

International Conference Discusses Civil Nuclear Energy Issues



President Sarkozy addresses the International Conference on Access to Civil Nuclear Energy.

The International Conference on Access to Civil Nuclear Energy, held in Paris's OECD Conference Center March 8 and 9, provided a forum in which public and private sector representatives could discuss the promotion of "the peaceful and responsible use of nuclear power." Prominent public figures, government policy-makers, managers of industrial companies, research and training

experts, and executives from international organizations came together to explore how to enable the peaceful use of nuclear energy in countries with pressing energy needs. The conference included six roundtable discussions with topics such as developing a framework for the responsible development of nuclear technology, supporting new nuclear countries, as well as examining training and financing issues, sustainable development, and the medium- and long-term consequences of nuclear power.

France holds the position that the peaceful use of nuclear power should not be confined to a handful of states that already hold the technology. Many of the nations who lack the access to civil nuclear power are concerned about the impact of non-nuclear energy technology to the environment and are battling increasing fossil fuel prices. In a United Nations High-Level Event on Climate Change in 2007, President Sarkozy stated that

President Sarkozy Visits the United States

French President Nicolas Sarkozy will visit the United States on March 29 and 30. His itinerary begins in New York City with a speech at Columbia University, after which he will meet with editorialists from various publications. For the second leg of his trip, the French president will travel to the nation's capital. There, he will meet with President Obama in the Oval Office, and hold a press conference at the White House following their discussion. President Sarkozy's trip will conclude with a private couple's dinner at the White House, where he and French First Lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy will join President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama. President Sarkozy plans to return to the U.S. on April 12 and 13 for the Nuclear Security Summit at the Washington Convention Center.

"France is ready to help any nation which wants to acquire civil nuclear energy," as long as the nation complies with non-proliferation obligations in terms of security, safety and protection of the environment. In the opening speech of the Conference, President Sarkozy reinforced such views, stating that "France will be adamant when it comes to defending every country's right to access nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. But France will be just as adamant in her opposition to those countries that violate collective security standards. [...] The World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the other development banks must make a wholehearted commitment to finance such [nuclear] projects." Mr. Sarkozy also introduced his initiative to create an International Nuclear Energy institute that will include an International Nuclear Energy School. Through the International Conference on Access to Civil Nuclear Energy, France and other nations actively continue the dialogue on how to best provide nuclear technology to willing nations.

Franco-American Delegation Extends Aid to Haiti's Deaf Community

In the aftermath of the earthquake that struck Haiti in January, specific sections of society, such as the deaf community, face unique challenges in gaining access to relief assistance. Christian philanthropist Foster Freiss and his son Michael organized a delegation through Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., to assist Haiti's deaf. The delegation, comprised of both hearing and non-hearing alike, traveled to Haiti from February 10-20 to extend support to this community and brought together benefactors, diplomats and Gallaudet faculty members for their collective network and knowledge of Haiti's deaf.



Emmanuel Jacq communicates with the mayor of Delmas via sign language to discuss relief efforts.

The demise of the Port-au-Prince branch of the Institut Monfort School for the Deaf and Deaf-Blind Children as well as the St. Vincent School for children with multiple handicaps including deafness, that resulted from the earthquake abruptly halted the children's studies, with many returning to live with their families in the capital city. Those who remained in the capital despite the wreckage face substantial obstacles receiving vital information

regarding post-earthquake support. Many of these announcements, such as where to find food and clean running water, are transmitted via radio and can run the risk of eluding the deaf and handicapped communities.

Emmanuel Jacq, a deaf administrative agent at the Embassy of France in Washington, D.C., played a fundamental role in the mission whose objective was to procure a walled plot of land with forty tents to create a resource center for the deaf community which reached approximately 400. Jacq used sign language to communicate with the deaf and to guide

them through this challenging time. During the mission, he wrote reports for the French Embassy in Haiti and distributed some funds to assist members of the deaf community to meet their immediate needs. The delegation provided logistical support for Haiti's deaf by identifying leaders to assist with problem solving and creating strategies to address immediate and long-term issues. The team also met with officials of the Mayor of Delmas and the Secretary of State for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities to advocate on behalf of the deaf population.

Jacq also proposed the creation of a refugee camp for the deaf, which would bring them together and ensure their physical safety and nourishment. Dispersed throughout other camps, they would remain more vulnerable. Such a camp would facilitate the process of identifying the deaf able to participate in the reconstruction programs and would foster opportunities of empowerment rather than dependency. Overall, the mission aimed to sensitize the national and the international community to the tragic situation, especially for the deaf, who risk becoming abandoned, without guidance or information. Jacq hopes that generating awareness among the international community and maximizing the opportunity for the deaf to participate in U.N. programs such as "cash for work" will secure a unique place for them in Haitian society and social consciousness.

For more information on the delegation, please turn to page 2.

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EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN CHEMISTRY AND ART



Walter's team discovered that Cleopatra's eyeliner held medicinal properties.

