sure, but a hamburger? The chef at the prestigious Prince de Galles hotel in Paris thinks so. Located in the city's *chic* 8th *arrondissement*, the hotel's Bar Regency has begun serving revamped versions of the traditional hamburger, with a decidedly French twist. Chef Benoit Rambaud's burger menu includes delights such as the "Caprice de Star," a three-tiered execution with the previously mentioned *foie gras*, mushrooms, and filet; the "Absolutely Fabulous," on a base of bacon, romaine lettuce, and vine tomatoes; and the "Love Me Tender," chef Rambaud's homage to Elvis Presley, who was a guest in the Prince de Galles in 1958. The Prince de Galles is hardly alone in its love for the burger — the American classic has swept Paris. The PDG restaurant in the 8th *arrondissement* claims to have the best burger in the city and is a favorite among US expats for its faithfulness to the American style.

## LA CITÉ DE LA VOILE SETS SAIL IN NORTHERN COASTAL REGION



The City of Sailing is an interactive museum providing visitors with a taste of life at sea.

The Atlantic coast of France, which has long been a hub for sailing and other nautical enterprise, is being commemorated with the opening an interactive museum — La Cité de la Voile Eric Tabarly (City of Sailing) — in Lorient, the northern coastal region of Brittany.

The museum, designed by French architect Jacques Ferrier in the shape of a wave, held its grand opening on April 5. The museum is named in honor of Eric Tabarly, a former French naval officer, noted sailor, and yacht architect who was lost at sea in 1998. Its permanent exhibition focuses on three main themes: man and the ocean, sailboats and yachts (particularly construction and innovation), and sailing and navigation.

Striving to make interactivity an integral component of La Cité de la Voile, the museum features high-tech simulators of boats to allow visitors to virtually experience sailing as vividly as possible, providing them with a hands-on experience of life at sea. Upon entering the museum, guests are surrounded by enormous video screens and magnified speakers that simulate being in the middle of the ocean. The various installations explore the history of sailing in France, as well as from a scientific and ecological perspective.

The Cité de la Voile is one element of a general revitalization of the Lorient area, which is also welcoming new marinas and ship construction companies, designed to reinforce the cultural importance of French sailing to the region. For more information on the museum, please visit: [www.citevoile-tabarly.com](http://www.citevoile-tabarly.com).

## Congratulations Graduating Seniors!!!

"News From France" would like to congratulate its graduating seniors and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors. Their time, dedication and valuable help is much appreciated. We would like to thank, in particular, Alexandra Rice, whose year-long commitment and quality of work has been invaluable. Similarly, Elizabeth Lee, Susannah Farabaugh, Juliana MacPherson and Maria Carolina Nelson have each brought unparalleled contributions to this publication.

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## Napoleon Returns to Louisiana

The Louisiana State Museum's Old U.S. Mint is offering new insight into the life of Napoleon Bonaparte through the exhibition "Treasures of Napoléon" from April 6 to August 3. The exhibition includes artifacts from Napoleon's life such as the earliest known letter in his handwriting, the valise that brought him the signed Louisiana Purchase documents from America, and the sword that proclaimed him Emperor in the Coronation Ceremony at Notre Dame. In addition to silver, porcelain, textiles, furniture and jewelry made by some of the finest manufacturers of First Empire France, the exhibition will also feature paintings, sketches and sculptures by some of the greatest artists of the time including Gros,



"Bonaparte Crossing the Alps by the Great Saint Bernard Pass," Jean-Baptiste Mauzaisse with Jacques-Louis David, 1807.

David, Canova, Gerard, Isabey, Houdon, Percier, Fontaine, Delaroche, Chaudet, Vernet, Mauzaisse, and more.

Pierre-Jean Chalencón, renowned collector on the First Empire, is the owner of this collection, which is touring North America for the first time. A number of items on display are making their debut public appearance.

Napoleon Bonaparte is a historical figure of particular importance in Louisiana, whose state laws were modeled after the Napoleonic Code. The "code civil louisianais" is celebrating this year its 200th anniversary.

For more information on the exhibition, please visit <http://lsm.crt.state.la.us> and <http://www.napoleonexhibit.com>.

## French-Algerian Choreographer Presents New Ballet

On June 7 and 8, French-Algerian choreographer Heddy Maalem will stage the North American premiere of his impassioned ballet, "Le Sacre du printemps" ("The Rite of Spring") at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina. The artist will join over 140 performers at the 17-day event, which features opera, music, theater and dance performances, before performing in other US cities.

Heddy Maalem, one of the high-lighted performers, will be accompanied by a team of 14 skilled African dancers. "Le Sacre du printemps," a reproduction of Igor Stravinsky's 1913 ballet, was inspired by Maalem's time in the city of Lagos, Nigeria and brings together 14 utterly distinctive dancers from Mali, Benin, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo and Mozambique. It completes a trilogy that includes "Black Spring" and "L'Ordre de la bataille".

The Compagnie Heddy Maalem will also perform "Le Sacre du



© Patrick Fabre

"The Rite of Spring," by Compagnie Heddy Maalem, will tour the U.S.

*printemps*" from June 10-15 at the Joyce Theater as part of the "French Dance Spring Event" in New York ([www.joyce.org](http://www.joyce.org)), and later, between June 25 and 29, at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival ([www.jacobspillow.org](http://www.jacobspillow.org)). The group will continue its tour of the U.S., making stops in other cities, including Nashville, Chicago, Ann Arbor, and Chapel Hill, Providence, RI, and Burlington, VT.

Maalem was born in Batna, Algeria, and was a trained boxer before he discovered dance. His pieces are simple and intense, focusing on themes such as violence and identity. Maalem is currently working on a piece for 12 dancers titled, "Un Champ de forces."

For more information, please visit: [www.spoletousa.org](http://www.spoletousa.org) or [www.heddymaalem.com](http://www.heddymaalem.com).

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