

## Alain Juppé Takes the Helm of the French Foreign Ministry

Alain Juppé was appointed the new Minister of Foreign and European Affairs on February 27. Mr. Juppé formally assumed the post from Michelle Alliot-Marie during a handover ceremony on March 1.

Mr. Juppé has served in a number of ministerial and political offices over the course of his career, most notably as prime minister under president Jacques Chirac from 1995 to 1997. He has previous experience as Minister of Foreign Affairs, having occupied the post from 1993-1995. Most recently, he served as the Minister of Defense, a position he left to accept the new appointment.

Since 1995, with a short interlude from 2004 to 2006, Minister Juppé has also been the mayor of Bordeaux, and will continue to occupy that position in conjunction with his new responsibilities.

Mr. Juppé expressed his expectations for the future of French diplomacy during the handover ceremony, stating, "We're going to have lots to do in terms of vigilance, readiness, initiating proposals, and imagination too, because I'd like French diplomacy to remain loyal to its tradition by not simply observing and commenting but also being innovative and imaginative." On a more personal note, he added, "I come here with a lot of enthusiasm, joy and confidence."

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Minister Juppé assumed his position March 1.

## International Community Responds to the Crisis in Libya

The United States Security Council passed a resolution on March 17 that authorizes the use of force to protect civilian populations in Libya. UNSC Resolution 1973 was drafted and presented at France's initiative, together with the United Kingdom, Lebanon and the United States. Pursuant to the terms of the resolution, an international coalition seeks to establish inter alia a no-fly zone and necessary measures to protect Libyan civilians. Additionally, the resolution strengthens the sanctions adopted against the ruling regime, the scope of which can include the implementation of an arms embargo, the freezing of assets of Tripoli authorities, or the banning of flights by Libyan airlines.

French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Alain Juppé addressed the UN Security Council on March 17 in New York, advocating concrete action to protect Libyan civilians from their own government. Passed with ten votes in favor and five abstentions, the resolution



Foreign Minister Juppé, President Sarkozy and Secretary of State Clinton discuss the UN Resolution.

recognizes that the situation in Libya "continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security," and "authorizes Member States...to take all necessary measures...to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory."

Two days later, French President Nicolas Sarkozy brought together members of the League of Arab States, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, officials, and heads of state and government from the European Union, the United States and Canada for an international summit in Paris. The meeting aimed to ensure the application of the Security Council's resolution and ending the violence against civilians in Libya.

The French president proclaimed in his address, "We are intervening to allow the Libyan people to choose its own destiny."

## New French Ambassador Assumes His Post



Ambassador François Delattre presented his credentials to President Barack Obama on February 23.

France named François Delattre as the new ambassador to the United States in early February. After presenting his credentials to President Obama for official recognition on February 23, Mr. Delattre assumed his position as ambassador.

Delattre has spent a significant amount of his diplomatic career in North America, serving as Ambassador of France to Canada from 2008-2011 and Consul General in New York from 2004-2008. The new ambassador is no stranger to the Embassy of France in Washington, D.C., having served as Press and Communications Counselor from 1998-2002.

As a member of president Jacques Chirac's foreign policy team from 1995-1998, Ambassador Delattre was responsible for European and transatlantic defense and security matters, in addition to

managing the Bosnian crisis. He also served as Deputy Director of the French Foreign Minister's Office and was a member of Foreign Minister Alain Juppé's cabinet, following two years with the Strategic, Security and Disarmament Department of the French Foreign and European Ministry.

Mr. Delattre was also posted in Bonn at the French Embassy in Germany from 1989-1991, where he was in charge of matters relating to the economic impact of Germany's unification and the environment.

Ambassador Delattre moved into the ambassador's residence in Washington, D.C., along with his wife Sophie, and children, Marcan (age 14), and André (age 10).

### INSIDE

- 2 **Current Events**  
*Baby Boom in France*
- 3 **France & America**  
*Emergency Rescue of Sailor*
- 4 **In Depth**  
*French Foreign Legion*
- 5 **Business & Tech**  
*Space Cooperation*
- 6 **Society**  
*Maison Martin*
- 7 **Culture**  
*Love Academy*
- 8 **France in America**  
*Conceptual Art in D.C.*

EMBASSY LAUNCHES NEW ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION



February 21-25, 2011

POLITICS

François Delattre Appointed New French Ambassador

François Delattre was appointed Ambassador of France to the United States February 21st after serving as Ambassador of France to Canada (2008-2010), Consul General in New York (2004-2008) and Press and Communications Director of the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. (1999-2002).

[Read full article here](#)

INTERNATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Obama Called Sarkozy to Discuss Situation in Libya

Faced with the continuation of the brutal and bloody crackdown and the threat of a collapse of the Libyan leadership, the two Presidents released their common immediate call to the use of force against the civilian population.

[Read full article here](#)

*French Dispatch* examines trends relating to France's foreign and domestic policy, business, and culture.

The Embassy of France is proud to announce the launch of a new publication, *French Dispatch: Weekly Update from France*, distributed electronically on a weekly basis. The interactive communications vehicle aims to provide timely information relating to France's foreign and domestic policy, business and technology, culture, and international highlights.

