

France Responds to Japan Crisis

The French government has coordinated a joint response between government agencies and private sector organizations to deliver humanitarian and technical aid to Japan in the wake of the recent earthquake and tsunami. Sécurité Civile (Emergency Preparedness Agency) teams and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs mobilized in the immediate aftermath of the natural disasters by sending relief units that arrived on March 13. A second *envoi* on March 25 included medicine, food, blankets, and water, which was distributed by the Sécurité Civile in Sendai, the most affected city. France's shipment of 40 tons of radiation protection equipment on April 10, jointly supplied by the Ministry of Defense, the Atomic Energy Commission, and French energy corporation AREVA, reinforced the 150 tons of materials sent on March 25. The French ambassador to Japan visited Sendai on March 26 to demonstrate France's unity with affected populations and to personally assure the imminent arrival of additional humanitarian aid.

France, which depends on nuclear energy for nearly 80 percent of its power, has made nuclear safety a priority in its support of Japan. Along with AREVA, French energy corporation Electricité de France and the French government-funded technological research organization Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique et aux Energies Alternatives have provided radioprotective and radiation measurement devices, as well as an atmospheric control trailer and generators. Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) gave AREVA the responsibility of decontaminating 70,000 tons of highly radioactive water around the site of the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor. The French company has also increased its team in Japan to approximately 15 experts who specialize in handling radioactive effluents and managing spent fuel ponds.

French President Sarkozy visited Japan on March 31, making him the first foreign head of state to go to the country since the earthquake. The President reaffirmed France's solidarity with the Japanese people. "Aid to the Japanese people is coming from the entire French population... Let us make this horrific catastrophe an occasion to reaffirm the ties between France and Japan, and let us use the French presidency of the G20 [as] an occasion to mobilize the entire world to the aid of our Japanese friends."



Members of the Sécurité Civile assist a Japanese woman with disposal of sediment during relief efforts in a tsunami-battered city.

Paris Mosque Rector Explores a Franco-Muslim Experience of Secularism

The Residence of France hosted the rector of the Great Mosque of Paris and former president of the French Council of the Muslim Faith, Dalil Boubakeur, on March 31 as part of the "Kalorama Lecture" series. Mr. Boubakeur's discussion, "A Franco-Muslim Experience of Secularism," explored the relationship between Muslim citizens and the secular French state. According to Boubakeur, Islam is France's second largest religion, with 7 million adherents. "My culture is essentially



Rector of the Paris Mosque Dalil Boubakeur spoke at the Kalorama Lecture.

French - I have been shaped by this culture from Algeria, where I was born, to the end of my time at university in Paris. This culture, as Mr. Ambassador said, is essentially secular," he explained, "The state integrates individuals, but not communitarianism... Having a plural society under a neutral state is the most important advancement in modern society." He emphasized the work of the French state to integrate minorities, stating: "We believe that our organization is one that allows impartiality, equality, and...tolerance."

Please visit www.ambafrance-us.org to view a video about Mr. Boubakeur's lecture.

Embassy of France Introduces Eco-Friendly Transportation Alternative



Ambassador François Delattre inaugurates the embassy's bike-sharing program.

The Embassy of France in Washington, D.C., launched a bike-sharing program for employees as part of the new "Green Embassy" initiative. The embassy purchased several *vélos électriques* (electric bicycles), equipped with a battery-powered motor. Available for daily loan, the bicycles aim to provide an ecologically-friendly means of transportation between professional

engagements. French Ambassador to the United States François Delattre inaugurated the eco-friendly endeavor in early April.

All staff members can use the bicycles Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. To promote the safety of employees who take advantage of the program, the Washington Area Bicyclist Association is offering a course in Confident City Cycling at the embassy. "More than an alternative to driving, biking is a good way to stay fit. This bike fleet will also help us save approximately one ton of CO₂ by avoiding taking cabs," said project manager Isciane Rouzière about the program. For more information on Green Embassy initiatives, please turn to "Interview with the Expert" on Page 2.

INSIDE

- 2 **Current Events**
Mayotte Gains New Status
- 3 **France & America**
Digital Media Library
- 4 **In Depth**
French Support to Libyans
- 5 **Business & Tech**
Employment Makeover
- 6 **Society**
Walking to Victory
- 7 **Culture**
Lemon Festival
- 8 **France in America**
EU Embassies Open House

FRENCH NGO RECEIVES DISTINCTION

The NGO Handicap International, founded by two French physicians, received the 2011 Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize for its work in assisting people with disabilities in situations of poverty, exclusion, conflict and disaster. After a rigorous review process that includes field evaluations, the prize, which includes \$1.5 million, is presented to humanitarian associations for their exceptional contribution to alleviating human suffering.

