

France Passes Law Banning Facial Concealment in Public

France passed a law in early October banning the public wearing of garments that cover the face, declaring that "No one shall, in any public space, wear clothing designed to conceal the face." The legislation is the result of a year-long earnest debate held throughout France led by a bipartisan commission of 32 members of Parliament. The commission interviewed dozens of human rights associations, women's rights associations, legal scholars, specialists of the Islamic world, and Muslim faith associations, including the French Muslim Faith Council and the Great Mosque of Paris.

The statute does not target any one group of people, but rather addresses several areas of social concern in a broad manner. Throughout the consultation, various schools of thought were weighed and a consensus was formed around two prevailing elements. First, concealing the face in public runs counter to the values of the Republic, specifically relating to public policy. The latter covers not only the demands of security, but also the rules of sociability (facilitating open social dialogue between peers in which citizens are easily identifiable) and public service (complying with certain administrative formalities: marriage, trials, etc.), among others. Secondly, the full-face veil is not a universal religious obligation and is only worn by a minority of Muslim women throughout the world. Conversely, the law includes several exemptions and shall not apply "if such clothing is prescribed by law or regulations, or is authorized to ensure the anonymity of the person involved, is justified on medical or

professional grounds, or is part of artistic or traditional festivities or events."

Although ratified this October, the law will not be enforced for another six months. The interim period is intended to allow for "mediation between the public authorities and the persons likely to be concerned by [the] statute." Starting next spring, any person found to be in violation of the law could face up to a 150-euro fine, while any person found to violate the "dignity of [a] human being" by compelling "another person, by reason of the sex of that person, to conceal their face" could be sentenced to up to a year in prison and receive a 15,000-euro fine.



France passed legislation in early October that prohibits wearing garments that cover the face in public.

Smashing Reception for New Children's Nutrition Game

Franco-American "serious game" designer Food N' Me, in collaboration with French public service institution Universcience, has produced an award-winning internet game to educate children and their families about healthy eating habits.

The game, called "Smash Your Food™," is the first of many planned game releases, and was inspired out of a recent collaboration between the two organizations. In the game, users are encouraged to manipulate a large mechanical press to literally "smash" unhealthy food items, exposing the amount of sugar, salt, and oil in those foods. The results are then compared against the recommended daily amounts of these



"Smash Your Food" received an honorable mention in First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign.

dietary elements. "Smashable" foods include pizza, hamburgers, sodas, milkshakes, and jelly doughnuts. On September 29, "Smash Your Food" was honored at a White House award ceremony with an honorable mention in the games division of the "Apps for Healthy Kids" competition, held as part of First Lady Michelle Obama's nation-wide campaign, "Let's Move."

Food N' Me will continue collaboration with Universcience, the institution responsible for the current "Bon Appétit" children's nutrition exhibit at the *Cité des sciences et de l'industrie* in Paris, to "bring scientific consultation and expertise to the production of Food N' Me™."

For more information and to play Smash Your Food, please visit: www.foodnme.com.

Recent Retirement Reforms in France

The French Parliament is debating a reform of the country's pension system. To be implemented gradually by 2018, the controversial new law will raise the legal age at which citizens may retire from 60 to 62. Conversely, provided they meet the minimum level of contributions, those who began working at the age of 18 will not be affected by the increase in the legal retirement age. Additionally, the legislature will, by 2023, progressively increase the age at which a person is entitled to receive a full pension from 65 to 67.

The pension reform introduces, for the first time in Europe, recognition of the long-term tolls of strenuous labor. In practical terms, those who have had physically grueling jobs can retire at 60. For senior citizens, the pension reform makes provision for the creation of a system to offer recruitment assistance to job seekers over the age of 55.

In the French pension system, contributions from those who work pay the pension of those who are retired. To guarantee the success of the system, the ratio of workers to retirees must be stable, requiring the input and output of

the system to balance itself. Although plans to rebalance the ratio of workers to retirees have been met with strong opposition, the French system is currently facing a major obstacle: due to the advancing age of the Baby Boom generation, the ratio of workers to retirees is a strained 1.8: 1, as opposed to the 4:1 ratio in 1960. The economic and financial crisis that hit the world accelerated and exacerbated the existing deficits. In 2010, one pension in 10 is paid by government credit, further increasing public debt. Without reforms, the government projects that its deficit from pensions alone could reach 45 billion euros by 2020.

INSIDE

- 2 Current Events**
Ocean Exploration
- 3 France & America**
France and North Carolina
- 4 In Depth**
France's Best Craftsmen
- 5 Business & Tech**
Paris Motor Show
- 6 Society**
First Carbonated Fountain
- 7 Culture**
New Light on Impressionism
- 8 France in America**
French Art in Nashville

PUBLISHER METRO INTERNATIONAL LOOKS TO EXPAND IN FRANCE

In an age when some traditional media outlets are scaling back production, global publisher of free commuter dailies, Metro International SA, recently launched three new dailies in France. With the addition of free publications in Metz, Nancy, and Toulon, Metro papers are now available in 15 major French cities. In partnership with local television broadcast company TF1, Metro has begun distribution of 60,000 additional copies of its Parisian edition, while undisclosed production increases in Toulouse and Nice aim to bolster Metro's position in the south of France, where Metro is already the top free publication. In a statement from Metro, the company laid out its goals for the expansion: "The aim is to differentiate Metro from other players by...acquiring the best national coverage of free newspapers in France."