By offering frequent and concise updates, *French Dispatch* will supplement the Embassy's other publications, including *News From France*. Luis Vassy, Press Counselor and spokesman for the Embassy, affirmed the value of cultivating the Embassy's online presence: "Electronic tools are becoming more important in our communications strategy. For this reason, *French Dispatch* directly complements our existing publications."

In response to questions about the target audience of the publication, Mr. Vassy commented, "The electronic publication will allow us to expand our audience in terms of geography and background. We invite anyone who is interested in learning more about current events in France to subscribe."

To subscribe to *French Dispatch: Weekly Update from France*, please email [publications@ambafrance-us.org](mailto:publications@ambafrance-us.org).

## 2010 a Banner Year for Population Growth in France

While population decrease has become a concern among developed nations, France's National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies, INSEE, has reported that France's population is growing at a rate unparalleled since the end of the Baby Boom. According to a report released in January, French women had 828,000 babies in 2010, bringing the fertility rate just above replacement, to 2.01 children born per woman. This is comparatively high in the European Union, where the 2009 average was only 1.6. Furthermore, as of January 1, 2011, France's population surpassed 65 million for the first time, making it the second largest country in Europe behind Germany.

INSEE also noted a trend of protracted motherhood. The average age that women give birth has risen to 30, while women between 35 and 39 years of age accounted for 17 percent of births in 2010, compared with only 10 percent twenty years ago.

In the past, depressed birth rates were thought to be symptomatic of financial crises, but France's birth rates are up in spite of the recent global economic downturn. Pascale Breuil, INSEE's Chief of Demographic and Social Studies, attributes the paradox to government policies that alleviate financial burden and encourage family growth. For example, the French government provides



In 2010, France's population grew at a rate unparalleled since the end of the Baby Boom.

universal public schooling for children, starting at age three, as well as subsidies from *La Caisse nationale des allocations familiales* (National Office for Family Allocations, or CNAF), including financial aid for child care and family housing.



Interview with Patrick Chevallereau, Rear Admiral, Executive Assistant to NATO's Strategic Allied Commander Transformation

**What is the role of NATO's Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk?**

Allied Command Transformation is one of the two existing strategic military commands in NATO. Established in Norfolk only seven years ago, this is still a young command, whose mission is to ensure that NATO Forces have the right capabilities and training to face the threats and security challenges of the 21st century. Commanded since 2009 by a French officer, General Stéphane Abrial, ACT headquarters in Norfolk are manned with a staff of 700. But in order to have a complete picture of the total manpower, one must add an additional 500 men and women in our European entities, a significant part of which are training centers dedicated to the support to current NATO operations, including Afghanistan. It is notable that we have a powerful transatlantic symbol with a European General commanding in the US and a US Admiral commanding Allied Command Operations — the other strategic Command — in Europe.

**How does the French military hope to contribute to NATO through ACT?**

The French presence within the NATO command structure is obviously a "plus" to deepen and consolidate the interoperability of French forces with other NATO countries. Today, almost all military operations are multinational. NATO is a

unique forum to develop and improve the ability of national military forces to work together.

At the same time, France's military know-how is extremely well-recognized by our partners in NATO. You know that there is in France a long tradition of conducting complex operations. Not so many NATO nations have such an experience to offer. Today, this added value is reflected in important leadership positions occupied by French officers, including in ACT.

Finally, I believe that French military personnel, in addition to valuable individual experiences, often bring enthusiasm, and perhaps an ability to quickly adapt to changing situations. In circumstances where fiscal pressure is increasing on the Defense budgets and where there is need to be as effective as before with fewer resources, these qualities can superbly benefit the Organization.



**L'interview with the expert**

**How does French-U.S. cooperation in Afghanistan reflect the two countries' shared goals?**

Among all the NATO nations, France has one of the most significant military involvements in Afghanistan, with approximately 4,000 troops.

More specifically, viewed from Norfolk, France also contributes to the efforts to support operations in Afghanistan. The Joint Force Training Center (JFTC) in Poland, has a significant cadre of skillful French military trainers, while the Joint Warfare Center (JWC) in Norway will be led by a French general as of this summer. These two entities play a crucial role in training the military headquarters before they are deployed in Afghanistan.

The efforts that France is sustaining are an illustration of our involvement in implementing a stable Afghanistan, side by side with the US.

## U.S. Coast Guard Rescues French Sailor



The rescued French national with the crew of the Sebring Express, a Filipino merchant vessel diverted by the Coast Guard.

The U.S. Coast Guard helped rescue a French national found 1,381 miles off the coast of San Juan, Puerto Rico, on February 3. After receiving an emergency signal from the sailing vessel, *Nacouda*, the U.S. Coast Guard diverted the Filipino cargo vessel *Sebring Express* to the location of the emergency broadcast. The vessel arrived in the vicinity, and crewmen spotted a strobe light, followed by a flare. As they approached, the sailor was heard calling for help from a floating life raft. Rescued nearly six hours after he sent the signal, the sailor was reported to be in good health and spirits.