In its tradition of promoting the arts and culture, the Embassy of France in Washington, D.C., welcomed Philippe Walter, a researcher from the Louvre Museum, to La Maison Française on February 25 for a conference titled *Beyond the Appearance of Works of Art: The Chemist's View*. Over 250 guests attended the free event.

During his discussion, Walter related the long-standing history between chemistry and art. Since antiquity, new chemicals have been created to use as pigments as well as for cosmetic and therapeutic uses. During the Renaissance, optical effects created glazes or glistening. Recently, the technical know-how of ancient chemists has been rediscovered through the methods of analytical chemistry. The precious character of the most famous works of art and their uniqueness imply particular cautions and require methods that yield the maximum amount of information with the minimum amount of sample.

Philippe Walter is the Director of the CNRS Laboratory Center for the Research and Restoration of the Museums of France, a laboratory housed within the Louvre Museum. A chemist by training, Walter's work revolves around using chemical analysis and state-of-the-art instruments to discover the stories behind some of the greatest masterpieces of the art world. Walter's team also recently discovered that Cleopatra's eyeliner — also used by ancient Greeks and Romans — had medicinal properties that cured eye infections.

Philippe Walter's conference was part of *Les Rendez-vous du CNRS*, a series of conferences launched in March 2009 by the CNRS Office in Washington, D.C. The conferences are free and open to the public. For more information or if you would like to be added to the mailing list for *Les Rendez-vous du CNRS*, please email: associate-cnrs@lambafrance-us.org.

Current Events

Transplant Games Reflect Goodwill of International Community

The athletes in Vancouver weren't the only ones to vie for medals for their country this winter. Over 300 athletes competed in the seventh Winter World Transplant Games, in the French Alps city of Sainte-Foy Tarentaise. The events aim to raise public awareness of organ donation and their benefits. Over 25 countries participated in this year's winter games from January 17-22, with the objective of promoting the rehabilitation of the participating organ recipients, who range from 4- to 80-year-olds. In addition to snowboarding, slalom and cross-country skiing, this year's edition also featured snowshoeing.

The winter games incorporate an event designed specifically for children, the Nicholas Cup. This competition was founded in honor of Nicholas Green, a young boy whose death prompted his family to donate his organs. During this week on the slopes, children who have received transplants met other such children and participated in ski lessons.

Similar to the Olympic Games, there are both summer and winter components. The first Transplant Games date back to 1978. France has long been a friend to the Transplant Games, hosting the first two winter versions in Tignes in 1994 and Pra-Loup in 1996, both located in the French Alps. France took the lead in this year's games and brought home 47 medals. Switzerland was the second highest contender with 22, and Austria followed closely with 20. According to the World Transplant Games Federation, the "30 percent increase in organ donation rates in the countries which have hosted the games" underscores the organization's success in increasing awareness about organ transplants. The biannual World Transplant Games not only bring people together for friendly competition, but also in the spirit of brotherhood and solidarity to give hope to those who need it most.



Courtesy: World Transplant Games

Participants of the Nicholas Cup enjoy a ski lesson.



Interview with Emmanuel Jacq, Administrative Agent at the Embassy of France in Washington, D.C.

While you were in Haiti, what were the linguistic challenges the delegation faced in communicating between people of various backgrounds?

Traveling to foreign countries to work with other hearing-impaired people is always a challenge. This is because sign language in one community can differ greatly from that in another. French Sign Language (LSF), whose establishment is largely attributed to Abbé Charles Michel de l'Épée, fused with American Sign Language (ASL), but as the two languages have evolved, they have become less mutually intelligible. While there is an International Sign Language (ISL), it is used as more of an auxiliary system for communication internationally and was standardized in the 1950s at the World Deaf Congress. Haitian Sign Language is an adaptation of American Sign Language and thus there is not as much of a connection between what the people sign and the words they convey. For example, in Haitian Sign Language, the symbol for water is made by pointing three fingers in the formation of a "W" for the English word "water," as opposed to motioning an "E" for the French word "eau."

What were some of the obstacles that you have faced in the pursuit of your career?

When I was studying biology at Montpellier University, it was most

challenging when my professor would turn his face towards the blackboard so I could no longer read his lips. I was given notes from other students in my class to read afterwards, but it was extremely time consuming. I wish I would have had the opportunity to study at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. I would love to help French students access the opportunity I never had. In my professional life, using telephones is difficult because I require an interpreter. Recently, tech services installed video-conferencing capabilities in my office that allows me to connect with an interpreter for free, a tool for non-professional use to help me access valuable services.

What support structures are in place to facilitate entry for handicapped French citizens into the workforce?

In France, of the 4.9 million people identified by the French Government as having a limitation in their working capacity, only 1.3 million currently enjoy a disabled worker status. Statistics indicate more than 800,000 handicapped persons are employed

in the workforce. Therefore, a need exists for supporting structures that serve to maximize the potential of those left out of the above groupings. By 2011, France plans to have videoconferencing options available for deaf people and to bolster its capacity to supply them with interpreters for telephone calls. There are two principles that have been fundamental to advancing opportunities for handicapped persons. The first is an emphasis on accessibility, one aspect of which the aforementioned 2011 plan underscores. The second is legislation relating to compensation. Thanks to the government's efforts, employers now better understand the difference between disability and incapacity.