PRESTIGIOUS MUSEUM REOPENS

LaM, the Lille Métropole Museum of Modern Art, Contemporary Art, and Outsider Art in Villeneuve d'Ascq reopened on September 25 after four years of renovations. The museum (www.musee-lam.fr) has been a noted artistic center in the French countryside for years, a harmonious union of art, architecture, and garden. Boasting works by Picasso, Braque, and Modigliani, the museum now also contains touchable sculptures and rotating international exhibits. Post-renovation, its new features include an annex designed by architect Manuelle Gautrand, with carved eyelet walls that filter natural light, as well as an unparalleled collection of art brut, or outsider art. The new exhibition of art brut showcases works by socially marginalized artists who never received formal training, notably psychiatric patients and psychic mediums. LaM is one of many prestigious museums of contemporary art appearing in Northern France — the Pompidou Center recently opened a satellite in Metz, while the Louvre plans to open its own offshoot in Lens.

Current Events

Symposium on Ocean Exploration, Governance and Discovery

The Embassy of France held a symposium on Ocean Exploration, Governance and Ten Years of Discovery on October 19. The Symposium brought together distinguished guests from NGOs, think tanks, universities, and federal agencies to provide insights on current marine biodiversity issues, from scientific exploration to international governance.

Guest speakers from France included Olli Barbé from Galatée Films, who worked for six years on Jacques Perrin's film *Océans*. Philippe Lebaron, director of the Marine Station in Banyuls-sur-Mer; Philippe Bouchet, of the French National Museum of Natural History; and Philippe Gouletquer of Ifremer also gave presentations on marine biodiversity exploration.

U.S. guest speakers included Ron O'Dor from the Consortium for Ocean Leadership; Michael Vecchione, curator of the Sant Ocean Hall at the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH); and



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Elizabeth Moore of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Finally, Jesse Ausubel, Director of the Program for the Human Environment at Rockefeller University, presented the Census of Marine Life (CoML) findings. The CoML (www.coml.org) is a decade-long project began in 2000, which brought together 2,700 scientists from

more than 80 nations to assess and explain the diversity, distribution, and abundance of life in the oceans. The symposium marked the first time the CoML findings were released in the United States.

The symposium was organized by the Office for Science & Technology at the Embassy of France in partnership with the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS). The event was followed by a reception at the Smithsonian Institution's NMNH, with a screening of Jacques Perrin's film *Océans*.

France Welcomes 2010 Women's Forum Global Meeting

The coastal city of Deauville, France, welcomed female leaders in corporate and public spheres from around the world for the 6th annual Women's Forum Global Meeting. Held from October 13 - 16, the theme of this year's forum was "Change: Make it Happen."

Held at the Deauville International Center, the forum featured panel discussions, brainstorming sessions, and a variety of meet-and-greet events for participants. The conference aimed to address five primary questions related to global change in politics, business, the environment, health, and "the woman factor." Notable speakers at the event included Editor-in-Chief of *Le Monde*, Sylvie Kauffmann, Vice President of the Corporate

Engagement Team at Goldman Sachs, Anne Black, and the Video and New Media Director-Producer for Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential Campaign, Kate Albright-Hanna. The meeting was attended by over 1,200 guests, a 20 percent increase from last year.

A key contributing factor to the event's success, according to organizers, was the innovative *Discovery Program*, introduced for the conference. Consisting of a series of sessions held in parallel to the main Forum, the Discovery Program allowed participants to "experience new thoughts, and exchange ideas with artists, writers, scientists, experts, men and women from around the world."



Interview with Karen Taylor, Editor of France Magazine

How has the publication evolved since its inception 25 years ago, and where do you see it headed?

Our editorial mission has remained the same — 25 years on, we are still seeking out the best of France to share with our readers: the most outstanding cultural events, the most compelling talents, the best travel destinations, the most distinctive products and services. What has changed is not what we do but how we do it. Thanks to so many technological advances, we are producing a much more sophisticated product now than we did in 1985 with exactly the same number of people. It's hard to believe, but when we started this magazine, we were retyping articles sent from France by fax and cutting and pasting layouts by hand!



Of what milestones or particular features is the magazine most proud?

Given all the upheaval in the publishing industry in recent years, we are most proud of the fact that we are still here—and I'm not being facetious! Just this past week, I read an article by a former travel writer at *Gourmet* (which folded last year) relating her lavish spending

while on assignment. Maybe if we'd ever had *Gourmet's* budget, we would have behaved the same way, I don't know. But we are part of a nonprofit and have always had to keep costs down to the bone; creativity, resourcefulness and an incredibly dedicated staff have allowed us to produce a quality publication on a shoestring.

What also makes us very proud is when we do a feature story—on Marseille, for example, or contemporary winery architecture in Bordeaux — and people from those areas tell us that they learned something new about their native city or region in the pages of *France Magazine*.