"His preparedness and use of a properly registered distress beacon allowed rescuers to quickly respond to his exact location, which is in large part why he was found, and found alive," said Rear Admiral William "Dean" Lee, commander of the Coast Guard's 5th District. Philippe Gazeau, the 65-year-old French national from Nantes, France, was sailing from the Canary Islands to Guadeloupe but was forced to abandon ship when it started taking on water after being struck by a whale.

## French Artists Tour the U.S.

This month, audiences across North America enjoyed performances from several of France's most celebrated musicians.

French singer, model, and actress Vanessa Paradis performed selections from her 2010 acoustic album *Une nuit à Versailles* (A Night at Versailles) as part of an international concert tour. Paradis's gentle vocal quality has generated international appeal since her 1987 debut at age 14. With just three performances in North America from February 16 to 20, in New York, Los Angeles, and Montréal, tickets sold quickly for the whirlwind tour.

Meanwhile, avant-garde French musician and composer Yann Tiersen embarked on a month and a half tour of the United States and Canada to



Vanessa Paradis, who has performed since age 14, toured North America in February.

promote his latest album, "Dust Lane." Many Americans recognize Tiersen as the composer of the score from the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain*, or *Amélie*. Known for his minimalist compositions with classical and folk influences, Tiersen's latest album layers acoustic and electric guitar with synthesized and electric sounds, making for a unique live performance experience. Having opened the tour on January 29 in Los Angeles, Tiersen will perform in venues across the continent, including Houston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Toronto, Vancouver, and San Diego, with a final stateside performance (also in Los Angeles) on March 11. For future concert dates, please visit [www.yanntiersen.com](http://www.yanntiersen.com).

## French Alpinist Ascends Mount McKinley

Mount McKinley in Alaska is the highest peak in North America and one of the most challenging for climbers. Its jagged, glacier-covered surface and its elevation present many obstacles: thin oxygen, unexpected blizzards, and temperatures of up to -75° F, before wind chill. Only about half of the 1,200 who attempt the climb each year reach the top, but most ascend in the warmer summer months.

Christine Feret, a French alpinist, hopes to become the first woman to summit the mountain in winter, accompanied by American climber Artur Testov. The pair began their climb at the beginning of February, prepared for a month-and-a-half long trek to the 20,320 foot summit. To protect themselves at night, they will have to carve caves into the mountain's icy surface, a job that can take up to five hours per day. They will also capture never-before-seen photographic and video footage of McKinley in winter. Feret will upload audio files to her blog to document their progress.

For more information, please visit: <http://wintermckinley.blogspot.com>.



Only 16 people have ever successfully completed a winter ascent of Mount McKinley.



French and American authors discussed developments in the literary scene in their respective societies.

From February 24 – 26, New York University hosted seven intimate, hour-long conversations between French and American authors as part of the Festival of New French Writing. "These discussions...shed light on the concerns and accomplishments of writers in France today, as well as on the similarities and differences that the commitment to writing implies in France and in the U.S.," the website stated about the event. The panelists reflected the diverse landscape of French and American contemporary literature. Featured artists include graphic artist David B. whose comic, *L'Ascension du haut mal*, was translated into English in 2005, alongside Ben Katchor, an American cartoonist whose works have been adapted for the stage. Several of the authors, such as Atiq Rahimi, a French-Afghan writer, are also filmmakers. The event was sponsored by the Center for French Civilization and Culture, New York University, L'Institut Français, and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy.

### PÉTANQUE ROLLS INTO LOUISIANA

The Alliance Française of Lafayette, Louisiana, hosted the Third Annual International Pétanque Tournament on March 19 and 20. Pétanque, a game similar to bocce, originated in 1907 in the south of France, played by rolling hollow metal *boules* toward a single wooden ball called a *cochonnet* (literally, piglet). The first day was dedicated to the Children's Tournament, for any *pétanque* enthusiasts under 13 years old, and the second day featured the Adults' Tournament and International Day of Francophonie. Former Pétanque World Champion Bernard Champey gave demonstrations on both days; defending champions Luc Botasso and Alain Medjian from Le Cannet, France, were also featured guests of the tournament, alongside Lafayette Mayor Joey Durel.

# The French Foreign Legion: 180 Years of Military Excellence

An elite professional combat unit of the French army, the French Foreign Legion is comprised of volunteers from all nations who unite to serve French interests domestically and abroad. The Legion operates with an *esprit de corps* founded on discipline, honor, pride, diligence, and a 180-year tradition.

## A Modern Unit: The Legion Today

Although it is known for the distinctiveness of its traditions, the Legion has embraced a 21st century approach to security, relying on the Internet and information technology. All legionnaires must show a proficiency in computers and high-tech gear as well as traditional weaponry.

The Internet is the Legion's main recruiting tool and has expanded the unit's diversity. The Legion, comprised of 7,699 men from 136 countries, including France, is no longer exclusively European, as Asians and Latin Americans are among the fastest growing nationalities represented. "The new Foreign Legion reflects the international reality," said Brigadier General Louis Pichot de Champfleury. "The reality has changed. The Legion has to have the capability to adapt to a new era, new recruiting, new technologies." The Legion's embrace of new technology allows for accurate and efficient transfer of information and decreases response time, giving the Legion a strong advantage in terms of rapid reaction.

