

## Bastille Day Celebrations Take the Nation

The universal tenets of *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité* bridged the Atlantic in July, as Americans gathered to honor the democratic ideals born of July 14, 1789, the day celebrated as the start of the French Revolution.

In Milwaukee, WI, thousands of people took to the streets, recreating the revolutionary scene with the "M&I Bank Storm the Bastille" 5K run and 2-mile walk. The reenactment was part of the city's Bastille Days Festival (July 8 - 11), one of the nation's largest outdoor tributes to the French Revolution.

For many, the national holiday was also a moment to remember the sacrifices made to preserve the Republic. Olivier Brochenin, the consul general of France in New Orleans, honored seven Louisiana veterans by bestowing upon them the Legion of Honor for their service during the liberation of France in World War II.

Other celebrations adopted a more lighthearted tone, as Los Angeles, West Palm Beach and various metro areas nationwide held Parisian waiters' races. Servers raced down urban avenues, speed walking as they sought to retain both their composure and the champagne-filled glasses resting on their trays.

In the nation's capital, Ambassador of France to the United States Pierre Vimont welcomed D.C.'s French community for a patriotic *soirée* brimming with culinary delicacies, dance and reminiscing. Both the French and American national anthems were performed.

The annual *défilé militaire* along the Champs-Élysées, conducted by the Ministry of Defense, not only featured marchers from the French army, but also included troops from 14 sub-Saharan former French colonies in celebration of their independence. In honor of the 100th anniversary of French Naval Aviation (see NFF 10.05), the festivities also took to the skies, as French military jets and parachutists soared overhead.



Several cities across the United States, including Milwaukee and Los Angeles, featured Parisian waiters' races as part of their Bastille Day celebrations.

### *Rising to the Challenge: Tour de France 2010*

Spanning 2,263 miles and 20 stages over 23 days, the Tour de France demands extreme mental and physical endurance. One of the most popular sporting events worldwide, the Tour attracts nearly 15 million spectators to cheer on the athletes from the route's sidelines. For those unable to catch the excitement in person, the Tour is broadcast to 186 countries and territories, almost as many as watch the World Cup, which reaches 214 nations worldwide. This year, 35 riders on seven teams represented France, which holds the record number of wins for a nation.

Although the race culminates in Paris, a new city is chosen every year for the *Grand Départ* to draw visitors and international attention to the honored city's commitment to the sport. This year, Rotterdam was a symbolic choice, in recognition of the Dutch city's efforts to encourage exercise among youth and to promote cycling as a sustainable mode of transportation.

Nearly 200 athletes headed south from the largest port in the Netherlands, surmounting myriad challenges, such as slippery cobblestones and grueling mountain ascents. Riders cautiously navigated the treacherous conditions during stage three en route from Belgium into France, and many suffered injuries on the uneven terrain. This year marked the centennial of mountain stages in the race, initially introduced to expand the scope of the tour in perspective and physical rigor. Superior climbing ability is often a deciding factor in racing success. Participants took on the Alps and the *Pyrénées* with two ascents of the *Col du Tourmalet* in stages 17 and 18. The infamous climb is the highest road in the central *Pyrénées* and a favorite leg of the 107-year-old race.

At press time, the Tour winner was not yet determined.

## Agreement Caps Off French-American Efforts in Polar Zone Research



Minister Valérie Pécresse and Director Karl Erb forged a French-American research alliance in the study of polar zones.

France and the United States spearheaded a landmark joint effort for research in the polar regions on June 25 in Washington, D.C.

French Minister for Higher Education and Research Valérie Pécresse and National Science Foundation Office of Polar Programs Director Karl Erb signed a letter of intent facilitating exchanges in the operation of equipment for crossing the polar

icecaps, in deep ice core research, and in the use of technology for extreme-weather zones. Though largely uninhabitable, the polar regions serve as ideal spots for research on climate change, biodiversity and the study of toxic effects on ecosystems. "There is a sense of urgency, and I would even say of political urgency, in the need to deepen our knowledge of the polar regions," Pécresse stated.

France, a leader in scientific study of polar areas, pledged to open access to its bases on the subantarctic islands of Kerguelen, Crozet, Saint-Paul and Amsterdam for American researchers. In turn, the U.S. will team up with French scientists at U.S. polar stations in Alaska and Greenland. The new union also pairs the American base in Greenland, Summit, with the French-Italian center, Concordia, in Antarctica.

On the global level, the agreement follows a renewed focus on the poles as part of the International Polar Year 2007-2008, a worldwide effort to research the regions. Moreover, France played a major role in deep-ice drilling as part of the European research project, EPICA, which delivered scientists 800,000 years worth of climate history for study. France has also pledged its support for the creation of an Arctic Observatory.