How does the magazine plan to celebrate its 25th anniversary?

The best birthdays are those you spend with friends, and we are absolutely delighted that so many old friends are joining with us to put on a fabulous fundraising gala at the French Ambassador's Residence. The event will benefit the French-American Cultural Foundation, and we are collaborating with names

that you have seen in our magazine over the years: the Conseil des Grands Crus Classés en 1855 (Médoc & Sauternes), Champagne Roederer, Cuisine Solutions, Open Skies, the George V in Paris, the de Young museum in San Francisco, Augustine by Thierry Grippois, Baccarat, Christoffe, Chanel... All of these great names and many others are helping us celebrate the best of culture, travel and art de vivre while supporting French-American cultural relations.

International Connections Forged in Higher Education

Thanks to a recent agreement between North Carolina State University (NCSU) and France's SKEMA (School of Knowledge, Economy and Management) Business School, both institutions will boast enhanced international connections for years to come.

Starting in January 2011, students from SKEMA Business School will be able to attend classes at SKEMA's first American branch, located on NCSU's Centennial Campus in Raleigh, North Carolina. Approximately 250 students in several undergraduate and graduate programs will participate in the first semester at the American campus, with all classes taught in English.



North Carolina State University is site of SKEMA business school's first American campus.

In an interview with *News from France*, Dean of NCSU's College of Management, Ira Weiss, expressed his excitement about the many possibilities for collaboration between the two institutions. "We envision development of this partnership in three major areas, one being traditional student exchanges where [NCSU] would send some of our students to study at one of SKEMA's many campuses worldwide... the second being the possibility of graduate-level dual degree programs between NCSU and SKEMA... and the third being faculty research by SKEMA professors on campus." Student cultural immersion will also be a major component of this partnership, with a commitment from NCSU Interim Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Warwick Arden to personally ensure the successful integration of SKEMA students into NCSU's student life.

SKEMA Business School, currently the largest business school in France by enrollment, also hopes to take advantage of some of the rich research opportunities for its students in the nearby "Research Triangle." The school recently reached an agreement with the Research Triangle Park (RTP) Foundation to foster research projects with some of the area's high-tech companies, including SAS Institute, CISCO Systems, and IBM.

Together Towards Innovation: Celebrating Transatlantic Exchange

With the aim of strengthening collaboration between France and the American Southeast, the French Consulate in Atlanta and the Georgia Institute of Technology will co-present *France-Atlanta: Together Towards Innovation*, a series of events taking place from November 29 through December 12.

France-Atlanta will feature over 20 events that highlight and encourage French-American collaboration in the fields of science, economics, the arts, and humanitarianism. Programming includes scientific discussions on cancer research and public health problems in Haiti, panels of economic experts addressing the renewable energy and logistics sectors, as well as musical performances by jazz group Trio Baptiste Trotignon and Les Elements, a choir from Toulouse.

On November 30, Georgia Tech Lorraine, the university's campus in France, will sign an official agreement creating the Lafayette Institute, a Franco-American research center in the field of optoelectronics. Georgia Tech Lorraine celebrated its 20th anniversary this summer.

For a complete list of scheduled events, please visit: www.france-atlanta.org.

The Federation of Alliances Françaises USA Rolls into New Orleans

The Federation of Alliances Françaises (FAF) USA held its Convention and Annual meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, from October 14-17. The Convention was open to all 113 chapters of the Alliance Française (AF) in the United States, who came to *La Nouvelle-Orléans* to discuss best practices, explore projects of mutual interest, and leverage resources to support and expand the French network in the U.S. Said Federation President Mimi Gregory, "I feel very proud that we chose to come to New Orleans to really share and celebrate their renaissance five years after Katrina."



The annual event brought together AF chapters throughout the U.S.

Offering a series of workshops, events, and cultural excursions, the convention aims to help address the ever-changing function of AF chapters in the U.S. Workshop topics include creating an up-to-date and practical website, instituting a French-language instruction program, discussing noteworthy successes, and maintaining relevance in local communities. One way many chapters stay involved is through book clubs. For the coming year, the One Book - One Federation program selected

Catherine Velle's third novel, *Soeurs Chocolat*, a tale of two nuns from a community of chocolatiers who get lost on their way through Colombia in search of precious cacao. AF members were also able to attend the Assemblée Générale of the Federation, in addition to meeting the new Délégué Général, Jean-François Chenin.

The FAF bestowed one of its highest distinctions — the Prix Charbonnier — on Le Comte Gilbert de LaFayette, direct descendent of the Marquis de Lafayette, in recognition of his efforts to sustain French-American friendship. He handed out copies of WETA's recent documentary on Lafayette, according to Federation President Mimi Gregory, "to offer some of our smaller chapters an opportunity to work together with teachers and even nearby historians to create programs in local high schools about the role Lafayette played in the American Revolution and to facilitate round table discussions."

For more information on the FAF, please visit: www.afusa.org.

RENOWNED FRENCH MAESTRO TAKES THE LEAD IN SANTA FE



Chaslin is the chief conductor of the Santa Fe Opera.