Today, soldiers go into the field equipped with the latest military technology. Foot soldiers have begun to carry the first Félin (*fantassin à équipement et liaisons intégrés*), a portable bulletproof computer equipped with night vision, that enhances communication and positioning capabilities.

Infantrymen drive both the VAB (*véhicule de lavant blindé*) and the VBL (*véhicule blindé léger*), armored vehicles equipped with missiles.

The Legion has also invested in advanced missile technology. The Milan (*missile d'infanterie léger antichar nato*) is infrared-guided and can be used day

or night, the missile HOT (*haut subsonique optiquement téléguidé*), travels at subsonic speeds, and the missile ERYX, can be put in place and ready to fire in five seconds, traveling 600 meters in 4.2 seconds.

In addition to untraditional combat operations, like the securing of sewers of major urban areas against terrorist attacks, the Legion has entered the business of wine production to provide its veterans with a way to remain active during their retirement. Retired soldiers tend the Legion's vineyards, located in Southern France. The Legion's global reputation has helped secure the franchise's worldwide recognition and economic success.

## History

The Foreign Legion has had an active and successful history. King Louis Philippe created the *Légion Etrangère* in 1831 for volunteer soldiers between the ages of 18 and 40. Immediately after its inception, the Legion was deployed to participate in missions in Algeria. After France gave Spain control of the Legion (to support Isabella's claim to the throne), a second legion was created which served in Algeria, Crimea, Italy, and Mexico. It conducted one of its greatest battles in Mexico at Camerone Hacienda, a battle where less than one hundred legionnaires resisted an army of 2,000. Today, the flag of each of the *Légion's* eleven regiments carries the name of this battle.

The Franco-Prussian war in 1870 marked the first time legionnaires fought to defend France, a role they reprised in both World Wars. In the First World War, all multi-battalion units merged into one *Régiment de Marche* led

by Colonel Rollet, known as "the Father of the Legion." In World War II, the Legion achieved victories in Norway, Libya, Tunisia, Italy, Germany, and on France's home fronts of Alsace and Provence.

The Legion has most recently been dispatched to Chad (1969-70), Zaire (1978), the Gulf War (1990-1991), Kampuchea, Somalia (1992-1993), Rwanda (1994), Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia (1993 to 2003), and the Central African Republic (1996). Divided into twelve regimental formations, the Legion is currently engaged in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Chad, the Ivory Coast, and is available for additional deployments at any time.



French legionnaires represent France at a parade in 2009. The *Képi blanc* is a hallmark of the *légionnaires*.

## Tradition

The Legion's longstanding tradition is primarily exemplified through its uniform, band, and pace. The legionnaires' uniform, which varies according to regiment, exhibits certain fundamental similarities. The uniforms' colors are green and red — accompanied by a blue sash during parades. Each uniform bears the *Légion Grenade* insignia, consisting of a grenade with a hollow center and seven flames. The *Képi Blanc*, or "White Kepi," a round hat that troops wear while not in combat, is perhaps the most widely recognized symbol of the Legion.

In addition to its distinctive uniform, the Legion possesses several unique traditional characteristics. One such feature is its band, which consists of less than 100 legionnaires and non-commissioned officers, and acts as the Legion's cultural ambassador abroad. It has performed at concerts in France, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, London, Brussels, Halifax (Canada), Saint Petersburg, Wonju, Berlin, and Copenhagen, among others.

The Legion is also well known for its unique parade pace, marching at 88 steps per minute. Considerably slower than most marching paces, it is the speed at which the soldiers of the *ancien régime* marched. The pace also reflects the tempo of the Legion's theme song *Boudin*, (Blood Sausage) which became its official march anthem in 1870.

## The Service

To enlist, one must be 17 to 40 years of age, possess a valid form of identification, and be physically fit. No prior knowledge of the French language is necessary, as each legionnaire learns the language over the course of his service. For candidate screening, a prospective legionnaire must present himself at a recruiting office in France. Once a candidate passes the selection process, he is offered a five-year unconditional contract with the Legion and begins his training immediately.

The first four months of training consist of *formation*, or basic military instruction with the 4th foreign Regiment. During the first month, recruits undergo initial training, including outdoor and field activities, meant to introduce to them the military lifestyle, comradeship, and the Legion's traditions. Next, he learns the *Képi Blanc* march. After this he spends six weeks alternating between technical and practical training (barracks and field) and mountain training in the French Pyrenées. The last month consists of exams and obtaining the elementary technical certificate (CTE), and light vehicle/trucks school, before assignment to a combat regiment.

After the first five-year contract ends, the legionnaire can sign additional contracts for six months to five years, requiring regular postings overseas. He may sign on for longer depending on his rank and conduct, his physical fitness and leadership capacity, IQ, and service record. A legionnaire can become eligible for either French nationality or a French resident permit after five years of service. After serving fifteen years, he is entitled to receive a retirement pension, payable in France and abroad.