Judy M. Miller, vice president of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, announced the laureate on March 15. Underscoring the importance of Handicap International's work in improving the situation of people with disabilities around the world, Miller stated, "People with disabilities are the most vulnerable in societies and Handicap International has transformed the way the world deals with this underserved group. Through 30 years of innovative leadership and advocacy by Handicap International, more and more countries are assuring that persons with disabilities receive the same rights as everyone else." Present in 60 countries, the Handicap International Federation implements more than 300 development and emergency programs.

"In emergencies, the speed with which an organization is able to galvanize assistance on the ground can make a critical difference, not only between life and death, but it can also determine whether a temporary injury becomes a permanent disability," explained co-founder and executive director Dr. Jean-Baptiste Richardier. "Handicap International was created in 1982 to stand up for and give voice to the most vulnerable amongst us, persons with disabilities in particular, living in situations of crisis, whether caused by poverty, conflict or natural disaster." The French doctor continued, "I believe the Hilton jurors chose us in recognition of our work with one of the world's largest underserved minorities ... with the expectation that we will invest this precious wealth to further enhance our capacity to deliver qualitative and accountable assistance to the most vulnerable people living in destitute situations around the world." The Residence of France hosted a ceremony on April 20 in celebration of the distinction.

Mayotte Becomes the 101st *Département* of France

Mayotte, an island in the Indian Ocean off the southeast coast of Africa known as *l'île au lagon* (the lagoon isle), became the 101st *département* of France last month. The result of a referendum conducted in 2009, over 95 percent of Mahorais voted in favor of the new status. The roughly 200,000-person population of the department's two main islands, Grande-Terre and Petite-Terre, as well as the surrounding islets, is now represented in the French National Assembly by one deputy, and in the French Senate by two senators.

Previously governed as an overseas collectivity, Mayotte is now an overseas region of France. The development underscores a transition from *collectivité* to *département*, and at the same time, *région* in the French administrative framework.

France is divided into 27 *régions*. The metropolitan regions are subdivided into two to eight departments, whereas the overseas regions consist of one department each, totaling 101 departments in all. There are ten



Formerly governed as an overseas collectivity, Mayotte became both an overseas *département* and *région* last month.

French-administered territories overseas: five are governed as *régions d'Outre-Mer* (overseas regions), the other five as *collectivités d'Outre-Mer* (overseas collectivities).



Interview with Isciane Rouzière, Green Embassy (Ambassade Verte) Project Manager

What is the Ambassade Verte Project and how does it plan to engage the community?

The Ambassade Verte Project is based on the Embassy's goal to reduce its carbon footprint and meet the targets set by the French Government. Our first step was to conduct two technical studies: a greenhouse gas emissions assessment and an energy audit. These studies enable us to better understand our current ecological footprint and explore solutions to reduce our environmental impact. Transportation accounts for 45 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions, and energy usage for our operations represents 35 percent. Six months ago we developed an action plan with more than 100 initiatives in transportation, energy efficiency, waste management, water usage, freight shipping, and procurement.

We engaged the community by creating different working groups, such as a strategy group that makes important decisions and determines avenues to pursue. There is also a Green Embassy correspondent in each department, and a group of IT professionals. Collectively, these groups create a dynamic that allows us to obtain practical ideas that really fit our way of working and also help to raise general awareness. Consequently, all of the embassy's employees are involved in the project, as we ask them to make conscious efforts to consider and change their daily habits as they relate to computer usage, means of transportation, both during their commute and while on assignment, etc. In my opinion, changing habits is the most difficult part of the job.

Additionally, we try to communicate as much as possible. For example, we produce the *Green Embassy Post*,

which is a monthly newsletter that informs employees about the project and also gives advice on how to be greener.

Within the framework of the International Year of Forests, we have also organized a beautiful photo exhibit about forests in our main spaces. *News From France* readers who come to the embassy are more than welcome to discover it! We ask also our visitors to be eco-friendly during events organized by the Maison Française by sorting their trash in the proper way! Finally, we are also working on a carpooling application for visitors.

What are the Project's objectives?

Our project has multiple objectives. First, we want to show France's commitment to combating climate change. Secondly, even though we are abroad, we want to meet our administration's goals. In practical terms, we should be able to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent and reduce our energy usage by 40 percent by 2015. We should be able to achieve this with the employees' commitment, some technical improvements in our building, and some reorganization of our work and procedures.

What event or initiative are you most excited about this year and what inspired it?

The inauguration of our electric bikes fleet by Ambassador François Delattre (see article on page 1) last month was really exciting, as it is something that is accessible to all embassy employees. Although it will not significantly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, it will help to raise awareness about other green means of transportation in Washington, D.C.!