French conductor, composer, and pianist Frédéric Chaslin began a three-year term on October 1 as chief conductor of the Santa Fe Opera. He will open the Opera's 2011 season with a new production of Gounod's *Faust* and will lead at least one new production during each of the subsequent years of his term. Chaslin, a native of Paris, received training at the Paris Conservatory and the Salzburg Mozarteum. In addition to a distinguished career of directing and guest-conducting in many of the world's major opera houses, he has composed an operatic adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*. Additionally, an English translation of his book *Music In Every Sense*, which examines the relationship between modern music and its audiences, will be released this fall.

After his debut conducting *La Traviata* with the Santa Fe Opera in 2009, Chaslin was pleased to accept a more permanent position with the company. Citing the supportive spirit of the management, artists, and diverse patron base at the Opera, Chaslin articulated his satisfaction, "What more could a conductor ask for?"

CONFERENCE EXPLORES HISTORIC SHIPWRECK MYSTERY



Commissioned by King Louis XVI of France in 1785 (depicted in the painting above), Jean-François de Galaup, the count of Lapérouse, began a marine expedition around the world, aiming to gain scientific and geographical discoveries in addition to political and economic ties for France. After a three-and-a-half-year voyage chronicled in journals sent back to France, Lapérouse and his crew disappeared around the coast of Australia. Despite multiple search and rescue missions, they were never seen again. Artifacts from the shipwreck were discovered in 1826, but the ship itself was not found until 1964, and not formally identified until 2005. The historic achievements of Lapérouse, as well as the mystery surrounding his expedition's disappearance, were the subject of a conference held on October 18 at a French language high school in San Francisco named after the explorer, Lycée Français La Pérouse. Presented by Jérôme Gervais, administrator of the National Marine Museum of Paris, the conference discussed particular episodes in the expedition and later inquiries into the disappearance.

Les Meilleurs Ouvriers de France: A Tradition of Excellence

With the recent release of the critically acclaimed documentary *Kings of Pastry*, Americans are getting their first look at the famed *Concours des Meilleurs Ouvriers de France* (MOF), or "One of the Best Craftsmen of France Competition." The contest, held every four years, pits some of France's finest artisans from over 190 different disciplines against one another in a no-holds-barred competition for the industry's highest honor: entry into the *Société des Meilleurs Ouvriers de France*.

Though largely considered a culinary competition, MOF encompasses many different crafts and trades ranging from the more traditional (chocolate making, baking, lace and hand embroidery) to the more esoteric (plumbing, taxidermy, hairdressing, ice-sculpture) across 16 different trade categories.

The competition traces its origins back to 1924, when 200 master craftsmen from across France were invited to participate in the first *Exposition Nationale du Travail* (National Work Exposition), which concluded with the naming of 144 distinguished craftsmen as *Meilleurs Ouvriers de France*. Since its inception, the National Exposition has been held 23 times, with the next edition scheduled for 2011 in the centrally located French city of Clermont-Ferrand. Although the original MOF competition was held under the auspices of the first Exposition, the modern-day MOF has grown so much in size and scope that the format has been adapted. The competition itself is now held over the course of two years, with varying dates according to craft. Most trade categories have a preliminary qualifying round in which the best craftsmen are selected to compete in a final round usually held several months later. Those proud

few selected as MOF at the end of the competition are then invited to participate in the National Exposition, where they present their work to the general public.

The winners also attend a special ceremony over which the president of France presides, where they are presented with the iconic MOF medals on red, white, and blue striped ribbons. The distinguished award carries with it lifetime retention of the MOF title — past laureates are easily recognizable by the red, white and blue striped award carries with it lifetime retention of the MOF title — past laureates are easily recognizable by the red, white and blue striped



The MOF competition spans 190 different disciplines, including ice-sculpture.

blue collar that adorns their work garments. The title is taken so seriously that sporting such a collar fraudulently is a crime punishable by prison-time.

Although the next *Exposition Nationale* is not scheduled for another year, most of the MOF competitions are already well underway. October featured preliminary rounds for many of the culinary MOF categories, including pastry, cheese making, butchering, and baking, among others. The coming year is likely to bring a new fervor of competition, with title hopefuls putting their lives on hold for a chance to call themselves among the best French craftsmen of 2011.

Blood, Sweat, and a Lot of Tears

Considering throwing caution to the wind to pursue your passion for *pâtisserie* in the hopes of someday earning recognition as *un des meilleurs ouvriers*? The competitors are tough, but the competition is even tougher.

So, what does it take to be named one of the best craftsmen in France?



Chef Jacquy Pfeiffer puts the finishing touches on a chocolate-sculpture masterpiece.

tremendous: I practiced in every spare second I could find and was often not home... It was also a great financial commitment as there are no cash prizes for the candidates, making it a very expensive sport." At the competition, Pfeiffer produced a series of wedding-themed masterpieces in just 24 hours, including a three-tiered cake to serve 30, five styles of pastry puff, a chocolate sculpture to display three types of chocolate candy, a plated dessert to serve four, and an incredibly intricate centerpiece, known as the *bijou* (jewel). Pfeiffer even moved to France six weeks before the finals to perfect his recipes, practicing countless "dry-runs" of the actual competition day, during which he produced hundreds of versions of what would become his final *chef d'oeuvre* for judging.