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## YOUNG LEADERS TACKLE GLOBAL CHALLENGES FOR G-20

A new set of voices will join those of heads of state and government at the G-20 summit in France next year. The 50 Young Global Leaders, a group of ministers, executives, NGO founders, academics, journalists and other innovators, will submit their proposals addressing global challenges to French President Nicolas Sarkozy and his counterparts before the conference in November 2011. The individuals — each selected by the World Economic Forum — represent 24 different countries and a wide spectrum of fields, but a common thread unites them: they are all under the age of 40. In Paris June 29 - 30, they met with top French leaders from the public and private sectors, including Finance Minister Christine Lagarde and Lars Olafsson, CEO of global retailer Carrefour, to discuss global economic issues. The team will focus on contemporary concerns such as financial regulation, economic and monetary policies, international governance and development.

## CÉSAR AWARDS TO HONOR ANIMATED FILMS

In February 2011, the French filmmaking community will welcome a new arrival to the prestigious César Awards' 36th annual ceremony: a signature gold statuette for Best Animated Film. Each year, the *Académie des Arts et Techniques du Cinéma* honors achievement in French film at the César ceremony, christened "the French Oscars." As the industry has widened in scope, the *Académie* has followed, expanding the number of award categories from 13 in 1976 to 21 today. Prior to the new honor for achievement in animated film, the prize for Best Documentary, inaugurated in 2006, was the most recent addition to the slate of honors. The *Académie* is composed of 3,900 professionals from the French moviemaking industry, including directors, actors, screenwriters, producers and technical experts. Since 2002, the ceremony has taken place at the *Théâtre du Châtelet*, a Baron Haussmann-era venue located along the banks of the Seine, and is hosted by an icon in French film.

## Current Events

# France Takes Progressive Measures to Combat Psychological Violence

Workplace harassment was first included in the French labor law in 2002. The rule prohibited "repeated actions that lead to the deterioration of working conditions, likely to infringe an employee's rights, dignity, to impair his or her fitness or mental health, or prejudice his or her professional career." The legal recognition of mental harassment was a first step in protecting citizens from such abusive conduct, but was not enough, according to a new statute.

The French parliament unanimously approved a law on June 29 that deems psychological violence in relationships a criminal offense. This new statute defines mental violence as "repeated acts that could be constituted by words," including insults or repeated text messages that "degrade one's quality of life and cause a change to one's mental or physical state."

The offense is punishable by severe penalties, including up to three years in prison and a 75,000 euro fine.

The law builds on the work of the French psychiatrist Marie-France Hirigoyen, who laid the groundwork for the 2002 statute by popularizing the notion of "moral harassment" with her 1998 best seller of the same title. French Secretary of State for the Family Nadine Morano and other political figures agree that "[violence] is not just blows, but also words." However, proof of psychological violence is difficult to demonstrate and Hirigoyen also recognizes the risk of an ill-intentioned person using law to falsely accuse his or her spouse.

Although the recognition of psychological violence in statutes is a significant step toward preventing harmful behavior, Hirigoyen asserts that precautions should be taken to ensure that the new law is not abused.



Text messages can be used as evidence of psychological abuse, according to a new French law.



Interview with Roland Celette, Cultural Attaché and Director of La Maison Française

Could you explain the cross-functional role of La Maison Française?

*La Maison Française* is the cultural center at the Embassy. We serve two purposes: hosting programs for various services of the Embassy as well as our own cultural series. Last year, we had 220 events, both large and small, which attracted about 50,000 visitors. Our role is to make French culture known to our American friends, providing them with an open place for exchange.

For me, two words stand out — accessibility and quality. Accessibility means that we present a consistent program by organizing series (baroque, jazz, contemporary, and popular music, as well as theater and cinema). Quality means that we are eager to present the best of France by bringing master performers to the United States. In addition, we seek to facilitate a deeper cultural experience and a profound contact between the artist and the audience. This year we are again welcoming pianist François-Frédéric Guy, who last year played all of Beethoven's piano sonatas — 32 in nine days. He will be featured at *La Maison Française* for the next couple of years — just one example of the strong connections we make with artists.



How does La Maison Française engage effectively with the greater Washington, D.C., community?

Cooperation with the city of Washington is fundamental to our venture of sharing French culture with the whole spectrum of American society — even my three goldfish are named for D.C. museums: National Gallery of Art, Phillips Collection, and Kreeger. But in all seriousness, *La Maison Française* does work closely with numerous D.C. institutions, such as museums, arts centers, foundations, schools and, of course, the D.C. Commission of the Arts and Humanities.

We also benefit from the capital's international community. We host our *Fête de la Francophonie* annually with the embassies of 35 French-speaking nations! With the 27 European embassies we also created our Children's Festival to reach out to a younger audience, which is now the largest of its kind in the U.S.

We are trying to establish connections — and connections can be made at all levels. Indeed, we measure our success by the diversity of our audiences.

What event are you most excited about for this year and what was

the creative process behind it?

My team and I are looking forward to the Street Performance Festival, which is returning for its third year! The idea was inspired by French urban culture, where one often sees street artists such as jugglers, acrobats, and clowns interacting with the crowd. While we put on the classic cultural events, we are also fortunate enough to take risks and follow our vision. The idea is unique, fresh, and will give Americans a new perspective on French culture.