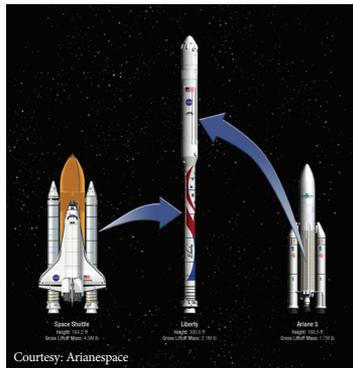


A Legionnaire scopes out his target while on patrol in Afghanistan.

## International Collaboration Lifts Off

In a transatlantic cooperative venture, European and American companies have collaborated to create the Liberty Launch Vehicle. The vehicle is a response to NASA's Commercial Crew Development (CCDev-2) program, which seeks to advance human spaceflight research in the private sector. The Liberty Launch Vehicle initiative combines technology from Astrium, owned by the European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company (EADS), and Alliant Techsystems, Inc. (ATK), headquartered in New Jersey.

The upper-stage will be powered by the liquid-fueled cryogenic core of the Ariane 5 rocket, developed by Astrium and operated by Arianespace, the European space consortium headquartered



The Liberty launch vehicle combines the proven systems from the NASA Space Shuttle and French Ariane 5 launch system.

in France. ATK—makers of the Space Shuttle's solid rocket boosters — will provide the lower, or first, stage of this new launch vehicle.

The collective experience of all agencies and companies involved makes this one of the safest ways to place humans into low Earth orbit in the history of spaceflight, according to Blake Larson, president of ATK Aerospace Systems Group. He explains, "This team represents the true sense of international partnership in that we looked across borders to find the best for our customers...Liberty provides greater performance at less cost than any other comparable launch vehicle." An initial flight is planned for the end of 2013, a second test flight in 2014, and the entire Liberty Launch Vehicle is projected to be fully operational in 2015.

## Google 3-D Technology Brings Versailles to the Digital Age

In collaboration with Google, the Versailles museum is participating in a global initiative to increase access to the world's most valuable objets d'art. Using panoramic cameras, the newly launched Google Art Project has compiled high-resolution images and virtual tours of 17 museums, including the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, the Freer Gallery in Washington, D.C., and the National Gallery in London, which are now accessible from any computer in the world.

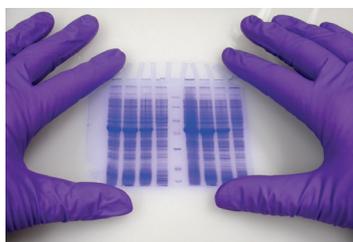
The same 3-D technology that Google developed for Google Street View captures the intricate detail of the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles, from the gilded walls to the crystal chandeliers. Pictures of the museum were taken from nine different angles by cameras affixed to a cart, then stitched together digitally to create the final product. "We found that this technology is particularly well adapted to Versailles, where the grand décor and the general context are at least as important as the works of art present," said Denis Berthomier, the general museum administrator of Versailles.

Each museum selected one painting to be available on Art Project at a resolution over 1000 times more detailed than a still taken by a digital camera. At Versailles, Google photographers captured a gigapixel version of a Rococo-style portrait of Marie Antoinette and her children by famed 18th-century painter Louise Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun. A closer look reveals the individual brushstrokes that compose the sumptuous clothing of the royal family and the surrounding décor.



Below, Google Art Project captures the minute details of Louise Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun's delicate brushstrokes in a portrait of Marie Antoinette.

## First French "Savior Sibling" Born



French doctors genetically prescreened the DNA of a child to detect diseases.

Doctors announced on January 26 the birth of the first *bébé du double espoir* (double hope baby) in France. Born at Antoine Bécclère Hospital in the Parisian suburb of Clamart, the infant has earned the American media nickname "savior sibling" for offering his two older siblings a cure for their beta thalassemia, a rare genetic blood disorder requiring monthly blood transfusions.

Umut Talha (Turkish for "Our Hope") was born after genetic prescreening of the embryo determined that he would not be afflicted with beta thalassemia, and that his blood would be compatible with that of his two older siblings. After a safe and healthy delivery, doctors preserved the blood from the child's umbilical cord, and have already begun using stem cells harvested from that blood to start treating Umut's two-year-old sister. The hope is that with treatment, his sister will be able to discontinue the monthly

blood transfusions that have become routine since her diagnosis.

The world's first "savior sibling," Adam Nash, now a healthy 10-year-old, was born in the United States in 2000. His umbilical blood stem cells were used to successfully treat a blood disorder in his older sister Molly, now 16 years old. Doctors on both sides of the Atlantic hope that the continued research and pioneering in genetic pathology will allow for more success stories.