Not only must the creations for any MOF competition exemplify artistic expression, but in the case of pastry, taste is an essential factor. For this reason, each judging panel is composed of industry professionals, food critics, and past MOF winners who meticulously rate candidates on both artistic form and practical function of their creations. The stress of this judging process has been known to leave even the most seasoned professionals in tears. As Chef Pfeiffer puts it in terms of his own preparation, "I had to first work on the taste part of it... Each recipe had to be dissected to make it at the same time delicious yet also fool-proof in its preparation... This is when the question is asked about each recipe: is it good? Better question: are the judges going to like it?"

All of this raises the question: why do these titans of French craftsmanship choose to put themselves through such grueling and emotionally taxing trials? For Chef Pfeiffer, it has always been about bringing innovation to his profession: "No matter what the outcome of this intense competition, you are never the same... You have to push yourself, more than you thought possible, and whatever the outcome, you will come back a better professional."

Technically, any French citizen 23 years or older who pays the 60-euro entrance fee can compete, but few have the preparation and dedication necessary to make a serious bid for the title. Most of the competitions involve a grueling regional preliminary round in which one must compete simply to arrive at the qualifying stage of the competition — six months before the final competition. Such a lengthy and meticulous qualification process ensures that only the best of the best end up in the finals.

Jacquy Pfeiffer, decorated Chicago-based pastry chef, competitor in the 2007 *Pâtisserie* division of the MOF competition, and the principal subject of the documentary *Kings of Pastry*, does not mince words in describing the level of commitment and dedication it takes to compete for the MOF title. "The time needed to prepare was



The heat is on as former MOF winners, wearing the distinctive red, white, and blue collars, judge current competitors.

French Kick-Off Electric Mobility at Paris Auto Show

The 2010 Paris Motor Show drew auto enthusiasts from all over the world to the Porte de Versailles Exposition Grounds from October 2 to 17, displaying over 100 new models. The Paris Motor Show offers an expansive look at the coming year's auto market, and this year's edition focused on new technologies in the field of "green" auto-engineering.

Among the companies debuting electric concept cars were French auto manufacturers Renault, Peugeot, and Citroën. Several of the companies have already moved past the concept stage, with plans to release their electric models to the public market in the near future. For example, Renault unveiled four all-electric cars at the Auto Show ready for market: the Kangoo Express Z.E. and the sedan Fluence Z.E. will be available in early 2011, the Twizy, a two-seat urban vehicle will come to market in late 2011, and the ZOE



Citroën's new 100% electric C-ZERO will be in production by the end of this year.

Preview, an urban car, will be released for purchase in early 2012. Citroën will roll out the C-ZERO, an all-electric car, by the end of this year. Peugeot debuted what it hails as the first production-ready diesel hybrid in its new 3008 HYbrid4 model, which receives 62 mpg while cutting carbon emissions by 30 percent, according to the manufacturer.

Other highlights of the 2010 show included an indoor electric karting track, workshops on city planning around electric vehicles, and an electric vehicle test track.

Bluecar proposed its Bolloré model as an option for *Autolib*, the planned car-sharing program launched by Paris's city council, demonstrating the collaborative spirit of both the public and private sectors to make the auto industry both environmentally friendly and cost-efficient.

Oenophiles Rejoice! New Wine Purchasing Technology in France



Astrid Terzian poses with her wine vending machine.

A new service for wine distribution and purchase is springing up in supermarkets across France. Self-serve wine vending machines, first installed in June 2009, are gaining popularity thanks to the ecological and economical benefits of the new technology.

The machines, which resemble indoor gas-pumps, allow consumers to fill up any container of their choosing with select wines on site. The machine measures wine output volume, and charges customers accordingly. Prices of wines vary according to vintage and provenance, but a normal cost is about 1.45 euros per liter, far below the price one would expect to pay for a similar bottled wine. The elimination of glass and plastic packaging translates into eco-friendly added value. Without heavy bottles to ship, transportation of the wine becomes more efficient, and the re-using of containers encourages recycling.

Astrid Terzian, the entrepreneur credited with the introduction of the bulk wine vending machines in France, says that customers' reactions to the technology have been very positive. "Customers are taken aback at first, but then warm up to the idea, especially after a taste."

Eurocopter Unveils New Hybrid

The Eurocopter group began official testing of a much-anticipated prototype high-speed helicopter on September 27 in Marignane, France.

The X3 hybrid helicraft is designed to achieve cruising speeds of over 250 mph by fusing traditional helicopter designs with those of modern dual-prop airplanes. The result is a craft that is capable of hovering like a helicopter, but also moving forward with the speed and agility of a small airplane.

The X3 features large overhead rotor blades similar to those found on normal helicopters, but substitutes the trademark extended tail and rotor for two small aircraft wings with forward-facing propellers. The overhead rotors and wing-mounted propellers operate independently, allowing for the forward propellers to be disengaged during takeoff and landing.