## French Game Rolls Onto America's Court

Whether in the countryside for an informal game or on an urban court for a more serious match, the people of France have long enjoyed the game of *pétanque*. On this side of the pond, *pétanque* courts are springing up as the favored French sport gains popularity in the United States. *Pétanque* is similar to the Italian game of bocce ball. Though it has roots in the coin-tossing games of Ancient Greece, the modern game of *pétanque* emerged in 1907 in Provence. Players participate either in teams or as individuals, accumulating points by tossing metal *boules* closest to the wooden *cochonnet* (or jack). Similar to the game of horseshoes, *pétanque* players can strategically knock any *boules* already in play away from the *cochonnet*.



The competition heats up in Boca Raton, FL, as a *pétanque* player lines up his shot.

for international competition, clubs across the United States feature tournaments and practices year round.

For more information or to find a *pétanque* club near you, please visit: [www.usapetanque.org](http://www.usapetanque.org).

The first *pétanque* club in America was established in California in 1959. Currently, *Pétanque America* — a store devoted solely to selling merchandise for the sport — estimates there are as many as 30,000 regular players stateside. The Federation of *Pétanque USA*, which oversees play in 37 clubs nationwide, boasts 1,300 members.

American *pétanque* players will have a chance to face off against international competition at the 45th World Championship of *Pétanque*, which is scheduled to take place in Turkey this October. Forty-eight teams are expected to participate. For those not yet primed

## Renewing 20 Years of Cooperation Between France and Georgia

Twenty years ago, the Georgia Institute of Technology ventured across the Atlantic to establish a campus, Georgia Tech-Lorraine, in the city of Metz in western France. On June 14, Georgia Tech President G.P. Peterson traveled to France to celebrate two decades of the French-American partnership. There, he met with representatives from the satellite institution and the French government to sign a letter of intent to create the Lafayette Institute in Lorraine. The planners anticipate that the facility will be a center for innovation and commercialization of emerging technologies, such as solar cells, in the medical and environmental sectors. President of Georgia Tech-Lorraine Yves Berthelot lauded the international scope of the project, stating, "We have created a node in the heart of Europe where Georgia Tech is plugged into a network of excellence in education and research and development."

President Peterson also renewed the joint research initiative between Georgia Tech and the French National Center for Research, which has facilitated an exchange of scientists since 2006. "We believe that the most pressing challenges in business, industry and society cross national boundaries, and by working together, there is no limit to what we can accomplish," Peterson said.

Though the ceremonies took place in Metz, a live transmission connected the participants in Lorraine to their colleagues in Georgia. At the Atlanta campus, Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox signed a memorandum of understanding between the Georgia Department of Education and corresponding institutions in Metz and Nancy to encourage French and English language instruction in schools.



Georgia Tech-Lorraine reaffirms its transatlantic and scientific partnerships on its 20th anniversary.

## California Festival Welcomes Francophiles and Their Faithful Friends



Poodles parade in front of the festival's Eiffel Tower.

California's sun-streaked coast is often referred to as the American Riviera — a perfect setting to celebrate transatlantic friendship by recreating the sounds, smells and tastes of France. For 23 years, Santa Barbara has hosted its annual French Festival, and from July 17 - 18, 20,000 revelers attended one of the largest *fêtes* in the western United States.

Combining musical performance with traditional fare, the free event honored artists Maurice Chevalier and Edith Piaf. Their distinctive voices blended with the sounds of accordions and *musettes de Paris*, surrounding festival-goers as they sampled French delicacies showcased by local restaurants. Visual interpretations inspired by France were also on the menu — painters displayed the warm colors of Provence, while continuous entertainment by wandering mimes, jugglers and over 40 acts, from cancan dancers to opera singers, spread over three stages. The festival culminated in the annual Poodle Parade as dogs of all sizes, sporting *tricolore* styles, strutted their stuff beneath a model Eiffel Tower.

For more information, please visit: [www.frenchfestival.com](http://www.frenchfestival.com).

### GAME, SET, LONGEST MATCH



Over the course of three days in June, a record-breaking tennis match played out on the grass courts at Wimbledon. Frenchman Nicolas Pietrangeli and American John Isner battled over points for more than 11 hours in the longest match in tennis history. The pair began their match on June 22, but it was suspended for darkness before either could claim victory. The next afternoon saw grueling back-and-forth play until the match was yet again called with Isner and Mahut tied 59-59. The third day finally delivered a winner — a backhand passing shot down the line from Isner that put him ahead, 70-68, satisfying the Wimbledon requirement for a player to win the final set, and thus the match, by two. Previously, the record for the longest tennis match was set at 6 hours and 33 minutes — Isner and Mahut's lasted for 11 hours and 5 minutes. The pair broke other records as well, including longest set (8 hours, 11 minutes) and most aces in a match (215). The match will be remembered not only for its length, but also for the tenacity and determination on the parts of both players.

