



News From France



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A free monthly review of French news & trends

France and Germany Co-Host EU Open House; Part of “Franco-German Year”



The Embassy of France welcomed some 4,500 visitors to its grounds on May 11. As part of the EU Open House, nearly 30 embassies of member countries belonging to the European Union joined in sharing European culture and diplomacy in Washington. The French and German embassies co-hosted this year. Story, p. 2

From the Ambassador’s Desk: A Monthly Message From François Delattre

▲ The past month has showcased an exceptionally diverse set of French-American partnerships. In fields as broad as medicine, culture, and manufacturing, we’ve been proud to work with our American friends.

Leading medical organizations in France and the U.S. joined together on May 7 to sign with me a Memorandum of Intent aimed at deepening research on addiction. France’s National Institute for Health and Medical Research (INSERM) and the U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) agreed to launch joint research and exchanges, in particular in the fields of neurology and psychiatry.

On May 11, the Embassy of France opened its doors to the visiting public as part of the EU Open House, an annual event that lets visitors explore diplomatic life in the nation’s capital. 2013 is the “Franco-German Year,” and France co-hosted its event with the Embassy of Germany. It is this Franco-German friendship that has helped secure peace in Europe since World War II, for which the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012. We’re proud of our modern relationship with Germany, our neighbor, ally, and European partner.

While the EU Open House served as the largest instance of European-American relations this month, other examples featured on cultural calendars throughout the country. Chapters of the Alliance Française in Louisiana, Michigan, and Minnesota hosted a variety of events

centered on this year’s “Euro-American Celebration,” part of the European Month of Culture all through May.

In the security arena, Jean-Yves Le Drian, France’s Minister of Defense, made a successful visit to Washington on May 17 for meetings with, among many others, U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel. The trip allowed for very close dialogue on global security challenges, including Mali, Syria, Iran, and North Korea.



On May 29, I had the pleasure of attending the expansion of a factory in Little Rock, Ark., which produces airplanes for the French company Dassault. The \$60 million addition makes the site the largest Dassault factory in the world. The event, attended by the Governor of Arkansas, the Mayor of Little Rock, and several of the state’s Members of U.S. Congress, provided a beautiful example of French-American economic partnership in cross-investment and high-tech industry.

As is often the case between France and the U.S., history was cause for celebration this month, too. May 8 marked the anniversary of V-E Day. On that day in 1945, World War II was declared over in Europe. To the American soldiers who fought for France at D-Day, on the Mediterranean coast, or in the Battle of Paris, I wish to thank the United States for helping liberate my country and for restoring the peace our two nations hold dear. France will never forget.

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Defense Minister in D.C. for Top-Level Meetings

In a 24-hour whirlwind of activity, Jean-Yves Le Drian, France's Minister of Defense, conducted meetings in Washington on May 17 with several top-level government officials and organizations, including U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel.

Sessions took place at the Pentagon and the U.S. Senate. Mr. Le Drian also gave a speech during a public event at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in partnership with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Press conferences and interviews took place in Washington.

The Minister addressed global security issues in Mali, Syria, Iran, and Asia. Special focus was devoted to security challenges shared with the United States, as addressed among senior French and U.S. defense officials who met as part of Mr. Le Drian's visit.

European defense, as well as the recently published French White Paper on Defense and National Security, was also discussed among participants.

Floridian French Caucus to Boost French-American Ties

A Floridian French Caucus modeled after the French Caucus of the United States Congress was inaugurated in late April, in an effort to make strong relations even stronger between France and the Sunshine State.

The caucus was launched at the Florida Historic Capital Museum in Tallahassee, FL, in a ceremony that was attended by François Delattre, Ambassador of France to the United States, Consul General of France Gaël de Maisonneuve, Florida Secretary of State Ken Detzner, and Executive Director of Florida Veterans' Affairs Mike Prendergast. Also present at the event were State Representative Lake Ray and State Senator Anitere Flores, who will serve as the group's first co-chairs.

In their speeches, each dignitary recognized the extensive historic and cultural ties connecting France and Florida, which date back to the 1564 founding of Fort Caroline by French explorer Jean Ribault. At the end of the ceremony, Amb. Delattre paid tribute to more recent connections, awarding France's highest award, the Legion of Honor, to six U.S. veterans who served in France during World War II.

EU Open House Shares French, German Worlds with D.C.

▲ On May 11, the Embassy of France opened its doors to roughly 4,500 visitors as part of the EU Open House, an annual event in which all embassies of the Member States of the European Union (EU) welcome visitors who want to know more.

The Embassy of France co-hosted the event with the Embassy of Germany at La Maison Française, the Washington-based cultural center of the Embassy of France. Offerings included interactive photo booths, face-painting and games for children, French and German food and drink, music, and a wide selection of handouts. A special "diplomatic lunch" with traditional cuisine was also available.