It is estimated that the X3 will travel approximately 50 percent faster than today's traditional helicopter. For more information, please visit www.eurocopter.com.



Eurocopter's X3 lifts off for a test flight.

PC GAMING COMPANY GAME TAP TO RELOCATE TO FRANCE



Online provider of PC games, GameTap, is moving technical and support teams to France.

GameTap, an online provider of subscription-based PC games, is moving its technical and support team from Atlanta to France to create "a global support center based in Europe," according to an article published in *Joystiq*. The Atlanta office will be closed by the end of October, with 10 new positions being added to the San Francisco Office to "strengthen [GameTap's] presence with major U.S. partners, distributors [and] publishers" according to a company representative. The restructuring takes place on the margins of broader reforms to the business model of Metaboli, the French gaming company that owns GameTap. According to the same representative, GameTap will be phasing out some of its retro games in favor of newer, more popular titles to "tap" into current gaming trends. Fifteen games will be added to a catalog that already includes over 550 titles for download or online play.

TEN-EURO COINS WITH A REGIONAL FLAIR

Four million ten-euro coins were recently minted and released into circulation by the French government, each coin bearing the insignia of one of 22 French regions and four overseas Departments. The coins were introduced for the first time on September 20. President of the Paris Mint, Christophe Beaux, explains the idea behind the minting as "[a way] to find common ground between this otherwise [stateless] currency and French national heritage." France is not the first to experiment with this type of currency. Germany has been using ten-euro region-themed coins since 2002. Although the coins, available for purchase in over 3,000 post offices across France, will be legal tender, individuals would be wise not to spend them too quickly; among collectors, certain pieces are already worth more than their struck value.

QUADRUPLE AMPUTEE MAKES CHANNEL CROSSING



Croizon celebrates his successful English Channel crossing.

Philippe Croizon gives new meaning to the phrase, "can-do attitude." On September 18, the Frenchman and quadruple amputee crossed the English Channel, finishing the 21-mile swim in just 13.5 hours. After being pulled from the water, an ecstatic Croizon described his arrival on the French shoreline as "pure happiness." Croizon has already taken on several other extreme sporting endeavors, including skydiving and scuba-diving, hobbies he picked up after a job-related electrocution suffered in 1994 — an accident that led to the partial removal of his arms and legs. Croizon has written a book about his experiences titled *J'ai décidé de vivre*, (I Decided to Live). When asked about future projects, Croizon hinted at possible plans to swim from Spain to Morocco via the Strait of Gibraltar — a shorter crossing than that of the Channel, but considerably more difficult, given heavy boat traffic and strong currents. The 42-year-old had a special message for those watching his crossing: "We can all make it...We suffer, but we get back up again."

WORLD RECORD TWINS TURN 98 YEARS YOUNG

Raymonde and Lucienne Wattelade are not your average identical twins. The two sisters recently celebrated their 98th birthday in the French town of Saint-Georges-de-Didonne. Born in 1912, they are recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records as the oldest living set of identical twins. The sisters describe the secret to their longevity as a combination of their *joie de vivre*, frequent exercise, and liberal doses of their favorite spirits: pastis for Raymonde and whisky for Lucienne. The twins, who competed for France's gymnastics team in the 1930s, have four children, seven grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren between them. When asked to look back on the course of their lives, the sisters stated, "We live in the present, it's pointless thinking about the past or the future — we're still 20 (in our heads)."

Society

Sparkling New Environment Initiative

Eau de Paris, the city's public water service, unveiled France's first public sparkling water fountain on September 21, housed in a former garden cabin in the Jardin de Reuilly. The fountain, called *La Pétillante* ("The Bubbly" or "The Fizzy"), offers both still and sparkling water, chilled or at room temperature. Free and open to the public, the fountain injects carbon dioxide into still water from the public supply to make "thin and tasty" bubbles, according to Philippe Burguière, a spokesman for Eau de Paris.

Sparkling water fountains have already taken off in Northern Italy, but in France, the fountain remains experimental. Preliminary reactions have been positive, and if they continue as such, Eau de Paris hopes to install similar fountains in parks across Paris.

The French are well known for their penchant for sparkling water. However, the national love of fizzy beverages can have negative environmental consequences — buying bottled sparkling water can generate a significant amount of plastic waste. Eau de Paris estimates that one sparkling water fountain saves about 2,300 plastic 1.5-liter bottles every day.

Burguière explained that the new fountain is part of a broader initiative "aimed at promoting tap water in a country where we invest a lot to preserve its quality."



© Eau de Paris/ Olivia Blaizac

La Pétillante fountain awaits thirsty Parisian park-goers.

Sight-Seeing in Champagne Picks Up the Pace

Since 2005, the phenomenon of sight-jogging, a guided tour taken at a brisker pace than ordinary sight-seeing, has taken off in large cities like Rome, Berlin, Barcelona, and Paris, with private companies charging between 70 and 80 euros per client per hour. A more cost-effective version of this combination of exercise and tourism has recently come to Troyes, the capital of the Aube department in Champagne, located on the River Seine.