L'interview with the expert

French-American Foundation Launches Online Media Library



The FAF Equality of Opportunity Project's new media library makes expert information more accessible.

The French-American Foundation (FAF) recently launched a publicly-accessible online media library as part of the Equality of Opportunity Program (EOP). Started in 2006, the EOP studies "French and American strategies to fight discrimination and to promote greater equality of opportunity for minority and immigrant populations," according to

its website. The free, bilingual media library, sponsored by the Ford Foundation, will supplement the EOP by combating discrimination through education.

The media library has made available more than 100 videos with transcripts in French and English, in addition to published works from governmental organizations and independent experts, all available for download. The research and video footage includes excerpts from interviews conducted by FAF, segments from French and American documentaries, panel discussions, and reports and policy briefs on equal opportunity.

In addition to promoting greater opportunities for certain populations in France and the U.S., the program "seizes opportunities for policy innovation by informing institutional actors responsible for devising new policies, and by engaging thought leaders who are impacting public debates and proposing change."

For more information, please visit: equality.frenchamerican.org

Richmond Universities Host 19th Annual French Film Festival

The University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University co-sponsored the 19th edition of the internationally-recognized French Film Festival, hosted annually in Richmond, Virginia, since 1993.

The brainchild of Dr. Peter Kirkpatrick and Dr. Françoise Ravoux-Kirkpatrick, professors at VCU and UR, respectively, the festival aims to "promote French-language cinema and culture in the United States and create a tradition of Franco-American corporate and cultural partnerships," according to organizers. This year's festival included 11 feature films and 12 shorts, presented from March 24-27 at the historic Byrd Theatre in downtown Richmond.

Many of the films' directors, producers, actors, and cinematographers flocked to Richmond to introduce their works and hold discussions with audience members. Notable guests included Jacques Perrin, director of the award-winning documentary *Océans*, who presented his new film on Vietnam, *L'Empire du milieu du sud*.

Ticket sales for the event eclipsed previous records: approximately 21,000 people attended the festivities this year. Dr. Kirkpatrick cites the positive local response as the reason French filmmakers are so eager to participate. "They like to know that young Americans want to see more foreign films and are curious about the world, curious about filmmaking. It not only gives them the energy to go back and make more films, but it also makes them ask the question, 'Why aren't more foreign films being distributed in the United States?'"



Held every year in Richmond, Virginia, the film festival screens a wide variety of French works.

Philadelphia International Art Festival: A Journey Through Time



An 81-foot model of the Eiffel Tower stands at the hub of the Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts.

The Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts is taking over the City of Brotherly Love from April 7 – May 1. Adopting the theme "The Spirit of Paris 1910-1920," the festival recreates early 20th-century Paris with a series of events throughout the city. The Kimmel Center Commonwealth Plaza serves as the hub of activity, featuring an 81-foot illuminated model of the Eiffel Tower, a full-service bar and crêpe stand, "French in Ten Minutes" lessons offered by the Alliance Française, and free nightly events.

Trolley tours of "French Philadelphia," offered in both French and English, highlight the many connections between Philadelphia and France, including an extraordinary amount of French Impressionist artwork, one of the largest collections of Rodin sculptures outside of Paris, a former residence of French King Louis-Philippe, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway inspired by the Champs-Élysées, and the lasting legacy of Benjamin Franklin himself, America's first emissary to France.

The festival also boasts performances in ballet, circus arts, and theater, as well as art and film exhibitions throughout the city, including a series of video and sound installations by French artist Tania Mouraud at the Philadelphia Art Alliance. Additionally, 11 of the city's most renowned restaurants, such as Lacroix, Parc, and Le Bec-Fin, have welcomed French guest chefs to create innovative dishes available to patrons. For more information, please visit: www.pifa.org

NYC FRENCH-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS OFFER BILINGUAL EDUCATION



Students at The New York French-American Charter School will be starting class this coming September.

When the school year begins this fall, some elementary students will encounter a unique multicultural experience. This September, two multilingual elementary schools, The New American Academy and the New York French-American Charter School, will open new classes in New York City. These programs will expand and reinforce the group of public schools already offering French-English education in New York. The Embassy of France in Washington, D.C., works closely with these schools, providing textbooks and workshops for instructors, as well as logistical and financial aid. "We have always believed that learning world languages is critical... Initiatives such as The New American Academy, the French-American Charter School and the dual-language program, which put world languages at the forefront of education, will help American people to thrive in a globalized world," stated Antonin Baudry, Cultural Counselor of the French Embassy.