Trip Fosters Transatlantic Appreciation for French Rappers



Our Better Angels perform at the opening ceremony of le Mois de la Francophonie.

Diplomacy through rap? A group of eight promising young French rappers traveled to the United States to discover the heritage and culture of their preferred music genre, but the impact of their visit extended far beyond the realm of art.

Known as Our Better Angels, the troupe of French musicians comprised 15- to 21-year-old men from a marginalized suburb of Paris. The central premise of their visit was to expose them to "unexpected connections with other worlds" by having them explore American music, urbanism and politics. Starting their tour at the birthplace of hip hop engendered the opportunity to develop a cross-cultural appreciation through a common interest: music. The entirety of the transatlantic trip was documented by bloggers from the French-language Web site Bondy Blog.

Spearheaded by French-American Monte Laster's non-

profit F.A.C.E., based in the heart of the rappers' neighborhood, the young artists enjoyed a busy schedule of events from late February to early March. The group was hosted by the Harlem Biennial, a New York-based non-profit concerned with gentrification and dedicated to stimulating the resurgence of Harlem as a thriving economic, tourist and arts community. The Harlem Biennial arranged a series of workshops with American students, recording opportunities, and excursions to discover key American institutions and places of memory, such as the White House and Ground Zero. The New York City component of their visit included performances at Columbia University and the Hip Hop Cultural Center along with workshops at the Harlem Children's Zone and Pratt College. During the Washington, D.C., leg of their tour, the troupe showcased their talents while performing at the kickoff reception to the *Mois de la Francophonie*.

An American who has been living in Paris for nearly 20 years, Laster believes that change is possible through the implementation of creative models, and his initiative received an outpouring of support. Having obtained assistance from both the French and American governments to defray the travel and cost-of-living expenses, Laster and his colleagues volunteered their time and resources to chaperone and support the group in their journey to discover a mutual appreciation of different cultures. "We're leaving the country with a different vision. It's one thing to see the United States on television and another to come breathe [its air], its energy, its movement," one of the rappers reflected in the French daily *Le Figaro*.



Paris is the focus of over 250 foreign productions annually.

In their sixth annual ranking of Super Bowl advertisements, researchers at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University awarded top honors to a Google commercial that chronicles the courtship of an American man and a French woman in Paris. The advertisement narrates the evolution of the couple's romance by combining search queries — that indicate the American's intentions — and thematic background music that parallels the progression of the relationship. The top Super Bowl ad begins with the American's searches for "study abroad Paris" and "how to impress a French girl," then moves onto "long distance relationship advice" and "jobs in Paris," and culminates with the faint sound of wedding bells as the queries "churches in Paris" and "how to assemble a crib" are displayed.

As this commercial shines the limelight on the City of Romance, France is no stranger to the silver screen. Approximately 250 foreign films, commercials and television shows are shot in France annually, of which 20 to 25 percent are American and represent between 60 to 80 percent of foreign cinematic expenditure in France. The French capital has been featured in many films. From *Moulin Rouge* to *Something's Gotta Give*, a Parisian backdrop goes hand-in-hand with romance. Parisian love is all encompassing, gastronomy included. The recent Golden Globe recipient *Julie and Julia* depicts the beginning of Julia Child's lifelong love affair with cooking during her stay in Paris during the 1940s and '50s. From commercials to films, the long-standing friendship between France and the U.S. is represented through cooperatives in business and culture.

For more information about the French film industry, including foreign tax incentives, please visit: www.cnc.fr.

American Women Celebrated for WWI Civilian Relief

The exhibition *American Women Rebuilding France, 1917-1924*, set to open at the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, in May, will bring to life the extraordinary efforts of 350 American women volunteers who left their homes in the U.S. between 1917 and 1924 to help the civilian population of northeastern France in the aftermath of First World War. Organized by Château de Blérancourt, the original exhibition was held at the Franco-American Museum in northeastern France. The exhibit comprises over forty vintage photographs and rare silent film footage. Anne Morgan, the dynamic leader of these efforts, and daughter of financier John Pierpont Morgan, collected private funds to found the American Committee for Devastated France that first took its roots at the Château de Blérancourt. These women provided basic necessities to the wounded, directed the reconstruction of buildings and agricultural production, created a network of visiting nurses and libraries, and organized festive social and sporting events. Today, the Château de Blérancourt is a French national museum devoted to chronicling the history of friendship and collaboration between the United States and France. Following the exhibition's presentation in Kansas City, it will move to the Morgan Library and Museum in New York City in September.



350 American women volunteered between 1917 and 1924 to leave their homes and participate in the aid initiatives in northeastern France.

For more information on the exhibition, please visit: www.theworldwar.org.