The first sight-jogging season in Troyes concluded this past September. Tours, which typically fill up days before the event, take place most Saturday mornings starting at 9:00 a.m. Each tour lasts for about an hour and costs just one euro per person. Going at a faster pace than a walking tour, visitors can see more of the city in one hour while still experiencing the outdoor ambiance of the city. The program welcomes joggers of all ages and experience.

In an interview with News From France, Nicolas Villiers, direc-



Sight-joggers in Troyes are able to see more of the city while promoting a healthy lifestyle. After the tour, participants convene at the Office of Tourism for snacks and discussion (right).



tor of the Troyes Office of Tourism, emphasized the accessibility of the activity: "There is no competition, no restrictions in this activity; only pleasure and well-being." Villiers praised the originality of the activity, stating, "We're always looking for less traditional ways

to explore the city. Sight-jogging is a personalized tour, an opportunity to discover sites that others do not see. The element of sport breaks down barriers between participants, creating a spirit of conviviality among groups." After every tour, the tourism office provides snacks for participants, encouraging socialization. Both residents of

the city and tourists can enjoy the activity, thanks to the unique route, the knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide, and the camaraderie that develops among participants.

Next year, the Office of Tourism plans to expand the program by hosting a marathon tour of Troyes during *La Journée du Patrimoine*.

For more information, please visit: www.tourisme-troyes.com.



A TOUR OF MOF GASTRONOMY

An American expatriot living and working in France, PT Ford operates the blog www.why-traveltofrance.com, which examines, among other topics, the gastronomic delights offered by France's winners of the coveted title *Un des Meilleurs Ouvriers de France* (MOF — See page 4 for more information on MOF).

The "MOF" section on the blog features accounts and reviews of Ford's many

trips around the country to sample the culinary delights offered by MOF laureates. The sampled fare includes chocolate



from title-holders Georges Larnicol and Fabrice Gillote, *haute cuisine* from the likes of Head Chef Serge Chenet, and pastries from the world-famous Christophe Michalak. In addition to providing mouth-watering photos of tastings, Ford offers reflections on and contact information for each restaurant or boutique she visits.

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

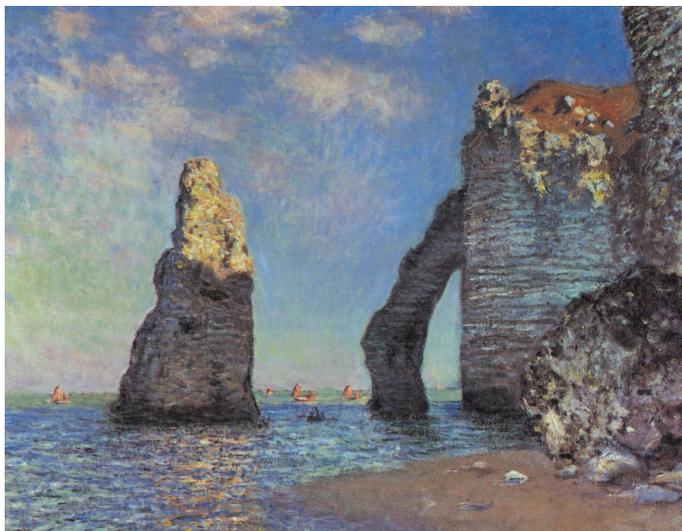
Monet Exhibit Sheds New Light on the Impressionist's *Oeuvre*

One of the most prolific and well-known Impressionist painters, Claude Monet's career encompassed 60 years of painting, from early landscapes to his celebrated water lily paintings. Monet pioneered the artistic movement of Impressionism, painting ceaselessly for over 60 years, establishing a foundation for modern art at the turn of the 20th century through his work and collaboration with his contemporaries. Over 170 of Monet's paintings are currently on display in the *Galleries Nationales* of the Grand Palais in Paris until January 24 as part of the largest exhibit of his work in three decades.

The exhibit, titled "Claude Monet (1860-1926)," has been organized both thematically and chronologically, no small feat considering the sheer volume and genius of Monet's opus. Visitors to the museum traverse the retrospective along three paths: Monet and Nation, Figures and Still Lifes, and Dreams and Reflections.

The exposition retraces the entirety of Monet's career, from his start in 1860 until his final paintings of water lilies housed in the Orangerie Museum. The Grand Palais worked in conjunction with La Réunion des musées nationaux and the Musée d'Orsay to compile the monumental display of Monet's work from museums and private collections around the world. In 1980, the Grand Palais hosted a retrospective of Monet's career that paid homage to the great Impressionist; today, museum-goers benefit from decades of new research into more obscure areas of the artist's work.

For more information, please visit: www.monet2010.com.



The National Galleries of Le Grand Palais in Paris are hosting the largest Monet exhibit in 30 years.

Dueling Violins: World's Top Young Musicians Fiddle Away



Competition winners of *le Concours Long-Thibaud* for violin strike victory poses.

official rules, all competitors must be under the age of 30. The judging panel consists of renowned violinists from France, the United States, Japan, Germany, and Great Britain, as well as one French conductor.