France and Germany have several reasons to celebrate their roles in the European Union, notably that 2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Elysée Treaty. Completed in 1963, the watershed text formalized peaceful Franco-German relations that would stabilize Europe for decades following

World War II. Peace and prosperity ensued in broad measures across the European continent. France would coin a special term for the period, *les Trente Glorieuses*, or the "Thirty Glorious Years," when from 1945 to 1975 the country enjoyed dramatic economic growth.

The Franco-German "couple," as they have become known in EU circles, fueled the trend of European integration that would evolve into the European Union the world knows today.

In 2012, the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel committee cited the EU's work as having "for over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe."

The EU Open House event marks the second time France and Germany have conducted their public occasions jointly, following a successful first event in 2012.



At the Open House photo booth, visitors could have their picture taken at the Eiffel Tower (well, almost). L-R: a French embassy staffer thinks of home, two German women go on virtual vacation, and a mother and daughter share a smile.

In U.S. & at Home, France Fêtes European Month of Culture

▲ May is a month full of anniversaries for the European Union, and for France's role within it. Throughout the month, Americans could enjoy the European Month of Culture, celebrated throughout the United States. The series focused on a multitude of contemporary EU debates, and Alliance Française chapters in Louisiana, Michigan, and Minnesota hosted various goings-on.

In New Orleans and Lafayette, La., the "Euro-American Celebration" ran from May 9 through 12 with cultural, social, and educational events honoring the Euro-American relationship.

The Alliance Française of Detroit ran an extended slate of activities from May 4 through 31, with special emphasis placed on friendship between the EU and the United States.

In the Minneapolis/St. Paul area, Europe-themed offerings included business conferences, a soccer tournament, and a talk on the European Capitals of Culture program.

Related events took place elsewhere in the U.S. and Europe. The week of May 5 through 11 was Europe Week, a busy seven-day event series held throughout

the United States on topics from business development to gastronomy to academic conferences.

In France, Thierry Repentin, France's Minister Delegate for European Affairs, met with members of the European Youth Parliament on May 9 as well as participants in Eurolycées, an initiative run by the Citizenship and Democracy Association, which encourages high-school students to think about EU energy and environmental policy. Students also took part in a simulation of an EU electoral campaign.

Mr. Repentin also met with civic associations to discuss the 2013 European Year of Citizens program. He joined groups for a visit to the "European Village" set up at the foot of Paris's City Hall. The events are part of the *Faites l'Europe* ("Do Europe") project organized by the House of Europe, based in the French capital.

May 9 marked the anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, a landmark speech given in 1950 that would help establish the European Union. It bears the name of its orator, the French statesman and one of the founding fathers of the European project, Robert Schuman.

Pierre-Henri Guignard, Permanent Observer of France to the OAS



Most people think of the Organization of American States (OAS) as a kind of United Nations for the Western hemisphere. Why, then, has France been an observer since 1972? As explained by Ambassador **Pierre Henri Guignard**, the Permanent Observer of France to the

OAS, France has an enduring relationship—not to mention several French territories—in the expanse from Canada to Cape Horn. **News From France** caught up with the diplomat for a closer look at his career and current work at the Washington-based organization.

What is your role as Ambassador of France to the Organization of American States?

I'm the Ambassador-Observer to the Organization of American States. France is an observer state. We are not one of the 35 members of the OAS, though France has territories in the Americas: Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane, and St. Pierre-et-Miquelon. It's the longest-running regional organization in the world.

How do you try to promote France's views within the OAS?

Well, let's step back for a minute. France is one of 62 observers. It is, with Spain and Italy, the only country to have a dedicated ambassador. What do the observers do? First of all, they observe [laughs]. We try to understand what is going on in the political bodies of the organization. And it helps us to understand what is happening, say, in Venezuela, between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, how Brazil is growing. What I report to Paris and the French embassies on the continent helps us to understand what is going on regionally. It's political observation.

We also try and use the organization to strengthen democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular through electoral observation.

The third activity we have is to support human rights. It's very important to France that the values that form the basis of our society are observed by all countries in the same way. So, we are very supportive of the Inter-American Human Rights System, which is embodied by the Commission, which is part of the OAS, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which is based in San José, Costa Rica. France finances some of their programs, in particular on freedom of speech and freedom of expression. And we try, once again, to be a bridge between the European system of human rights and the inter-American system of human rights. It's key to us that the same values are observed on either side of the Atlantic. We consider it our responsibility.

The fourth issue is security. Fighting drug trafficking is an important challenge for all of our countries. Everyone knows that some of the drugs produced in the Americas

cross the Atlantic toward Africa, where sometimes it finances terrorism, and then goes to Europe. Therefore, it's very important that we work with all American states to enhance security.