"THE GOVERNATOR" RECEIVES THE LEGION OF HONOR IN CANNES

French Minister of Culture and Communications Frédéric Mitterrand bestowed the distinction of *Chevalier* in the *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, on former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in early April. The ceremony took place in Cannes, where Schwarzenegger unveiled his new television show at the MIPTV conference (see page 5 of *News From France*). "I'm very happy to receive this because... Cannes and France [have] been a very important part [of my success]," Schwarzenegger stated after he received the award. Before leaving France, Schwarzenegger also left his "mark" on Cannes. The former governor made a cement impression of his hands and signature on the star walk, and promoted his new animated series, *The Governator*, which stars the actor-turned-politician as a crime-fighting superhero. Broadcasters in France as well as several other European countries have already picked up the series.

France and International Allies Offer Support to the Libyan People

Since democratic movements developed in the North-African country of Libya in February, the uprising against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi has attracted the attention and support of the international community. France, the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the League of Arab States (LAS), the African Union (AU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have discussed and undertaken actions to protect the Libyan citizens and prepare for the country's political transition.

On March 10, France became the first country to recognize the Transitional National Council (TNC), the political body established by the opposition to Muammar Gaddafi, as the legitimate government of Libya. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and founder of the regional cooperation organization Union for the Mediterranean, France has helped coordinate a diplomatic response to the conflict and uphold the democratic aspirations of the Libyan people.

International Organizations

France and international coalition partners, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, have mobilized organizations such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Human Rights Council (HRC) to protect the human rights of the Libyan people and give support to the TNC.



World leaders met in Paris on March 19 to discuss support for the Libyan people.

the population," in addition to imposing an arms embargo, freezing the assets of regime members, and referring the situation directly to the International Criminal Court.

Soon after, France recommended the suspension of Libya from the Human Rights Council, which the UN General Assembly approved. Libya's suspension marks the first time in the Human Rights Council's history that one of its members has been suspended.

Following the establishment of the TNC in late February and continued attacks by Gaddafi's forces against civilians, UNSC Resolution 1973 was drafted and presented at France's initiative, together with the United Kingdom, Lebanon, and the United States. The resolution passed on March 17. Recognizing that the situation in Libya "continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security," the resolution established a cease-fire, a no-fly zone, and "[authorized] 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."

France was the first to enforce the UN-mandated no-fly zone with airstrikes against Gaddafi's forces on March 19, in cooperation with British, American, Canadian, Spanish, and Belgian forces. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates joined the coalition soon after. Following the initial strikes, NATO military command took control of the operations on March 30.

Since the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1973, France and the United Kingdom have helped assemble the representatives from the UN, the EU, the LAS, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the AU in Paris and London to discuss the issue. The London meeting on March 29 established a

Contact Group to "provide leadership and overall political direction to the international effort...provide a forum for coordinating the international response on Libya; and provide a focal point in the international community for contact with the Libyan parties." The Contact Group held its first meeting with the Libyan TNC in Doha, Qatar, on April 12.

In a joint op-ed published in the *New York Times* on April 15, Presidents Barack Obama and Nicolas Sarkozy and Prime Minister David Cameron stated, "Today, NATO and our partners are acting in the name of the United Nations with an unprecedented international legal mandate. But it will be the people of Libya, not the UN, who choose their new constitution, elect their new leaders, and write the next chapter in their history."

Humanitarian Aid

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon estimates that nearly 3.6 million Libyans may need humanitarian aid. The need to support civilians affected by the conflict constitutes a core element of France's response to the Libyan crisis. France has specifically focused on three areas: medical relief to the city of Benghazi, evacuation of foreign nationals, and aid to refugees.

On February 27, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs' Crisis Center assembled a team of 32 firefighters and medical personnel, along with five tons of supplies, in less than 24 hours to be dispatched to Benghazi's largest hospital. A rebel stronghold, the city receives a great number of wounded from the front lines. The French team has joined with hospital staff to administer care. A Libyan student who helped unload the French supplies commented, "They were so kind to us...it was so brave of them to do that for us. Especially from



Numerous organizations responded with humanitarian support. Above, Médecins Sans Frontières provides medical care to a wounded person in Misrata, Libya.

France, it's very kind." Samuel Mercier, a Parisian firefighter with the team, described the situation in the understaffed hospital as "tense." Yet, he expressed hope for their mission, stating: "We had firefighters from Paris and Navy firefighters from Marseille...We have all brought our individual *savoir-faire*. We all have different expertise with emergency care, and it is this mix of abilities that will help us do something good here."

Between March 3 and 9, French planes made more than 24 trips between Libya and Egypt to evacuate nearly 4,000 Egyptian civilians trapped inside Libya. In coordination with the Egyptian government, France also set up a special flight to repatriate 166 Malian citizens who had fled the conflict. Responding to a request from the TNC, another humanitarian relief flight took place on April 13, delivering medical equipment to Benghazi and helping humanitarian NGO staff to reach isolated civilian populations.