Parisian Fashion Puts On a Show



An image from *Galerie des Modes et des Costumes Français*, one of the first fashion magazines, illustrates a style of the 18th century.

The season's hottest styles made their debut at the annual Paris Fashion Week held from March 2-10. Models flaunted clothes from some of the most renowned design houses, including Louis Vuitton, Chanel and Yves Saint-Laurent during the week-long celebration. The French capital city is one of the world's "Big Four" hubs of fashion, along with New York, London and Milan. Organized by the fashion industry association *Fédération française de la couture, du prêt-à-porter des couturiers et des créateurs de mode*, Paris hosts three sets of shows twice a year, each highlighting a different category of the fashion world and introducing the highly anticipated styles of the coming seasons.

The *haute couture* shows, held this year in January and July, put the spotlight on apparel specifically tailored to fit the wearer. In addition to being meticulously handcrafted, these pieces must meet certain standards set by the Paris Chamber of Commerce to earn the distinction of *haute couture*. The menswear shows, also held in January and July, display the most cutting-edge male fashions. Finally, the *prêt-à-porter*, or ready-to-wear-themed shows, taking place during the March Fashion Week, boast the newest styles crafted for a larger audience.

History of Fashion Week

The French fashion industry traces its origins as far back as the late 1600s, and emerged as the country's head of state became a leading trendsetter. Sporting lavish garments sparkling with diamonds and other eccentric combinations of accessories, French King Louis XIV frequently introduced new styles. As his court and the rest of society gazed upon his ensembles and aspired to emulate his creative style, the Sun King is often credited with playing a fundamental role in the popularization of fashion. Famous for his propensity to use fashion as a vehicle to impress, King Louis XIV characterized it as a "mirror," reflecting both the garment wearer's personal taste and class. With clothing becoming a precious commodity, embellishing accents such as velvet and laces could make any man or woman appear fit for the royal court. In her book, *The Essence of Style*, University of Pennsylvania professor Joan DeJean asserts, "When he inherited the throne [...] the Sun King set out to make both himself and his country legendary for a sense of glamour and elegance never before seen." In later decades, French citizens would browse publications such as *Journal de la Mode et du Goût* and *Galerie des Modes et Costumes Français* for a look at the latest clothing designs in vogue. People relied on magazines such as these as sources of modern stylistic innovation, with women and dressmakers taking their fashion cues from the picturesque sketches. Though trends have come and gone as the institution has evolved over the centuries, the inclination to use clothing as a visible



King Louis XIV played an instrumental role in popularizing fashion in France.

expression of oneself has remained fashionable, and has metamorphosed into a multi-billion dollar, world-wide industry.

Since the early 1900s, American designers, manufacturers, buyers and journalists made biannual pilgrimages to the earliest incarnations of Paris Fashion Week to get the first glimpse at the newest French *couture*. The Second World War, however, interrupted the fashion season in Paris, and industry enthusiasts in New York organized what would become the precursor of Fashion Week. The *Fédération française de la couture, du prêt-à-porter des couturiers et des créateurs de mode* was established in 1973 as a derivation of an earlier fashion association, the *Chambre syndicale de la haute couture*. The modern *Fédération* has three branches — *haute couture*, ready-to-wear, and menswear — corresponding to the fashion events that annually take place in Paris. The French capital's ready-to-wear-themed fashion week, which normally occurs during the first three months of the year, has existed in its current form since the *Fédération's* inception.

Highlights of Paris Fashion Week 2010

Many of the heavy hitters of the French fashion world participated in Paris Fashion Week. Marc Jacobs, creative director of the Louis Vuitton design house, dazzled audiences with a new collection titled *And God Created Woman* at a fountain in the courtyard of the Louvre. The retro-themed show featured such illustrious models as Adrianna Lima, Elle McPherson and Laetitia Casta.



Chanel featured an Arctic-themed collection at Fashion Week set to the backdrop of 265-ton glacier.

Reminiscent of 1950s-era fashion in America, the show featured corsets, long skirts and flared coats. The event elicited a sense of nostalgia as the collection also showcased elegant handbags, accentuating its chic, retro vibe. Hailed by the New York Times as the best collection not only during Paris Fashion Week, but of all of the year's international Fashion Weeks, the Times also emphasized that Jacobs's collection "took us all over the rainbow with his pared-down dissertation on Americana." According to Fashion Week Daily, the Louis Vuitton creative director Jacobs "has without a doubt cemented the current title as the most significant designer working in fashion today."

No Fashion Week in Paris would be complete without a spectacular by Chanel. This year, the French design house's creative director Karl Lagerfeld broke the ice with his Arctic-themed collection, in which models in faux-fur winter wear and other pieces posed in front of a gargantuan, imported iceberg. It took six days for 35 sculptors from all around the world to carve out the 28-foot tall, 265-ton glacial backdrop. While knit sweaters glittered with beadwork like icicles, Angora wool sweater dresses boasting white and blue tones resembled the Arctic. Adding to the success Lagerfeld's show, the 76-year-old designer received news from French President Nicolas Sarkozy that he will be decorated as a Commander of the French Legion of Honor for his contribution to French culture. Lagerfeld will join the ranks with other iconic designers such as Valentino and Yves Saint-Laurent.