### AMERICA SITS DOWN TO ITS OWN DÎNER DE CONS

In 1998, French actors Thierry Lhermitte and Jacques Villeret delighted viewers on the big screen with their slapstick comedy *Le dîner de cons* (*The Dinner Game*), a story about a dinner party of imbeciles where nothing goes as planned and the night inevitably ends in disaster. Written and directed by Francis Veber, the comedy was the highest-grossing French film in 1998 and garnered several distinctions, including the César Award for Best Actor (Jacques Villeret), Best Supporting Actor (Daniel Prévost), and Best Writing (Francis Veber). More than a decade after *Le dîner de cons* premiered on the silver screen, American director Jay Roach (*Austin Powers*, *Meet the Parents*) is making his own adaptation of the film, *Dinner for Schmucks*. Roach selected American stars Steve Carell (pictured above), Paul Rudd and Zack Galifianakis — whose comedic chemistry sparked improvised scenes — to fill the shoes of the original French players as they stumble through another cringe-worthy dinner game. *Dinner for Schmucks* premiered on the big screen July 30. For more information, please visit: [www.dinnerforschmucks.com](http://www.dinnerforschmucks.com).



## A Dive Into Jacques Cousteau's Undersea World

Jacques Cousteau gazes across the waves in his signature red hat, eyes fixed on the horizon. The image of "The Captain" aboard his beloved *Calypso* encapsulates the intrepid spirit of the late explorer who pioneered advances in oceanography, documentary filmmaking and conservation of the seas alongside his crew. His ocean adventures, popularized through books, movies and a television show, revealed the diversity of ocean life and inspired others to take responsibility for the marine world he cherished. On June 11, the 100th anniversary of his birth, the American Cousteau Society and the French *Equipe Cousteau* launched a year-long commemoration to celebrate the Cousteau tradition and encourage others to continue his work as contemporary stewards of the oceans.



Recognized around the world for his emblematic red hat, Cousteau revealed the mysteries of the seas to millions.

### At Home Aboard the *Calypso*

Cousteau began his career on the seas at 23, when he became an officer in the French Navy as a freshly minted graduate of the *École Navale* in 1933. Though he was forced to abandon his military ambitions after a car accident, he soon found the French Navy's information service was a place to pursue his passion for marine research. The work stimulated his creative mind, and by 1943 he had co-directed the first French undersea film, *Par dix-huit mètres de fond (18 meters deep)*. The same year, he made a landmark contribution to the world of nautical exploration with the invention of the Aqua-Lung, a revolutionary device that facilitated underwater breathing. The Aqua-Lung paved the way for modern scuba gear and opened the door to marine expeditions by amateurs.



Captain Cousteau launched his nautical explorations and filmmaking career from the *Calypso*.

his documentary, *The Silent World*, co-produced with Louis Malle, won the *Palme d'Or* at the Cannes Film Festival. Using the Aqua-Lung, the divers moved as freely as fish through the coral landscape and took the cameras to a colorful and diverse world little known to those on land. The film transported audiences to the depths of the Mediterranean and Red Seas, as well as the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf.

In the 1960s and 70s, as the space race captured the minds of the world by showing them a celestial world above, Cousteau revealed the mysteries of the oceans, guiding viewers below the surface of the Earth on his television program, "The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau." In his distinctive accent, the captain narrated the

After having served in the French Navy until 1949, Jacques founded the French Oceanographic Campaigns in 1950 and began his lifework aboard the *Calypso*, a retired army minesweeper that he converted into a hub for oceanic research and documentary filmmaking. In 1956, Cousteau garnered international acclaim when

verse the seas aboard the *Calypso* with the help of son, Jean-Michel, and wife, Francine, until his death in 1997.

### 100 Years Later: Remembering Cousteau

In light of international environmental crises such as the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, Cousteau's 100th birthday serves as an occasion to redouble the efforts of the Captain. One week before the centennial of Cousteau's birthday, his son Pierre-Yves of the Cousteau Society and National Geographic launched a mission aboard the *Alcyone* to compare Cousteau's footage with modern data to gauge the health of the Mediterranean today.

*Equipe Cousteau* plans to rehabilitate the iconic *Calypso* to run educational voyages from its adopted home port in Brittany, France, to ports around the world. The traveling exhibition will feature all of Cousteau's aquatic innovations, such as diving outfits and mini-submarines he used when filming. "[The team is] extremely pleased and excited by the prospect of her touring again...to continue the mission of Jacques-Yves Cousteau's life, fostering appreciation of both the beauty and fragility of the seas," Francine Cousteau said in a Cousteau Society press release.

The crew will also launch the Cousteau Diver's program to coordinate observations of the world's oceans by a global community of divers. Pierre-Yves explained the international enterprise. "By uniting a community of divers concerned about the marine environment, Cousteau Divers will bring the legacy of Jacques-Yves Cousteau to life, making



Divers from the Cousteau Society conduct exploratory and research missions.

each diver an agent of the study and conservation of the aquatic realm," he said.

"We protect what we love," The Captain once said, vocalizing his mission in service of man and sea; only by cultivating a connection to the ecosystems of the deep can mankind ensure its preservation.

For more information on the Cousteau Society, please visit: [www.cousteau.org](http://www.cousteau.org).