The outpouring of refugees into surrounding countries has also been of great concern to France. In response to the call for solidarity from the UN High Commissioner (UNHCR), France has designated 500,000 euros for refugee assistance programs through the UNHCR. Myriad organizations have come together to provide 51 tons of humanitarian aid to civilians who have fled to the border town of Ras Ejder in Tunisia. The Red Cross and the Var Food Bank of the Provence-Côte-d'Azur region were instrumental in this shipment.



A French Mirage F1CR fighter jet is deployed for Opération Harmattan in Libya.

New Program Puts a Fresh Face on Job Search

French governmental agency Pôle Emploi, responsible for providing unemployment benefits and job counseling, recently launched Action Relooking, a new initiative to help unemployed women get back on their feet. Funded by the EREEL endowment, an organization that finances innovative proposals throughout Europe, Action Relooking aims to help unemployed women find work by teaching them strategies for engaging with prospective employers.

Each month, a handful of women receiving low or no income are chosen to attend one day of workshops, where they



A new public-private initiative gives unemployed women a fresh start in their job search.

learn how to successfully present themselves to future employers. The hands-on lessons coach the women on comportment and focus on practical application of interpersonal skills during interviews. Each woman also receives custom wardrobe and makeup advice from a personal stylist, as well as a one-on-one human resources consultation about her individual career goals and how to achieve them.

After the day of workshops, each woman leaves with free beauty products and clothes provided by sponsors like Revlon and Gatteau. The program follows the progress of each woman's career for a year.

Internet Use Linked to Economic Growth in France

International consulting firm McKinsey & Company released a report in March on the Internet's impact on the French economy that examined economic growth fueled by the Internet. The results of the study demonstrate that a company's Web-use is strongly correlated with its performance, particularly for smaller businesses. The study draws several statistical conclusions about the economic effects of the Internet in France on the job market, GDP, product prices, and productivity.

According to the report, the Internet has created 700,000 jobs in France in the past 15 years, roughly a quarter of total national job creation during the period. The Internet is predicted to create about 450,000 jobs by 2015. A major contributor to GDP, the Internet also generated 60 billion euros in 2009. New technologies are projected to double the Internet's contribution to GDP from now until 2015 and increase France's Internet-based domestic product by 14 percent annually, reaching an estimated 129 billion euros in 2015 (totaling 5.5 percent of the overall GDP).

Higher Internet usage has resulted in a significant decrease in the price of goods for French consumers, according to the report. The study also identifies the social utility of higher Internet usage, including quicker job searches, democratization of knowledge, and establishment of new social bonds through networking.



A new report from McKinsey & Company examines the Internet's impact on the economy in France.

Cannes MIPTV Conference Projects the Future of Big Screen



Stars of Camelot, including French actress Eva Green, chat about the series at the MIPTV conference.

In early April, the MIPTV Conference in Cannes brought together media experts, buyers, and interested members of the general public, to give the world "its first taste of the newest content that will shape the year to come for TV, Internet, mobile and all video-rich platforms." This year's annual conference featured over 1,500 exhibits from 107 countries, attracting more than 11,500 participants.

MIPTV aims to connect the biggest players in the business and media worlds, linking technology with entertainment and providing businesses and clients with a forum to network. 2011 exhibitors included BBC Worldwide, France Television, MTV Networks International, Mark Burnett Productions, and Discovery Communications. Other conference features included keynote addresses, a producers' forum, and opportunities for individual meetings.

The conference also spotlighted digital entertainment startups, hosting a competition called Creative Connectivity to reward the most innovative startups in digital entertainment. Six of the 11 finalists at this year's competition were French. Also of note was French gaming company 3Dduo, which took first prize in the Online and Social Games category of the conference's Content 360 competition for digital design and innovation.



Described by Emile Zola as the "belly of Paris," food-market-turned-shopping center Les Halles is getting an 800 million euro architectural makeover, which the Prefect of Paris deemed necessary for "public utility." One of Europe's busiest transfer centers at the intersection of five metro and three regional train lines, Les Halles is a point of entry into Paris for commuters and tourists. The city will renovate the 10-acre garden at Les Halles and the train station itself to better accommodate the roughly 750,000 people that pass through each day. The renovation also includes the construction of a 17,000 square-meter pillarless canopy with a green-yellow louvered roof to promote natural light. The project intends to enhance the center's aesthetic qualities and create a more "livable space." According to Paris Deputy Mayor Anne Hidalgo, the new design is "an [architectural splendor], something that is completely in tune with the times, something that will leave a beautiful and lasting mark on the heart of the city."