The bright splashes of color captivated the industry elites, fashion aficionados and other distinguished members of the audience, as cobalt and fuchsia ensembles strutted down the runway between the dramatic color-neutral pieces of the Yves Saint-Laurent collection. The renowned French fashion house's designer Stefano Pilati presented a crisp and elegant line that featured a stark contrast of black and white. As the program noted, the fall collection was designed with "a woman in motion" in mind, one who is dynamic, contemporary and aware. Several of the models donned long, gold medallions reminiscent of the fashion giant's designs of the 1970s, evoking the memory of the late designer whose creative contributions continue to inspire generations of industry leaders.

For more information on French Fashion Week, please visit: www.modeparis.com.

New SNCF Train Pulls Out All the Stops



The sleek new Francilien integrates cutting-edge technology to facilitate commuters' transit.

Commuters gather at the Gare du Nord platform to marvel at the latest addition to the region's rail service. With its round forms and bright colors, the new Francilien trains represent a drastic change from the suburban trains that have been operating around Paris since the 1960s.

The new Francilien is designed to improve the overall commute of its passengers. It is equipped with a new "booster" motor that increases acceleration by 20 percent,

A New Dimension of Technology

After the record-breaking success of three-dimensional films such as *Avatar*, television manufacturers and broadcast companies are now shifting their attention to this lucrative trend. A long-time leader in the field of animation, France has implemented the technology in various fields, producing Oscar laureates and other notable award recipients for French artists savvy in digital animation.

French telecom operator Orange has been testing 3D possibilities for two years by selectively broadcasting events such as the tennis tournament Roland-Garros, boxing matches and opera performances. Specifically, Canal+, a French premium pay-television channel, could be ready to launch programming that "brings screens to life" as soon as this year. The use of 3D technology is not strictly limited to the entertainment sphere. For example, a group of French scientists has benefited from 3D technology in its study of mummies. Instead of manually investigating the thousand-year-old relics, innovations in technology have allowed scientists to scan the body and create a 3D image without opening the sarcophagus and risking potential damage to the mummy. The visualization technology is being used to determine the identity and origins of the Champollion mummy in Figeac, France. The new movement has even caught the attention of some of France's top officials. In Paris on January 18, Culture Minister Frédéric Mitterrand and Prime Minister François Fillon attended a presentation about fiber optic technology and donned 3D glasses themselves.

The interest in the 3D movement is not limited to France alone. The 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa will be the focal point of 3D manufacturers and broadcasters around the world. As the 2006 World Cup brought in over 26 billion total cumulative television viewers, companies are working hard to showcase their technology on TV screens for the widely celebrated event. Putting aside competition, many French specialists are collaborating with and learning from 3D experts in the United States. Without a doubt, this technology will soon influence various "dimensions" of everyday life.

large doors to account for the smooth exchange of travelers and extending walkways to bridge the gap between the doors and the platform. These features allow for a smooth acceleration of the cadences and facilitate the steady flow of traffic.

The train also represents a fast track of technological advancement with its LCD screens that display touristic images of the region as well as railway traffic updates. The train is equipped with sensors that provide essential information to a diagnostic computer, which then automatically relays vital updates to maintenance centers. The high-tech train can also count the number of passengers who board the train and automatically adjust the temperature accordingly. Adding to its aesthetic appeal, over

50 percent of the train's surface area is covered in windows. Thanks to the train's discrete motors, which are twice as quiet as its predecessors, passengers can comfortably engage in conversation.

Although there are only two trains in service at the moment, France's railway operator is on track to revamping France's rail network. By 2015, 172 new Francilien trains are expected to be circulating the Ile-de France region.

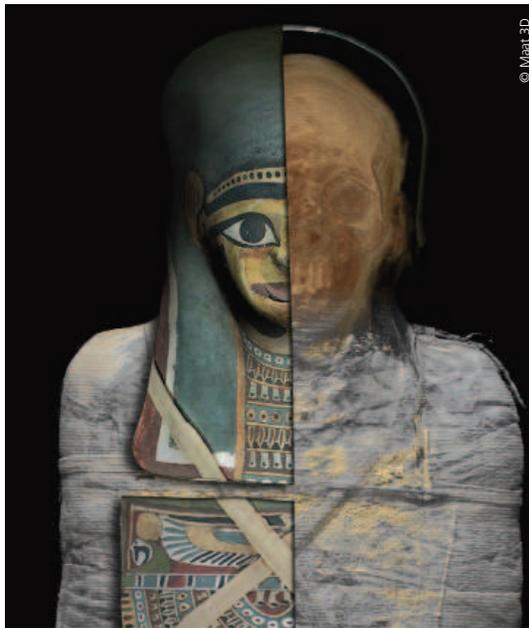


Select French executives will travel to San Francisco to meet potential American collaborators.