### *Keeping the Message Alive: The International Year of Biodiversity*

The centennial of Cousteau's birth coincides with the International Year of Biodiversity, organized by the United Nations, which aims to inform the international community about the fragility of biological diversity. France formulated its national plan based on the counsel of scientists, researchers, businesses and public authorities during the May Conference on Biodiversity at Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. National efforts included weekly broadcasts of live interviews with resident researchers on the website of the National Museum of Natural History in the same month, and also a nationwide *Fête de la Nature* that assembled over 1.2 million people. As one of 34 threatened biodiversity hotspots identified by the UN, the Mediterranean will be the focus of French conservation efforts. The Institute of Ecology and Environment at the French National Center for Scientific Research will also lend its expertise to international projects in China, French Polynesia and the Amazon, locations Cousteau also endeavored to protect.

For more information on the International Year of Biodiversity, please visit: [www.biodiversite2010.fr](http://www.biodiversite2010.fr).

## PICARD Satellite Blazes into Space to Study Sun

From Earth, the sun seems like an unchanging star, but its surface is constantly subject to immense fluctuations in temperature and intensity that may affect Earth's climate. To assess these changes, the PICARD satellite, launched June 15 by the French National Center of Space Research, will orbit the Earth to study the celestial giant 93 million miles away.

In the 17th century, the French astronomer Jean Picard, the satellite's namesake, was the first to take accurate measurements of the sun and to establish that its diameter shifted. Since his findings,



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The French satellite PICARD journeyed to the sun to study its activity and influence on climate change.

however, scientists have been unable to establish a connection between the sun's changing diameter, solar activity and the temperature on Earth.

The mission aims to shed light on the possible correlation by studying a two-year segment of the sun's approximately 11-year cycle, during which the diameter and the sun's overall activity oscillate. The satellite will record data about the diameter and intensity with a telescope designed to investigate the sun's interior structure. Its calculated orbit ensures the sun remains constantly in its line of sight, and the team will begin to receive data in the fall. This information will help scientists to better predict the sun's behavior and gain insight into the ways in which the sun may affect climate change on Earth.

## International Consortium Explores Causes of Autism

Theory that autism may be caused by rare genetic mutations has gained ground after a recent international study led, in part, by French researchers. Scientists identified previously unknown genes expressed in autism and determined that individuals with autism had more instances of insertions and deletions of submicroscopic gene sequences than did unaffected subjects. On June 10, the study was published in the scientific journal, *Nature*.

A consortium of 177 scientists conducted the study, the second phase of an initiative organized by the Autism Genome Project (AGP), an international collaborative genetics project. Using high-resolution DNA microchips, scientists analyzed the genotypes of nearly 2,300 autistic and non-autistic individuals to explore the genetic causes of the neurobiological disorder. The French contingent of the consortium focused specifically on identifying factors of genetic vulnerability present in those with autism. The consortium's findings support the results of a 2008 study, led by French scientists Thomas Bourgeron and Marion Leboyer, that discovered the first monogenic mutations associated with autism. Catalina Betancur, group leader of the most recent study, documented the success of the AGP. "We have been able to identify a genetic cause of 20 percent of autism cases and similar troubles."

While no biological diagnosis or cure yet exist for the developmental disorder, the identification of the new genes will help researchers improve diagnosis in newborns and treatment for people affected by autism.



An international team of scientists came closer to unlocking clues relating to autism.

## Discovery of Prehistoric Whale Makes a Splash



© Chloé Leterneur / MNHN

An artistic rendering of *Leviathan melvillei*.

The enormous creatures of the deep that have long been the subject of thrilling adventure novels may no longer be a figment of one's imagination. In the July 1 issue of the scientific journal *Nature*, an international team of researchers headed by a pair of French paleontologists from the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, published the discovery of a massive skull and jaw of what is believed to be a 12- to 13-million-year-old relative of the modern sperm whale. Endowed with 14-inch-long teeth, the ancient giant is thought to have fed on sharks and even other whales. The fossilized remains, which were found in the Peruvian desert, were so large that they were spotted protruding from the sand by researchers from far away. Owing to the size of the specimen, the whale has been officially named *Leviathan melvillei* — a reference to both the biblical sea monster and to Herman Melville, author of the famed novel *Moby Dick*. Though the discovery of the jaw helped researchers gauge the size and behavior of the ancient marine animal, many characteristics have yet to be determined. The research team plans to return to the discovery site in Peru in search of clues to help piece together the mystery of this gigantic beast.



The French government has implemented a new public service offering financial advice online and by phone.

For the modern consumer, navigating the complex workings of the financial world can be daunting, if not cringe-worthy. The launch of a public service in France will provide customized financial advice to citizens, guiding them through the process of obtaining insurance, opening a bank account and making smart decisions with their resources.

The service, dubbed *Assurance Banque Epargne Info Service*, follows a push by Finance Minister Christine Lagarde to establish a user-friendly financial tool for the French people. Together, the website and hotline act as a centralized hub of financial know-how for citizens looking to manage their money responsibly in areas as varied as life insurance, credit options and financial market decisions. The platform also provides guidelines for consumers consulting with financial advisers, warns of companies engaged in high-risk business practices, and displays a list of authorized firms and products.