AWARDS CELEBRATE FRENCH AS THE LANGUAGE OF BUSINESS

The Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry hosted the "Mots d'Or" and Bercy Language Trophy ceremony on March 16 in Lyon to celebrate the role of the French language in business, commerce, economy, and government. While the Bercy Language Trophies, created in 1996, recognize professionals who contribute to the vitality of the French language, the "Mots d'Or" have been reserved for youth from both French and international backgrounds since 1989. The award is given to students for their command of the French language, particularly in the areas of business and management. This year's international laureates hailed from Austria, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Gabon, Iceland, Madagascar, Quebec, Romania, Russia, Senegal, Syria, Thailand, Vietnam, and Zambia. Pascale Asmar, a winner from Lebanon, discussed the importance of business French today, saying, "French is not just the language of Molière, it is the language of Orange and of Air France. Even if the English language has become predominant, French has never lost importance."



The U.S. and England are the top destinations for French study abroad students.

With summer quickly approaching, more and more French parents will send their children abroad to learn to speak a foreign language, a skill of increasing value. English is the language most commonly studied by French students. England and the U.S. welcome more French university students than any other country. According to the Institute of International Education, American campuses receive well over 7,000 French students annually.

According to Fulbright Commission Director Arnaud Roujou de Boubée, American campuses receive a growing number of [French] students because American diplomas tend to increase one's global marketability.

Nearly 130,000 French students benefit each year from study abroad programs, or *séjours linguistiques*. While programs that mix English with sports and cultural outings are popular, so are "one-to-one" classes, where a student lives abroad with a teacher and receives private language courses. Linguistic *séjours* are not limited to travel abroad, however. For the past decade, France has had six domestically-operated "American villages," where classes and other activities are conducted solely in English.

The growing *séjour* trend is reciprocal. France ranks fourth among Americans' most popular study abroad destinations. Approximately 17,000 American students studied in France during the 2010-2011 school year. More than 10,800 visas for long-term studies were granted to American students going to France for more than three months, and an increasing amount of students are participating in short-term stays that do not require a visa.

Walk, Don't Run, to Victory

French athlete Yohann Diniz smashed the world record in the 50,000 meter outdoor racewalk by more than five minutes on March 12, with a time of 3 hours, 35 minutes, and 27 seconds (averaging less than seven minutes per mile). The previous record, set by Frenchman Thierry Toutain in 1996, stood at 3 hours, 40 minutes, and 57 seconds.

Racewalking is a long-distance foot sport like running. Judges closely monitor the competitors' form. Rules stipulate that athletes must keep one foot on the ground at all times, and that their supporting leg must remain straight until the body passes entirely over it. These regulations result in reduced stride lengths as compared to running.

Unlike the 50k event which occurs on roads, racewalk is a sport of equal distance that takes place on a closed track. The race consists of 125 laps, for a total distance of 31.07 miles.

33-year-old Diniz, a two-time European 50k gold medalist, won silver at the 2007 world championships. He broke the record at Reims Stadium, his home track, in front of a crowd of more than 4,000 cheering spectators, with music of his choice blasting over the speakers, including the Rolling Stones, Iggy Pop, and Noir Désir. Diniz explained, "The biggest inspiration for me was not just the music — but the spectators who gave me so much support," and called the new record, "one of the greatest moments in my sporting career."



He walks the walk: Yohann Diniz celebrates as he sets the world record in the 50k racewalk.

Report Examines the Role of Lobbyists in France



The study explores lobbying in the French National Assembly.

Public interest groups *Regards Citoyens* and *Transparence International France* recently published a report on lobbying in the French National Assembly. According to Anne-Marie Ducroux, who is on the board of directors of *Transparence International France*, lobbying has become a "democratic issue" demanding increased budgets, personnel, and resources. The two associations hope to succeed in "demystifying the work of lobbyists," as *Regards Citoyens* co-founder Tangui Morlier explained.

The study surveyed approximately 16,000 lobbyists from nearly 5,000 organizations, and found that 48.2 percent of lobbyists are from the public sector, 20.9 percent from unions, 16.4 percent from private sector companies, and 7.5 percent from civil associations. Individual experts, think-tanks, religious organizations, and other private entities comprise the remaining 7 percent. Transportation, culture, and private sector interests constitute the majority of lobbied issues.

The report affirms that lobbyists are important in clarifying complex legislation and encouraging the cross-analysis of issues. Ducroux stated that the report could help illuminate democratic processes that are little known, stating, "[T]ransparency is essential to ... restore confidence ... The system must be improved so citizens can understand what is going on."

Blogs

A PHOTO A DAY KEEPS THE "ENNUI" AWAY

There are almost 1,400 blogs registered with citydailyphoto.com, a website that tracks daily photo blogs from cities all over the world. While some are more faithfully updated than others, each site offers a glimpse into the quotidian life of a particular metropolis.