The San Francisco chapter of UBIFRANCE, the French agency committed to assisting small and midsize French companies in international development, will host the fourth annual French Tech Tour from June 4-11 in California's Silicon Valley. The CEOs of 15 French startup companies will fly to the San Francisco Bay area to meet with potential partners, American startups and venture capitalists. The Tour serves as an exceptional springboard for those hoping to penetrate the American market. Since the previous 2009 conference, six out of the 16 participating French companies have now established themselves in the United States.

This year, each company will take part in a six-day program of intensive training and preparation, focusing on interview and communication strategies with American professionals. In addition, various workshops coupled with networking events will provide the French executives with a deeper understanding of the business dynamics in the United States and help enhance their visibility outside of France. UBIFRANCE will arrange, on an individual basis, successive business-to-business meetings between the French companies and U.S. business and corporate development teams. To date, some of the corporate partners include Apple, Adobe, Google and Microsoft. Not only do the French companies benefit from this program, Silicon Valley partners gain a unique glimpse into French innovation and entrepreneurial spirit.

For more information on UBIFRANCE and its services, please visit: www.ubifrance.fr.



3D technology helped scientists study the mummy at the Musée Champollion in Figeac, France.



Organic wine is becoming increasingly popular in the field of viticulture.

France, the world's leading exporter in wine, has added a new type of wine to its repertoire. Organic wine, distinct from traditional varieties in the way the grapes are cultivated, is emerging as a growing export in France. The *Association Interprofessionnelle des Vins Biologiques du Languedoc-Roussillon* (AIVB-LR) defines these organic "bio-wines" as "wines produced without using pesticides, chemical fertilizers, or GMO." Organic viticulture aims to promote sustainable farming practices as the vegetation cover in the winter limits erosion and protects underground water supplies.

Organic farming developed in France during the 1960s and blossomed in ensuing decades. In 1972, the International Federation of the Organic Agriculture Movement was formed, followed by the French Organic Farmers' Union in 1978 and the French Organic Federation in 1979. The increase in the number of producers of organic wine in recent years reflects the growing interest in the variety. According to AIVB-LR, organic vineyards in France jumped from 498 in 1998 to over 1,500 in 2005.

The budding excitement in the variety is not limited to France. On the other side of the Atlantic, wine enthusiasts in San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Montreal were invited to sample a wide range of organic wines from France at the 2010 French Organic Wine "Rendez-Vous" from March 1-4. The local French Trade Commissions organized these wine tastings in their respective cities with support from UBIFRANCE, the French agency for international business development.

Cookbook Festival Spices Up Paris

This year's Paris Cookbook Festival welcomed over 40 nationalities in February, allowing the rich sources of culinary inspiration from gourmet aficionados to marinate all continents. The Festival offers the opportunity for professionals and the public alike to discover the many cookbooks published throughout the world.

A city long renowned for its rich heritage of culinary excellence, Paris has continued to heat up interest in gastronomy over the past 15 years by hosting the conference. The Paris Cookbook Festival aims to foster the transmission of tastes and knowledge, the promulgation and assessments of new innovations, and a forum in which to discuss contemporary issues, such as molecular cuisine and bio-wines.

The 4,000 works exhibited from February 12-15 tickled the taste buds of both experienced and novel enthusiasts. In addition to browsing the editorial exhibitions and participating in roundtable discussions with prominent chefs, attendees also had the opportunity to watch culinary demonstrations and take part in wine tastings. Epicureans took delight in moments spent among the cookbooks and chefs, whose tantalizing recipes impelled spectators to get busy cooking or to get into the kitchen and turn up the heat!



Chef Michael Troisgros (left) was one of many culinary artists at the festival.

Festival Offers an Animated History

For the 37th year, the International Comics Festival Association celebrated *bande dessinée* (comics), also referred to as the ninth art, at the annual festival held in Angoulême, France, in late January. The festival began in January 1974 with an exhibition named *Ten Million Images*, celebrating the famous comic creators from the area, consequently establishing Angoulême as the city of comics.

During the festival, several honors were awarded based on age and ability for non-professionals, but the highest distinction at the event is the presentation of the *Angoulême Grand Prize*, which recognizes one creator's contribution to the evolution of comics. This year, French comic strip author Hervé Baruléa, better known as Baru, received



A celebration with "character," the International Comics Festival Association brings comics to life.

the recognition for his comics, which often portray the rebellion and joy associated with youth. The prestigious award also carries an appointment as president of next year's International Comics Festival. In 2009, the award went to Strasbourg native Christian Hincker, known to most as *Blutch*.

The thousands of visitors to the festival also had the opportunity to visit the National Museum of Comic Strips, located in a converted paper mill, featuring over 8,000 original drawings, including favorites such as *Astérix*, *Peanuts*, *Tintin* and other comics from throughout history.

For more information, please visit: www.bdangouleme.com.



FIND FRANCE OFF THE
BEATEN PATH...