Can you tell us about your career and what led you to become Ambassador of France to the OAS?

I'd say I have an "All-American" career. I've been posted to Peru, to Mexico, to Canada, it's the third time I've been posted in Washington. I've also been posted at the United Nations in New York. I have multilateral and bilateral experiences. I was Ambassador to Panama prior to my appointment here at the OAS. Prior to that, I was in charge of the Americas in the staff of the Foreign Minister, first with Dominique de Villepin and then with Michel Barnier, as advisor for Latin American affairs. So, in a way, this experience of the Americas has brought me to the OAS, and I've enjoyed it very much.

France is working for worldwide abolition of the death penalty. How are you pursuing this at the OAS?

It's interesting because it's a topic that had disappeared a bit from the agenda of the organization. You have nine out of 35 countries in the Hemisphere that still have, in some way or another, the death penalty in their law. This is not right. We think that the death penalty is inhuman, unfair, and too often people who might be innocent risk the ultimate punishment without possibility of reversal. French diplomacy is very committed to the abolition of the death penalty, and we wish it will become universal as soon as possible.

Therefore, with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, we have started a process to bring back the issue to the OAS and try to convince a number of countries in the OAS to go towards either a moratorium, or abolition. And with some success at this point, because some countries in the Caribbean have their government interested, and we hope that one day the U.S. will abolish the death penalty. We hope to address this issue in the next OAS General Assembly in Guatemala this June. 🇫🇷

Embassy Joins D.C.'s Bike to Work Day 2013

As part of a citywide effort to think green about daily transportation, the Embassy of France hopped on to Bike to Work Day organized in the nation's capital on May 17.

A clutch of enthusiastic embassy staff rolled to work that morning on two wheels instead of four. As a reward for their efforts, riders were greeted with a collation, or healthy snack of granola and other foodstuffs appropriate for the health-conscious activity.

Some 70 other "pit stops" were in place throughout the Washington area. An annual event, Bike to Work Day 2013 was organized among the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia Departments of Transportation.

The event is among the activities related to the "Green Embassy" project, a comprehensive effort to establish sustainable, environmentally friendly practices at the French embassy and in Washington, in partnership with local organizations.

For photos of the embassy's Bike to Work event and participants, please visit facebook.com/franceintheus.

Two Wine Tastings at French Embassy Teach Tips

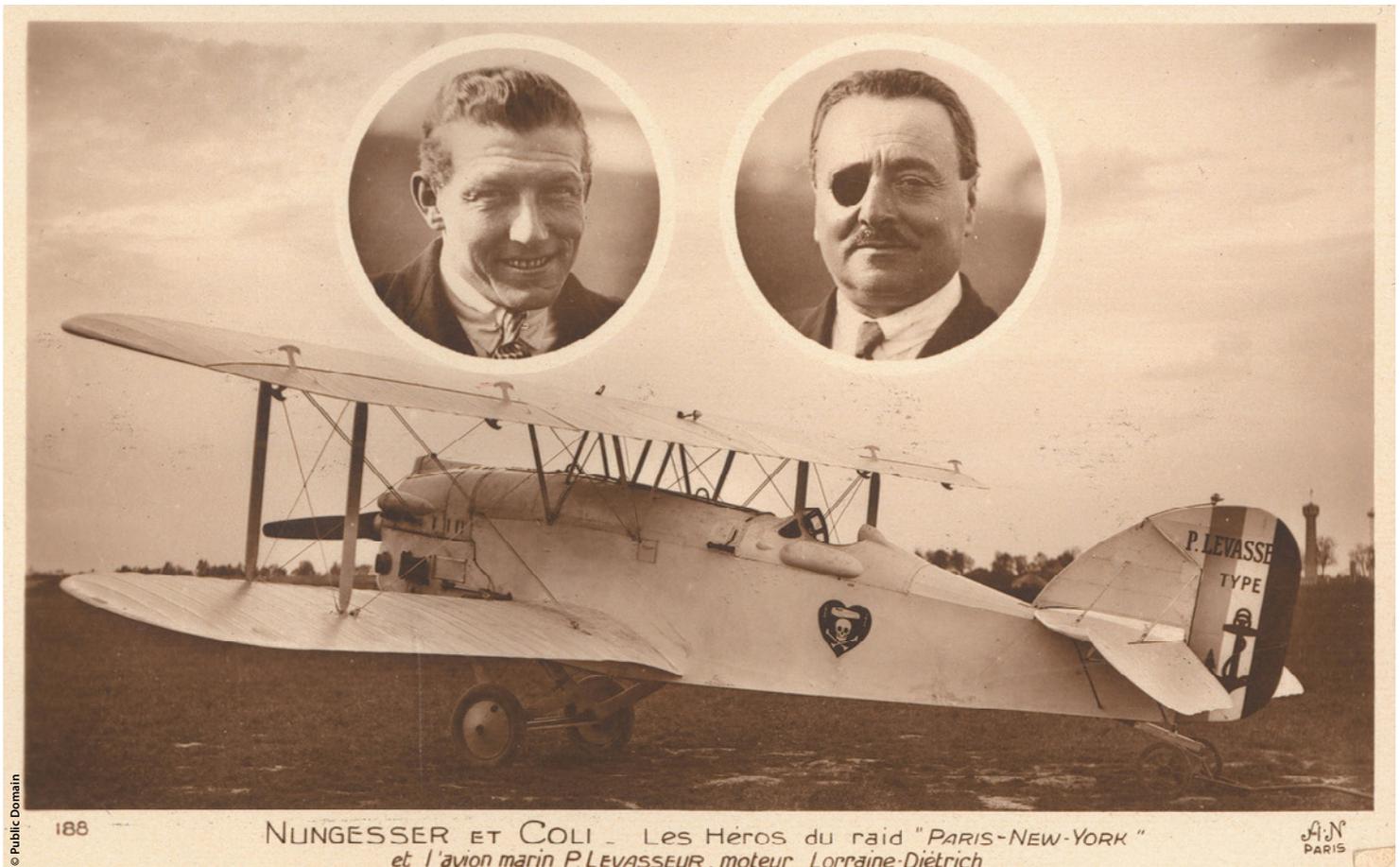
On May 1 and 29, budding wine connoisseurs from around the D.C. area gathered for the first *dégustations* of the spring season at the Maison Française, the French embassy's cultural center in Washington.