Geared toward members of the public who are less familiar with money management practices in an elaborate economic system, the service was conceived for private citizens and independent business owners in particular. It is overseen by *l'Autorité de Contrôle Prudentiel*, a subsidiary of Banque de France devoted to helping everyday consumers make informed fiscal choices.

For more information on the service, please visit: [abe-infoservice.fr](http://abe-infoservice.fr).

## THE COWS COME HOME TO BORDEAUX



The "Art'n'roll Cowlection" will graze near the water at the Quai Louis XVIII in Bordeaux

Herds of museum-goers can step outside this summer to enjoy Bordeaux's Cow Parade. The display will assemble 60 fiberglass cows, each bearing the touch of a local artist, into the streets of Bordeaux June 7 - September 14. The task of decorating the models was assigned to painters, photographers, designers and sculptors whose creative incarnations include a Marilyn Monroe cow bearing Warhol's famous print and another "spotted" with candid photos. The bovine panoply will add an "udderly" fun and eclectic flair to Bordeaux's summer scene. The Bordeaux Cow Parade is part of the largest public street art event in the world, which has brought cows to over 50 cosmopolitan cities. The association asserts that the endeavor mobilizes the region's artistic community, draws tourists to the city and gives back through a charity initiative. In September, the cows will be sold at an auction benefiting the food bank of Bordeaux and neighboring Gironde. The project has generated over 20 million dollars worldwide for charity in the last 10 years.

### 150 YEARS OF GREENERY CELEBRATED

The legacy of Emperor Napoléon III endures as the *Jardin d'Acclimatation*, an expansive green space he designated for public use, celebrates its 150th year. Located within the *Bois de Boulogne*, a park in Paris, the *Jardin* has remained a familiar fixture to Parisians since 1860. It first functioned as a zoo to promote knowledge of exotic flora and fauna, but in recent years has expanded its scope. Now, the 1.5 million yearly visitors experience its 19th century ambiance through painting, gardening and confectionery classes for all ages. The 150th anniversary celebrates the park's historical heritage and its revived 21st century image. In honor of the founder, 20 brightly colored busts of Napoléon III will line the walking paths that cut across the landscape. With support from the City of Paris, the French luxury goods company LVMH plans to build the Louis Vuitton Foundation for Creation in the northern end of the commons. The building, designed to foster culture, heritage and contemporary artistic expression in France, will be the work of Canadian-American architect Frank Gehry.

## 6 NEWS FROM FRANCE

## Society

# Urban Stilts Stand Tall as the New Extreme Sport

What human can both jump over six feet high and run faster than 25 miles per hour? None, of course — at least not without the help of PowerBockers, or *échasses urbaines* (urban stilts) as they are known in France. The modern revival of the classic invention gives riders the perspective of a giraffe and the agility of a gazelle.

Adapted from prosthetic devices, the spring-loaded equipment uses one's body weight to depress and then release the spring, propelling the rider forward like a kangaroo. Though the idea might discourage some, Rémi Caron, head of the French PowerBocking association *Kangour'HOP*, claims that it only takes between seven and 10 minutes for an adult to find his or her balance. And for those still hesitant, Caron insists on the fitness benefits of the sport — 30 minutes on the stilts are the equivalent of an hour-and-a-half jog, he adds.

Stilts have a long tradition in France, where 19th century shepherds in the southwest used them to walk in marshy fields. The modern incarnation, developed in the 1990s, has sprung into popularity in recent years as French enthusiasts have helped transform the gadget into a new extreme sport that defies gravity.

From Normandy to Provence, a strong grassroots base of local associations has brought the sport into the mainstream. Aspiring riders can experiment with a variety of styles. Less flexible stilts are suitable for walking and running, but experimental stilts allow advanced riders to turn any urban landscape into an obstacle course with flips, skips, and giant leaps over cars.

The first country to organize international competitions, France also established the first world records. In October 2009, two riders, one from Nancy, and one from Strasbourg, set the record high jump, 7.18 feet, at the first International PowerBocking Contest in Bry-sur-Marne.

For more information, please visit: [www.ffeu.fr](http://www.ffeu.fr).



A PowerBocker rider in Alsace defies gravity.

# Summer Excursions Along the Seine



Thousands of revelers surrounded the stage at the 2009 *Rock En Seine* festival.

Flowing west through Paris into the English Channel, the Seine has shaped France's landscape and society for centuries. The famed waterway has facilitated trade and travel and has served as a muse to centuries of artists. From their enviable positions near the riverbanks, several towns along the Seine have inspired travelers and locals with a medley of summer events.

## Blogs GREEN TRAVEL FOR A RED-HOT SUMMER

Travelers always bring home memories from the places they visit, but seldom do they notice what they leave behind. *Je voyage durable*, a French ecotourism website, aims to reduce the carbon footprint of adventurers around the world and spread awareness about "traveling green." The two French journalists who founded the website combined their passions for global stewardship and travel. *Je voyage durable* caters

to travelers of all types, covering a variety of locales and events that could interest anyone from a large family on a weekend tour to a young backpacker. A weekly e-mail newsletter proposes alternative summer trips and connects a network of businesses and vacationers for a sustainable future of tourism. In addition to listings of eco-friendly establishments, the website provides information on vacations that open a window to the natural world, such as dolphin-watching expeditions in the

Mediterranean or dairy tours of France, with the hope that through their experiences people will be more conscious of their environment at home and on the road.