Jilly Bennett, a British expat who runs a luxury dogsitting service from her home on the Côte d'Azur, decided to start her own daily photo blog (www.mentondailyphoto.com) after coming across similar ones (Grenoble, Avignon, and Paris each have well-maintained sites). About three times a week, Bennett wanders the town of Menton, taking pictures for



Menton Daily Photo captures passing moments of daily life in southern France.

her next few daily posts. Recent images feature beaches, old streets, and the colorful parades of the Fête du Citron.

In an interview with *News From France*, Bennett characterized herself as "a Brit who fell in love with the area [of Menton] and wants to show it to everybody else." Calling the blog her

"passion," she expressed delight in the process: "I'm learning photography, getting better all the time... your eye develops and you get to love [and] see where you live through different eyes... the roof, the couple chatting in the bar." Her site has become increasingly popular over the last several years, currently attracting 10,000 visitors per month.

In addition to the Menton blog, Bennett also keeps a daily photo site for Monte Carlo, Monaco—the city is only a 20-minute trip from her home—as well as Riviera Dogs, a blog featuring images of canines seen along the Côte d'Azur.

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When Life Gives You Lemons, Host An Annual Festival!



Menton's *Fête du Citron* uses over 145 tons of lemons and oranges to create citrus sculptures.

Over 200 tons of lemons are produced annually in the region surrounding Menton, a Mediterranean coastal town in Southeast France. In celebration of the local specialty, the 78th annual *Fête du Citron* (Lemon Festival) took place from February 18 to March 9 in Menton.

Attracting more than 230,000 visitors per year, the festival is renowned for its magnificent artistic arrangements of oranges and lemons. In keeping with this year's theme *Grandes Civilisations* (Great Civilizations), the *Jardin Biovès* displayed enormous sculptures representing masterpieces of ancient civilizations, some over 30 feet high, made entirely from brilliantly-colored citrus fruits. On several evenings, the exhibition remained illuminated after dark, transforming into the *Jardins de Lumières* (Gardens of Lights).

The event also hosted festive parades featuring floats decorated with citrus fruit. Three weekend afternoon parades included performances by folk musicians and majorettes, while two evening parades involved spectacular light designs, followed by fireworks.

Plans are already underway for next year's *Fête du Citron*, which will be held February 19 to March 7, 2012.

Kevin Kline Delivers Big-Screen Checkmate – *en français*

This spring, American moviegoers can take in *Queen to Play* (*Joueuse*), starring Academy Award winner Kevin Kline and acclaimed French actress Sandrine Bonnaire. Directed by Caroline Bottaro, the release marks the American debut of Kline's first performance given entirely in French.

Kline plays Dr. Kroger, a reclusive U.S. expat living on the French island of Corsica. He begins an unlikely friendship with the timid Héléne, a chambermaid who works in Kroger's home. She discovers *échecs* (chess) by chance and, after learning the doctor is himself an enthusiast of the game, she musters the courage to ask her employer for lessons. A poignant teacher-pupil relationship then grows between Héléne and the ornery American loner.

The film wasn't Kline's first French affair on the big screen. The seasoned actor played the role of a French con man alongside Meg Ryan in the 1995 romantic comedy *French Kiss*. Though his experience with French is extensive (Kline has studied the language since grade school), the feature-length performance pushed his limits. "There were idiomatic expressions that I had not been aware of, and inflections and stresses that struck me as odd, things that just don't translate," reflected Kline. For his preparation, Kline sought coaching at the Alliance Française in New York.

Overall, "It was a great *expérience*," Kline said about the role. "I love that word because in French it means 'experiment' as well as 'experience,' and that's what it was for me."



Kevin Kline stars in his first all-French film, *Queen to Play*, alongside Sandrine Bonnaire.

MUSÉE D'ORSAY HOSTS *THE MAN WHO INVENTED MODERN ART*



Edouard Manet set the stage for future Impressionist artists with paintings like *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

The Musée d'Orsay is hosting an exhibition of the works of Edouard Manet, a highly influential painter during the transition between Realism and Impressionism in the mid-19th century. The exhibit, titled *Manet, the Man who Invented Modern Art*, is the largest display of the artist's works to be showcased in France in nearly 30 years. It features over 140 paintings, watercolors, pastels, etchings, and sketches, and includes a reconstruction of the artist's 1880 exhibition at the salons of the periodical *La Vie Moderne*. The exhibition follows the professional and personal development of the painter, particularly focusing on his later, "modern" works, examining Manet's reformatory attitudes towards Spanish and religious art, the influence of fellow artist and mentor Thomas Couture, and his friendship with fellow modernist Charles Baudelaire. The collection also seeks to explore narratives in the famous artist's body of work, including his relationship to women, political views, and pre-Impressionistic technique. The exhibit runs from April 5 to July 3. For more information, please visit www.musee-orsay.fr/en.