Contestants were chosen in the pre-selection round based on CD recordings submitted in advance to the jury. The live performance rounds begin on November 6, starting with the elimination round and semi-final, and concluding with final recital and concerto tests. Each round affords the musicians a degree of freedom — they may choose their pieces from approved lists for most rounds, categorized by style or composer. The final recital test includes a free choice and a contemporary work written specially for this year's *Concours*. The finalists will perform concertos at a gala on November 15, held at the Théâtre du Châtelet, bringing the competition to a close.

In addition to prestige, the top six contestants receive monetary prizes, with a grand prize of 30,500 euros.

Founded in 1943 by violinist Jacques Thibaud and pianist Marguerite Long to encourage the development of young musicians during World War II, *le Concours Long-Thibaud*, an international violin and piano competition, thrives today as a standard-bearer for excellence in the classical music community. Now separated into bi-annual piano and violin competitions, this year's *Concours* for violinists will take place from November 6 - 15 in Paris.

To this day, the competition remains truly international. This year's pool of 19 competitors includes one Romanian, four South Korean, six Japanese, and seven French violinists, eight of whom are men and ten of whom are women. According to

A VIEW OF STRASBOURG ON TWO WHEELS



Strasbourg rolls out new bicycle rental service, *Vélhop*.

The famously bike-friendly city of Strasbourg has adopted *Vélhop*, a customized bicycle rental system. While many French cities have recently installed automated bicycle rental services, *Vélhop* is customized to meet the varied needs of visitors and residents alike.

On September 23, the first three *Vélhop* boutiques opened in locations across the city, and three automatic self-serve stations followed in October. Operated and maintained by the city, *Vélhop* functions as an alternative means of public transportation. People can even use their permanent rechargeable farecard, otherwise used for city-wide transportation, to rent a bicycle from one of the automatic stations.

After putting down a deposit, *Vélhop* customers can choose between an occasional or long-term rental plan. Those in constant need of a bicycle can keep their rental for up to a year, presenting it every three months for routine checkups, while those who need a bike less frequently or for shorter amounts of time can rent from an automatic station. Each bicycle is chainless, which prevents many common mechanical problems, and comes equipped with a basket, lock, and lights.

Years ago, the city was one of the first in France to create a network of bike lanes. Now, Strasbourg continues its tradition of bicycle accessibility with the city-run *Vélhop*.



Leaving an "Impression" on Nashville

Art-lovers from all over the world travel to Paris's Musée d'Orsay to see the renowned collection of French Impressionist paintings. However, Tennesseans are spared the trip this fall. Nashville is the last stop of the travelling exhibition, *The Birth of Impressionism: Masterpieces from the Musée d'Orsay*, previously displayed in Madrid and San Francisco. The exhibition will run in Nashville from October 15 through January 23 at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts.

Tracing the development of the Impressionist movement through the work of artists living in Paris, the exhibition brings together 100 paintings from the permanent collection of the Musée d'Orsay. Included are masterpieces by artists such as Degas, Manet, Monet, Pissarro, and Renoir. Seventeen



An exhibition at Nashville's Frist Center for the Visual Arts will trace the development of Impressionism.

of these paintings will be displayed exclusively in Nashville.

"The Musée d'Orsay has the finest collection of French mid- to late-19th-century art in the world," said Frist Center Executive Director and CEO Susan H. Edwards, Ph.D. "In sharing these masterworks with the cities of Madrid, San Francisco and Nashville, the Musée d'Orsay offers an

unparalleled cultural experience to people who might not have the opportunity to travel to Paris."

The exhibition aims to broaden the conventional view of Impressionism as a radical departure from the Realist art of the era. It examines the Impressionists in the context of other artists that transformed the art of schools in Paris in the 1870s.

For more information, please visit www.fristcenter.org.

Thinking Outside the Canvas: New Courses on the Art of French Framing

A series of classes and internships on traditional French methods of artistic framing are currently being offered by framing artists Francoise Moulon-Tabournel and Anne Nguyen in New York City, Westchester, NY, and Washington, D.C., from October 2010 to June 2011.

Although French painted masterpieces have always been celebrated, the subtler *art de l'encadrement* (art of framing) has an equally rich heritage. Moulon-Tabournel discovered *l'encadrement* 24 years ago in Paris; Nguyen partnered with Moulon-Tabournel after taking several of her classes, seeking a better way to frame her own artwork. According to the workshop creators, the French technique is unique in the personal approach artists can take to the framing process.

"During our internships, we teach the most diverse

techniques step by step to allow you to discover the specifics of framing: the know-how, a sense of color and form, and most of all, creativity," explained the two artists. Among those techniques are *entre-deux-verres* (between two glasses) and *boitage* (shadow box). *Entre-deux-verres* is a way of suspending an image between two sheets of glass that can include multiple colored mats, creating a sense of dimensionality, while *boitage* uses a three-dimensional box to arrange and display mementos and objects that deviate from the standard painting or photograph. "Our project is to develop this artistic craft in Washington and in New York," the artists stated.

For more information or to register for their courses, email: fcmframing@gmail.com.

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