In an attempt to promote workplace equality, France passed a new law effective in January to increase the number of women employed in large companies. The law aims to equalize the male-female ratio in management positions — particularly on boards of directors and supervisory boards — by imposing mandatory quotas. Companies with at least 500 employees and total annual revenue exceeding 50 million euros must progressively implement the quotas. Women must comprise 20 percent of management by 2014 and 40 percent by 2017. Any companies currently without women in managerial roles must employ at least one in the next six months. Noncompliance with the quotas will lead to sanctions, including compulsory nullification of nominations of males and temporary suspension of board members' compensation. Of the top 5,000 French companies, women comprise less than 10 percent of executive positions. Roughly just one-third of working women do so in an executive or professional capacity, the vast majority in a part-time situation. The new law should boost these figures dramatically.

## FRENCH NEWS JUST A TOUCH (PHONE) AWAY

In 2010, 15.5 million of France's 46 million cell phone users accessed the Internet on a mobile device. Several French government bodies have capitalized on this trend, developing mobile applications free for download, to streamline information and services. The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs released a mobile application in 2009, *Conseils aux voyageurs* (Advice for Travelers). The first of its kind, the app is available for iPhone, iPod-Touch, and Android, with BlackBerry and iPad versions soon to be released. The application gives overseas travelers information on individual countries, answers to general questions regarding health and safety, and real-time news updates. Within six months of its release, over 100,000 users downloaded the application. The Office of the French Presidency also recently launched a new application. Introduced in late January, *Elysée* provides users with multimedia perspective on news about the Presidency, from video footage of the President Sarkozy's speeches and press conferences to a map that tracks the President in his travels in France and abroad. *Elysée* is available at <http://itunes.apple.com/fr> and *Conseils aux voyageurs* is available at <http://www.proximamobile.fr>.

## RETIREMENT BENEFITS TO THOSE WHO SERVED ON THE FIELD

France plans to make social security retirement payments to semi-professional athletes who have played for France by the end of this year. Currently, such players do not receive retirement benefits for putting their careers on hold to play for their country. The program will benefit between 2,500 and 3,000 athletes in sports such as fencing, judo, rowing, canoeing, kayaking, and track and field. According to French President Nicolas Sarkozy, these athletes should be able to "count their years of service to France in their calculation of their retirement rights." He explained, "You cannot tell a young player when he wears the national jersey 'he serves his country' and disregard in his career the years that he served." The President of the National Olympic and Sport Committee Denis Masseglia reiterated: "One cannot ask another to represent his country and to not benefit from the recognition."

## MISTER FRANCE 2011



Jonathan Duforestel took home this year's title.

Move over Miss America, here comes Mister France! Cable channel NRJ12 broadcast the finals of the Mister France pageant live on French television in the last week of February. The finalists were judged "not only on aesthetic qualities, but also on their personality, style, and generosity," according to the official Mister France website. Mister France, now in its 9th season, was originally introduced as a way for young men to work publicly for environmental protectionism. The Mister France laureates are expected to use their title to draw attention to issues affecting the environment. This year, Jonathan Duforestel, Mister France Candidate from the Picardie region, brought home the top prize, just ahead of runner-up Sébastien Bucher. Duforestel was crowned by popular vote after a week of competition in Mexico which narrowed the field of ten finalists to five. The new Mister France holds a degree in accounting, and describes himself as "a child at heart" with an affinity for relationships based on "simplicity and sincerity."

## Society

# A Visit to the Past in the "Sleeping Beauty" House



The Maison Mantin has been restored as a pristine example of 19th-century style after remaining untouched for over 100 years.

Left untouched for over a century, the enormous Mantin mansion in Moulins, located in the Auvergne region of central France, is a time capsule of 19th century life. After 105 years of total abandonment, the Maison Mantin has been renovated and opened to the public as a museum in keeping with the owner's last wishes.

Born in 1851, civil servant Louis Mantin inherited his family fortune at the age of 42, which he used in part to construct the lavish residence. To decorate the house, he commissioned sculptures and wood-carvings, in addition to importing tapestries, paintings, and porcelain. On the top floor, he installed a personal museum of prehistoric, Neolithic, ancient Egyptian, and medieval artifacts.

Mantin ensured in his will that his beloved house would be preserved for posterity. Maud Leyoudec, assistant curator of the museum, explained, "In the will, [Mantin] says that he wants the people of Moulins in 100 years time to be able to see what the life of a cultured gentleman of his day was like."

Thanks to a 3.5 million euro (4.7 million USD) grant from local authorities, the house is now the museum that Mantin intended. Visitors can enjoy the house's magnificent 19th-century décor, as well as Mantin's older archaeological relics. Leyoudec explains, "It was his way of becoming eternal."

# French Museums Diversify Fundraising Strategies

Last fall, when the Louvre, the most visited museum in France, wanted to purchase a painting by Cranach the Elder dating from 1531, it took an innovative fundraising approach. The famed museum posted a call for donations online. The response was overwhelming: over 7,000 donations, ranging from 1 euro to 40,000 euros, helped the museum reach its goal of 1 million euros far in advance of the deadline.

In the face of the worldwide recession, France's 1,218 museums have had to develop creative ways to finance restoration projects and acquire new works. Some, like the Louvre, have raised ticket prices, but income from ticket sales accounts for a small percentage of operating costs, requiring a more strategic approach. The Musée d'Orsay is renting advertising space to companies like Chanel. Versailles hopes to generate revenue from a luxury hotel planned on its grounds. Institutions such as the modern art museum Centre Pompidou in Paris are also sending their collections abroad. In 2010, the Centre earned \$1.9 million by participating in touring exhibits.