Parisians, future Parisians, and anyone else with a special place in their heart for the French capital can stay up to date on the city's latest cultural trends with the *My Little Paris* blog. Available in both French and English, the site aims to equip readers both in France and abroad with a diverse knowledge of some of the city's best-kept secrets in fashion, food, home and beauty, among other areas of interest. New content from the site is summarized and dis-



Café Verlet, one of Paris's hidden treasures.

seminated via email to followers in a newsletter every week. In the weeks preceding Paris Fashion Week in March, *My Little Paris* offered readers the opportunity to stay current with the event via the mini-newsletter *My Little Fashion Week*.

Since the site's inception, founder Fany Pechiodat has created *My Little Lyon* and *My Little Marseille* for those who wish to stay in the know about France's other prominent metropolises. The sites serve as digital treasure maps for anyone looking to uncover the riches of what each city has to offer. For more information, please visit: www.mylittleparis.com.

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Parkour: Scaling an Urban Playground

Running up walls has never been so exciting! Described as a mix of martial arts and urban acrobatics, Parkour is a natural method of training the human body to move forward quickly by making use of the urban environment, and of training the mind to be free from physical obstacles. The movement, an impressive stunt to spectators, seeks efficiency and control. Parkour was showcased in the opening chase scene of the James Bond film *Casino Royale*, as Bond himself chases the adept fugitive by scaling the scaffolding of a construction site and fighting while dangling from dangerous heights. Aside from these elaborate Hollywood-inspired chase runaway scenes, the essence of Parkour emphasizes the values of social responsibility, community integration and mutual respect, while practitioners of the art, known as *traceurs*, are encouraged to abide by the law in their agile pursuits.



Parkour artist Paul Mederos performs the art at Georgetown University.

attention and has been featured in music videos and advertisements, including clips for Nike Air and Sprite.

The practice, considered a "complete sport," was created by Frenchman David Belle in the late 1980s as a way to release himself from constraints and to hurdle both physical and mental obstacles. Belle has taken his passion to the silver screen, as he stars in French director Luc Besson's recently released film *District 13: Ultimatum*, a follow-up to his 2004 hit, *District B13*; both set in the Parisian suburbs. Parkour has developed throughout the world with several growing regional groups in Canada, Brazil, Australia and various U.S. cities. With the release of the first Parkour video game, the art gains more global

Technology Bridges International Borders

As technology plays an increasing role in the realm of international relations, its importance is also extending the field of global education. On February 24, French Ambassador to the United States Pierre Vimont, along with education officials from the Académie de Lyon and Missouri Commissioner of Education Chris L. Nicastro, signed an agreement to promote educational ties between France and the United States. The Memorandum of Understanding encourages cooperation between educators and students in the city of Lyon, France, and the state of Missouri, U.S. Taking place at the Missouri History Museum, the historic signing was streamed live via Skype communication software to officials in France.

With communication technology such as Skype, education is no longer limited to the physical boundaries of one classroom. Ambassador Vimont observed that, "In today's world, where globalization is not just a word but a way of life, it is more essential than ever to develop cooperation in K-12 and higher education and also to expand the international dimension of teaching." Students in Jefferson City, Missouri, are collaborating with their counterparts in Lyon

to create a joint Web site. The students are already taking advantage of the high-speed internet technology, and have been exchanging pictures and news about their hometowns with each other. Commissioner Nicastro emphasized that this accord will reinforce the academic exposure many students in Missouri gain to French via their school's foreign language instruction, while this agreement will also allow the students of the schools that do not offer French "to have some experience with foreign language and culture that broadens their horizons and introduces them to the global society."



Centre Pompidou-Metz Prepares for Grand Opening



Centre Pompidou-Metz is preparing for its grand opening.

Paris's Centre Pompidou eagerly awaits the opening of its counterpart in northeastern France this May. A complement to the original home of modern and contemporary creation, the Centre Pompidou-Metz will represent the extended expression of the

original Centre Pompidou spirit, concomitantly boasting its "twin regional and European identity [...] born from a vision of integrating European growth, globalization in the arts, and the evolution of French society."

The Centre Pompidou-Metz unites two resolutely forward-looking institutions, the original Centre Pompidou and the Metz Metropole region, through the new museum's extensive collection of 59,000 pieces. The modern institution also provides the opportunity for visitors to explore the area as a meeting point between the city itself and the wider European community.

According to Alain Seban, president of the Centre Pompidou, "Arts policy has featured strongly in Metz's development for many years, and the city has demonstrated remarkable energy and unwavering determination in this area." The inaugural exhibition of the Centre Pompidou-Metz titled *Masterpieces?* will examine the concept of a masterpiece; what it is and who decides.

ACTORS KNIGHTED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMEDY



Min. Mitterrand (center) honored McGregor (left) and Carrey.