SPOTLIGHT ON STANLEY KUBRICK

La Cinémathèque française, the French government-sponsored film archives, is hosting a touring exhibition of famed director Stanley Kubrick's life work. *Kubrick: l'exhibition* features the director's correspondence and research, as well as photos, costumes, and set pieces from his films. Curator Hans-Peter Reichmann engineered the showcase in collaboration with Christiane Kubrick, Jan Harlan and The Stanley Kubrick Archive in London. The exhibition presents all of Kubrick's films. Additionally, the retrospective will feature two of the projects that Kubrick never finished before his death in 1999: *Napoleon* and *The Aryan Papers*, a project on Nazi death camps. The exhibit runs through July 31. For more information, please visit: www.cinemathque.fr.

La Francophonie Celebrated in France and Abroad



President Nicolas Sarkozy and OIF Secretary General Abdou Diouf inaugurate the new *Maison de la Francophonie* in Paris.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy inaugurated the new *Maison de la Francophonie* in Paris at a ceremony on March 18, signifying the first time that all of the services of the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) will be housed in the same building since its creation in 1970. The French president expressed his admiration for the OIF, "which is [destined] to be a forum for political and cultural exchange in the service of diversity, democracy, and human rights."

The dedication ceremony occurred two days before *La Journée internationale de la francophonie* (International Day of Francophonie), a worldwide celebration of shared linguistic and cultural heritage coordinated by the OIF, featuring special events in China, Costa Rica, Italy, New Zealand, Romania, Vietnam, and many other countries.

Stateside celebrations included a tasting of five French wines in Burlington, Vermont, a conference on the integration of Francophone countries into the global ecosystem in Los Angeles, and a series of discussions with Congolese author-illustrator Dominique Mwankumi in Austin, Texas.

In conjunction with *La Journée Internationale de la Francophonie*, the Embassy of France in Washington, D.C., hosted a six-week-long Francophonie Festival from March 2 to April 15, bringing a host of concerts, theatrical performances, art exhibits, seminars, literary salons, children's programs, and a film festival to Washington-area Francophiles. Highlights included a sold-out concert by Grammy-nominated French-Cameroonian musical duo Les Nubians and a *discothèque* featuring French DJ "The Toxic Avenger" at the National Postal Museum.

European Embassies Open Doors To Public in May

On May 7, the embassies of the 27 European Union (EU) Member States in the United States will open their doors to the public, presenting a rare "behind-the-gates" opportunity to visit and explore the various embassies throughout Washington, D.C. Running from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., the event will showcase the many cultures of Europe, allowing the public to sample the cuisine, music and art of different countries. Last year, 96,000 visitors had the opportunity to step inside D.C.'s European embassies. Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the U.S. João Vale de Almeida said that the event is "the single biggest celebration of the EU in the world,



The French Embassy eagerly awaits friends and families for the D.C. Open House on May 7.

demonstrat[ing] the EU's motto of *Unity in Diversity* by showcasing the range and richness of European society." At the Embassy of France, visitors can experience an introduction to French wines and participate in a soccer tournament. The Embassy's chef will also prepare a three-course prix-fixe menu for visitors who wish to have lunch at the Embassy. Free shuttles departing from Dupont

Circle and Foggy Bottom will provide transportation to the various embassies. The day-long event marks the beginning of Europe Week in the United States and is hosted by the non-profit organization Cultural Tourism DC. For more information on the Open House, please visit: www.europe-in-dc.com.

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A Year of French Film Comes to NYC

Film-lovers enjoyed a wide range of contemporary French masterpieces at the 16th edition of *Rendez-Vous with French Cinema*, which took place in New York City from March 3 - 13. Presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center and uniFrance, an organization dedicated to the worldwide promotion of French film, the annual showcase offered audiences "the best in contemporary French film," in addition to several events featuring French cinema legends.

The New York festival premiered 22 feature films and 7 shorts, opening with François



François Poizon's *Potiche*, starring Catherine Deneuve, was shown at the *Rendez-Vous with French Cinema* festival.

Poizon's *Potiche*, which was nominated for four *Césars* (the French equivalent of the Oscars) this year.

In addition to premiere screenings, the festival offered many special events. BAMcinématek hosted a Catherine Deneuve retrospective of 24 films, honoring the career of the legendary French actress. "A Conversation with Claude Lelouch" allowed audiences to engage with the renowned director in a discussion of his 50-year career, including his latest release, *What Love May Bring*. Director Bertrand Tavernier gave a presentation on his career in an event titled "The Cinema Inside Me," and participated in a Q&A concerning his latest film, *The Princess of Montpensier*.

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