Head of the Musées de France organization, Marie-



Part of an innovative fundraising scheme, the Musée D'Orsay displays an ad for Yves Saint Laurent.

Christine Labourdette is optimistic about museums becoming more financially independent. "We have noticed a real dynamism in 2010 and satisfactory attendance despite the financial crisis, the volcano [in Iceland], and the decrease in the number of tourists," she stated.



## AMATEUR POETS "THROW DOWN" IN FRENCH SLAM

Many can be poets, but few can win a poetry slam. The art's simple parameters — any poetry competition performed live can be considered slam — encompass a broad variety of styles influenced by rap, prose poetry, and theater. From January 26 to March 1, TV5monde chal-

lenged Francophones to present their poetry in its own *Concours de slam* online.

As part of *La Semaine de la langue française et de la Francophonie* (French Language and French-speaking Week), slam participants had to include ten words in their creation: *accueillant* (welcoming), *agapes* (feasts), *avec* (with), *choeur* (choir), *complice* (accomplice),

*cordée* (tied), *fil* (thread), *harmonieusement* (harmoniously), *main* (hand), and *réseauter* (to network).

The two winning slams were chosen to be read by famous French *slammeur* Grand Corps Malade on broadcast television, and received albums signed by the artist himself.

To view slams submitted to the competition, please visit: [www.tv5monde.com](http://www.tv5monde.com).

## La Love Academy: Calling Dr. Love



Jean-Christophe Bonicard is co-founder of La Love Academy.

People on both sides of the Atlantic frequently moan about a disappointing Valentine's Day. New French company *La Love Academy* aims to make next year's February 14 one to remember. Officially launched January 1, France's first school for the art of making sparks fly offers both singles and couples the chance "to improve already existing romantic relationships, or identify the keys to finding one's soul-mate."

Love Academy employs behavioral psychologists and experts in interpersonal communication and body language, taking the art of finding Mr. or Mrs. "Right" and distilling it to its most scientific elements. According to Love Academy's website, "resident specialists and outside consultants are selected for their professionalism, their know-how, and their teaching methods." Courses range from one day in length to a full academic semester, and involve both theoretical and practical lessons. "What we want people to understand..." said co-founder Jean-Christophe Bonicard in a conversation with *News from France*, "...is that seduction is not instinctual. Like any other skill, it is, and can be, learned."

In addition to their classroom options, *La Love Academy* offers students a variety of other services, including an emergency hotline for helpful pointers at any moment, a theatrical department for staging mock romantic situations, and an online social networking forum.

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

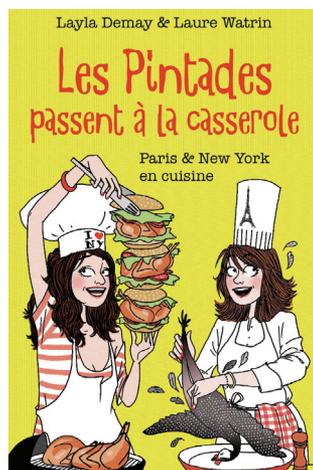
## Les Pintades Soar with Latest Guide

Celebrated pair of French authors *Les Pintades* (the Guinea Fowls) have just completed a new book, *Les Pintades passent à la casserole* (Les Pintades move on to pots): an ethno-touristic guide to the cuisines of Paris and New York.

Best friends and former journalists Laure Watrin and Layla Demay launched the Pintades series in 2004 with their first book, *Les Pintades à New York*, which sought to decode fashionable life among New York women. Since then, the duo has become well known for its honest, witty, and entertaining appraisals of French and American culture. Each work is written as a chronicle which describes the daily life of women in the social and political context of their respective countries, but *Les Pintades passent à la casserole* focuses on food habits from both sides of the Atlantic.

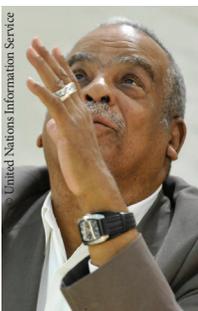
"We love to cook and eat," said Demay. "We always said that we would enjoy the opportunity to explore the two cities where we live through this culinary lens." Topics explored include differences in dating between the two countries, how 1920's era prohibition altered gastronomy in New York, and secrets of the massive Rungis food market in Paris.

Although *Les Pintades* guides are written by women, about women, Watrin and Demay are quick to point out that men can, according to the authors, " glean a practical aspect from the guides that is intended as much for them as for women."



The latest book from French social writers *Les Pintades* is the first with a culinary focus.

## Francophone World Mourns the Loss of Edouard Glissant



Edouard Glissant established a transatlantic network of literary scholarship from his native Martinique.

Edouard Glissant, francophone poet, essayist, and novelist from Martinique, died at the age of 82 on February 3. "We have just lost a major figure in Caribbean literature, as well as a socially committed writer," UNESCO's Director General stated about the man who once headed its newsletter.