The honor bestowed upon actors Jim Carrey and Ewan McGregor by French Minister of Culture Frédéric Mitterrand on February 1 is no laughing matter. The Hollywood stars received the *Insignes de Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* as a recognition of their lifetime contribution to comedy. The prestigious award is given to those who have impacted France and the world through significant work in the arts or literature. This February, the actors were hailed by Minister Mitterrand as "the two complementary faces of the comedic genius." The Culture Minister commented that the stars stand on opposite ends of the comedy spectrum, with Carrey representing an "art constituted by an extraordinary presence, by a truculence that practically reaches exuberance," while McGregor is able to hold an audience's attention through "an economy of means and a concentration of effects" which characterize his quieter acting style. Carrey has starred in hits such as *The Mask*, *Ace Ventura* and *Yes Man*, while McGregor has most notably acted in *Star Wars* and other well-known films such as *Moulin Rouge*. This year, the two recipients will join each other in *I Love You Phillip Morris*, a film about a police officer who reassesses his life after a dramatic event.

ROMANTIC OPERA COMES TO THE BASTILLE

The Opéra Bastille, located in the heart of Paris, opened its curtains last month to Jules Massenet's 1892 opera, *Werther*. The opera is based on the novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, written by German author and polymath Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in 1774. This specific performance was first staged by French director Benoît Jacquot for the Covent Garden in London in 2004. *Werther* tells the story of a poet who falls in love with a married woman and reveals his emotions through a profuse letter-writing campaign, which she reads and rereads. Just as she confronts the situation, tragedy ensues. A shining cast of stars at the Bastille breathes new light into this classic, featuring German tenor Jonas Kaufmann, French mezzo-soprano Sophie Koch, and French baritone Ludovic Tézier.



President of the *Mois de la Francophonie 2010*, Jean-Stéphane Bernard, awarded General Jones (right) with the *Grand Prix de la Francophonie* in recognition his promotion of the French language.

News From FRANCE

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Francophonie Celebrations Take to the U.S.

Throughout the month of March, the International Organization of the Francophonie celebrated its 40th anniversary with an array of cultural events in countries around the world, highlights of which can be viewed at www.francophonie2010.tv. This year, many festival organizers in the United States took this month as a unique opportunity to demonstrate solidarity with and support for Haiti through relief fundraisers and benefits.

The Atlanta Francophonie Committee (www.consulfrance-atlanta.org) hosted a variety of local events from March 19-25. The Committee featured a French film festival at the High Museum of Art and a business breakfast at Emory University on the topic of "Doing Business with Francophone Countries." Not only did all of the festival's proceeds go toward aid to Haiti, but several of the events put Haitian culture in the spotlight. On March 22, Atlanta's Midtown Arts Cinema screened a film adaptation of Haitian author

Dany Laferrière's book *Le Goût des Jeunes filles (On the Verge of a Fever)*. The Chicago Alliance Française (www.af-chicago.org) also contributed to Haitian relief with its Festival de la Francophonie on March 5. In addition to showcasing music performances and delicacies from several Francophone countries, the event featured raffles for various French-themed gifts, the proceeds of which went to the Red Cross's efforts in Haiti.

The Washington, D.C., Francophonie 2010 Festival (www.francophoniedc.org) dedicated its festival, which opened during the first week of March and will run through early April, to the memory of those lost in the earthquake in Haiti and to those contributing to the rebuilding efforts. Attendees who purchased their tickets online had the option to contribute \$10 to Haiti relief. A raffle for a trip for two to Tahiti also donated all proceeds to relief efforts. The month-long celebration kicked off with a ceremony at the Willard Hotel, during which National Security

Advisor General James L Jones, Jr. was awarded the *Grand Prix de la Francophonie*. Having lived in France during his formative years, the American general addressed the audience in flawless French (visit www.ambafrance-us.org to see the video). Another highlight of Francophonie 2010 in the American capital was the *Grand Fête* at the Embassy of France's Maison Française on March 5, where over 1,600 attendees reveled in the francophone atmosphere, enjoyed live music and sampled food from 35 different French-speaking countries.

Texas's French Cultures Festival (www.francophonie-texas.org) organized events in Dallas, Houston, Austin, and extended the festivities to neighboring states by supporting events in Tulsa and Little Rock, AR. On March 1, the "Carnival de Nice" kicked off a month of festivities at the Black Swan restaurant in Houston. Dallas hosted an art show featuring various types of creative expressions from French artists,



Citizens from Benin showcase their traditional music and instruments at D.C.'s *Grande Fête*.

including ceramics and painting.

Louisiana showcased the music tour titled "French Troubadour" in New Orleans and Lafayette during Francophonie celebrations (www.consulfrance-nouvelleorleans.org) from March 19-22. Headliners Tété and Eric John Kaiser, who both sing and play guitar, have toured throughout the U.S., delighting crowds with their unique musical stylings which blend pop, blues and rock, among other genres.

The New England region participated in the nationwide celebration of French cultural heritage, as Boston, Providence, Montpellier and other cities hosted events from March 13-28 (www.franco-newengland.org). Along with a plethora of film festivals and art exhibits, events included a performance by French singer and guitarist Bertrand Laurence in Cambridge on March 14 and a series of lectures on French and American literature by Quebecois author Martin Robitaille throughout universities in the region.

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