For more information on eco-friendly travel, please visit: [www.jevoyagedurable.com](http://www.jevoyagedurable.com).

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

## Tapping Into French Microbreweries



French microbreweries serve up a spectrum of their signature craft blends.

Centuries ago, Cistercian and Benedictine monks in France supported themselves by not only producing cheese, flour and wine, but also perfecting another art: beer. In the 10th century, private breweries began to emerge, and the land's ample supply of barley, hops and fresh water spurred the budding industry. Almost eight centuries later, nearly 12 percent of beers produced worldwide bear some trace of French grains, while domestically, beer consumption in France generates over two billion dollars in sales.

A new trend has been transforming beer-making in

*l'Hexagone* over the last 20 years: microbreweries. More intimate facilities devoted to the craft of high-caliber artisanal beers, microbreweries represent an approach to brewing that is, in itself, a trade reflected in final products. Two regions, Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Alsace, are leaders in the movement, boasting a portfolio of craft beers ranging from *blonde* to *brune*, *blanche* and *ambrée*. Nord-Pas-de-Calais's first microbrewery was established in 1986, and that of Alsace in 1991. Two years ago, microbreweries generated nearly 20 percent of domestic beer sales volume, and today, there are over 250 microbreweries nationwide.

Francis Bouchon, manager of *La Lanterne*, an Alsatian microbrewery, explains, "Consumers want what's natural, they want to see how [the beer] in their glass is made." In addition to the appeal of consuming the unfiltered beverages, emerging symbols of the local and regional identity, the ability to tour the facilities and interact with local brewers plays an integral role in the experience.

The micro movement has impacted the industry on the global level. The brewing interest in craft beer has fostered an international community of independent *brasseurs* who will showcase their intoxicating blends September 25-26 during the International Festival of Artisanal Beer, now in its 13th year, in Nord-Pas-de-Calais.

## New Photos Found of Beloved French Author and Aviator

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, best known for his famed novella *Le Petit Prince*, disappeared on July 31, 1944, during a reconnaissance flight over the Mediterranean Sea. Saint-Exupéry, who used his flying experiences as inspiration for his books, was never seen again after that day. Despite the discoveries of some of the lost aviator's belongings — a plane presumed to be his found off the coast of Toulon and his engraved bracelet — at the bottom of the sea, the shocking disappearance of the beloved Saint-Exupéry remains shrouded in mystery.

The most recent development associated with Saint-Exupéry was found far from the bottom of the sea. Four photos — determined to be the last taken of him before his disappearance — were discovered in the home of fellow French flyer Raymond Duriez's family, tucked away unnoticed inside an old cardboard box. In one photo, Saint-Exupéry is sporting sunglasses, standing next to a Jeep; another captures the writer mid-sneeze. Only one of the photos — an image of Saint-Exupéry in the cockpit of his P-38 Lightning — was previously known to exist, having been featured in a magazine in the '90s.

The photos depicting the last known moments of the author and aviator were donated to the Regional Air Museum in Angers, France.

For more information, please visit: [www.antoinedesaintexpury.com](http://www.antoinedesaintexpury.com).



Antoine Saint-Exupéry disappeared in 1944.

## Tribute to Monet, Manet and More in Normandy

A boat sits calmly in Le Havre harbor, its form set against a mesmerizing interplay of fluid brushstrokes. Though this scene and its creator, Claude Monet, have long since faded, *Impression, soleil levant* stands today as the namesake for an artistic revolution. Normandy — the region that inspired Impressionism — is celebrating the movement's heritage during a festival from June to September.

North of Paris, Normandy was the playground of Impressionist painters such as Monet, Auguste Renoir and Camille Pissarro, who enjoyed "wandering through the countryside in search of new subjects to paint," according to the event's organizers. The unexpected, even whimsical landscape of cloudy skies burst with occasional rain showers, filtering sunlight and producing the same mix of color that made *Impression, soleil levant* a fixture for the human eye.

For the Impressionist masters,

Normandy was a reminder that each individual's perception was distinct, dependent on the time of day and on one's positioning. For the ongoing festival, dozens of venues in the region boast cultural offerings that recall the power of human sensation: dance performances, plays, art installations and an outdoor picnic reminiscent of Edouard Manet's *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, the impetus for the Impressionist movement. In the work that bridged the gap between the Realist and Impressionist eras, Manet portrayed a contemporary nude woman seated with a pair of fully clothed men at an outdoor luncheon. The starkly real image jarred traditionalists of his time, but for Impressionists to come, Manet's artistic choice was hailed as an affirmation of individual freedom, the ethos of the movement.

For more information, please visit: [www.normandie-impressionniste.fr](http://www.normandie-impressionniste.fr).