Glissant's writing, which speaks out against racism and discrimination, was inseparable from his Caribbean identity. His career reflects an embrace of pluralism and diversity through a stylistic mix of the real and imaginary in both poetry and prose. Born in 1928 in Martinique, he earned a doctoral degree in Paris. He gained recognition for his first novel, *La Lézarde*, winning the 1958 Prix Renaudot, and collaborated with other notable Francophone authors Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor, Senegal's first president. In 1992, he was shortlisted for the Nobel Prize.

In keeping with his dedication to social engagement, Glissant enhanced scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic, opening a research and education center in Martinique and the Institut du Tout-monde in Paris. According to its website, the Institut will continue his mission of "advancing the knowledge of 'créolization's' phenomena and processes, and contributing to the diffusion of the extraordinary diversity of people's imaginations that they express across a multiplicity of languages, a plurality of artistic expressions, and unexpected ways of life."

## AMERICAN STREETCAR GETS FRENCH OVERHAUL



La Comédie Française puts a unique spin on the American classic, *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

In a landmark transatlantic production, *La Comédie-Française* is presenting Tennessee Williams's classic *A Streetcar Named Desire* (in French, *Un Tramway Nommé Désir*), the first time in its 330 year history that the troupe has taken on a non-European work.

*La Comédie-Française* was founded in 1680 by order of King Louis XIV, and has been under state sponsorship since. The original performance venue of Molière, the theater is firmly rooted in French tradition. However, Muriel Mayette, the troupe's administrator, insists, "Our future is international, and it's necessary to enrich our repertoire," an attitude reflected in the choice of a well-known American play.

Directed by Lee Breuer, an avant-garde New York theater professional (who, as a non-French speaker, conducted rehearsals with the help of several interpreters), the production of *Un Tramway Nommé Désir* juxtaposes a classic French translation of the text by Jean-Michel Déprats with a fantastical Japanese setting. Breuer explained the seemingly odd choice as a way of adapting the play's themes to a new audience: "How are you going to capture Tennessee in classical French?...It's not easy, but we are using Orientalist Japanese, with its elegance and decadence, as a metaphor for the antebellum South." The result is a truly international adaptation of the classic Williams play.

*Un Tramway Nommé Désir* opened in early February and will run through June 2, with performances selling out quickly.

Correction

News from France would like to clarify information contained in an article in last month's edition (11.01), titled "New Law Puts the Brakes on Motorcyclists." The new law described in the article seeks to tighten a loophole that previously allowed holders of a 4-wheel license easier access to riding small motorbikes (50-125cc). The writing staff in no way intended to misrepresent road-safety provisions in France. News from France apologizes for any confusion or ambiguity relating to the matter.

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French Contemporary Artist Cyprien Gaillard at the Hirshhorn

Directions: Cyprien Gaillard and Mario Garcia Torres, on display at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., until March 27, examines the inevitable forces of deterioration that permeate human civilization, from social and political upheaval to abandoned hotels and tenements.

French artist Gaillard, recent winner of the Prix Marcel Duchamp at the Foire internationale de l'art contemporain, has already established himself as a formidable conceptual artist for the 21st century, particularly in the United States. Gaillard has been featured at the New Museum in New York in 2009, the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio, and the MIT List



The conceptual art of Cyprien Gaillard has already been widely displayed throughout the United States.

Visual Arts Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and is currently the artist in residence at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles.

"[U]sing Polaroid photography...along with video shot by the artist and found footage from the Internet, [Gaillard] confront[s] the domineering soullessness of buildings conceived to tame humanity into rational, contented communities," the exhibit's website explains. The second half of the Directions

exhibit features Mexican artist Torres, who catalogs the weathering of a mural abandoned by its artist and the tropical resort that commissioned the work.

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

International Touring Picasso Exhibit Stops in Virginia

Picasso: Masterpieces from the Musée National Picasso, Paris, a touring exhibit featuring almost 200 works from the artist's personal collection, will be on display at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) in Richmond until May 15 to honor the museum's 75th anniversary. Picasso: Masterpieces has already travelled to Helsinki, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Seattle; next, it will visit San Francisco, and Sydney.

The Musée National Picasso created the international exhibit that showcases many of their staple collection pieces while it is undergoing renovations until 2012. Born in 1881, Picasso began studying art in



Reading, Painted in 1932, is an example of Picasso's dialogue with surrealism by metamorphizing people into shapes.

Barcelona at a young age, and worked until his death in 1973. His constant need to reimagine his art and unstoppable urge to create made him one of the most important and prolific artists of his time. Alex Nyerges, director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, expressed the significance of the exhibit: "An exhibition this monumental is extremely rare, especially one that spans the entire career of a figure who many consider the most influential, innovative, and creative artist of the 20th century." Picasso: Masterpieces features such seminal paintings as Les Femmes d'Alger (1911-12) and Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.) (1965), alongside other works in wood, bronze, pencil, ink, pastel, watercolors, and found objects.

For more information, please visit: [www.vmfafa.state.va.us](http://www.vmfafa.state.va.us).

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