Festival-goers enjoy the fresh air at an outdoor picnic as they pay homage to Manet's famous *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

## JEAN COCTEAU'S HOME OPENS DOORS TO THE PAST

The house of avant-garde artist Jean Cocteau in Milly-la-Forêt, just south of Paris, opened to the public on June 24. A prominent 20th-century writer, filmmaker and painter, Cocteau explored the relationship between the real and the imaginary in his works, and the museum displays his striking surrealist pieces in the home where he lived quietly for 17 years. "This house is exemplary," Minister of Culture Frédéric Mitterrand declared during the inauguration on June 22, describing it as one of the "spaces where one can breathe in the spirit of those who lived there." Almost 50 years after his death in 1963, Cocteau's living room, study and bedroom have been immaculately restored, along with his books, photographs and leopard print wallpaper. Whimsical portraits of Coco Chanel, Pablo Picasso, and Marcel Proust, all lifelong friends of Cocteau, adorn the walls of the second floor, and downstairs two rooms showcase his art collection, including works by Andy Warhol and Man Ray. Outside, the sculpture garden shelters a bust used in his famous 1946 film, *Beauty and the Beast*. The timeless nature of the house evokes the sentiment of his famous epitaph: *Je reste avec vous* (I stay with you). For more information, please visit: [www.jeancocteau.net](http://www.jeancocteau.net).



Artist Jean Cocteau's house opened to the public this June.

## CULTURE MINISTER HONORS BARBARA AND THE FEMININE MUSIQUE

French Minister of Culture Frédéric Mitterrand kicked off the 2010 *Fête de la Musique* by immortalizing the legacy of renowned French *chanteuse* Barbara with an award in her name. The prize will be given annually to a promising young artist who possesses the same musical flair that made Barbara a star. On June 21 in the first-ever awards ceremony, Mitterrand honored Carmen Maria Vega, a jazz *manouche* (or "gypsy swing") singer based in Lyon. Barbara, née Monique Serf, began her iconic career in 1965, when she released her first album. Her life's work spanned over 30 years, until 1996, the year before her death, when she released a highly successful album that sold over a million copies in just 12 hours. This year, in a tribute to *la musique au féminin*, Mitterrand dedicated France's annual music festival to the contributions of Barbara and the female singers, composers and artists who have inspired musicians and the greater French nation.

Summer Break

News From France will resume production at the end of September, early October. Until then, the News From France editorial staff would like to thank you for your loyal readership and wish everyone an excellent summer.

News From FRANCE

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
Emmanuel Lenain

EDITORS  
Delphine Halgand, Thomas Rottcher

SENIOR WRITERS  
Eamon O'Connor, Eleanor Warnock

WRITERS  
Matthieu Bonvoisin, Victoria Jones, Aleksa Miskinis

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FRENCH EMBASSY PRESS & COMMUNICATION SERVICE

4101 Reservoir Road, NW  
Washington, DC 20007-2182  
Tel: (202) 944-6060  
Fax: (202) 944-6072

E-mail:  
info@ambafrance-us.org

http://www.ambafrance-us.org

The Big Apple Enjoys a Taste of the South of France



The international Sud de France Festival spreads the warm Mediterranean *joie de vivre* of the Languedoc-Roussillon region.

Savoring a glass of *pastis* on a bright mid-summer's day may sound like a moment reserved for a trip to the south of France, but the worldwide Sud de France Festival saves food and wine lovers the journey. The festival's events have entertained enthusiasts around the globe, making stops in the United Kingdom, Germany, Mexico, Brazil, the United States and China throughout the summer. Sponsored by *Sud de France Export*, an organization that promotes products from Languedoc-Roussillon, the festival uses its global stage to showcase delicacies from the region.

The American leg of the festival's world tour ran from June 14 - July 26 in New York City. In addition to the festival's educational seminars, wine retailers treated guests to free wine tastings and restaurants paired Mediterranean menus and gourmet cuisine with wines from the Languedoc-Roussillon area. For those connoisseurs who prefer a hands-on experience, a wine-blending seminar enticed guests to create their own *mélange* after learning about the different grape varieties from the south of France.

Through a Legend's Lens

Henri Cartier-Bresson captured his world travels from a unique angle — through the lens of his Leica camera. Often referred to as the father of modern photojournalism, Cartier-Bresson revolutionized the world of photography — chronicling three decades of political and social changes through images of the revolution in China, of post-Stalin Russia and of India struggling for independence. Working almost exclusively in black-and-white, Cartier-Bresson explored the changing world around him, sneaking candid photos of unsuspecting subjects and developing them in their most raw form — uncropped and unedited.



Cartier-Bresson, known for his ability to capture daily life on film, snapped this candid photograph of a picnic in Juvisy, France in 1938.

Though Cartier-Bresson was a notoriously private individual, a new exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago thrusts the photogra-

pher and his life's work into the public eye. The exhibit, titled *Henri Cartier-Bresson: The Modern Century*, recently opened with nearly 300 photographs on display. The retrospective is a tribute to the wealth of information and understanding the artist brought to the world through his photographs. Organized by the Museum of Modern Art in New York with support from the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson in Paris, the exhibi-

tion will be on display in Chicago July 25 - October 3.

For more information, please visit: [www.artic.edu](http://www.artic.edu).

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