The sessions, which featured a variety of sweet and dark wines from such prestigious estates as Château Climens, Château Troplong-Mondot, and Maison Joseph Drouhin, were led by Claire Morin-Gibourg, a French national and Washington-based journalist with wine expertise.

Throughout the sessions, audiences learned key tips about how to enhance their wine experience, including avoiding snacks and sweets prior to the tasting in order to have a fresh palate. Participants were also encouraged to avoid wearing fragrances that might prevent them from appreciating the wines' own subtle aromatics.

The third and final tasting of the series will take place on Wednesday, June 26, and will feature sparkling wines from both Virginia and the Champagne region of France. To find out more and register, please visit the website of the Maison Française at www.la-maison-francaise.org.

French Embassy Remembers Story of the *Oiseau Blanc* Vanished Airplane Attempted Early Transatlantic Flight



Charles Nungesser and François Coli attempted the first two-manned, Paris-to-New-York flight ever. Their reputations as flying aces in World War I were legendary, so it stunned observers when they disappeared in 1927. A recent event at the Embassy of France shed light on the mystery, and today's search for answers.

On May 8, 1927, two French aviators took off from the Paris-Le Bourget airport with the ambition to land in New York City. Their airplane, the *Oiseau Blanc*, or the White Bird, was breathlessly anticipated all over North America's eastern seaboard. When the pair never arrived, an international mystery ensued, with few substantive clues as to the fates of the pilots.

On May 8, the anniversary of the *Oiseau Blanc*'s departure, the Embassy of France joined leaders from business and civil society to remember the pioneering spirit that has connected France and the United States since aviation's earliest days. A presentation from the French civic organization A La Recherche de l'*Oiseau Blanc* shed new light on the airplane's disappearance, and how France and the U.S. are working together in an effort to solve one of modern flight's most compelling mysteries.

Two Pilots, One Mission

When Charles Nungesser and François Coli decided to try for a transatlantic flight, their reputa-

tions as flying hotshots were already well-established. Both pilots had become famous as aces in World War I. Their exploits were celebrated internationally and each became immensely popular public figures during the 1920s.

The idea for their feat sprung to life in 1919 in response to a \$25,000 prize offered by an American hotelier to any aviator who flew a successful non-stop journey from Paris to New York or vice versa. No one met the challenge after its five-year time limit, and the award was extended in 1924. When Mssrs. Nungesser and Coli later announced their endeavor, the world turned to watch. The lead-up to their departure received frenzied media treatment, generating top coverage in radio and newspapers on each side of the Atlantic.

On May 20, 1927, just 12 days after the French pilots' departure, American aviator Charles Lindbergh would famously complete the first solo crossing less than two weeks later. He would land at Le Bourget airfield, the same one from which Mssrs. Nungesser and Coli had taken off. Attended by a swarm of reporters upon his arrival, Mr.

Lindbergh lauded the courage of his fellow adventurers.

A Renewed Interest

Decades after the frenzy of speculation and press coverage about the *Oiseau Blanc*'s disappearance, research would begin again, and from an unlikely source of inspiration. In 2006, French businessman and adventure sports enthusiast Bernard Decré would first learn about the story in the Clive Cussler novel *The Wreck Hunters*. Intrigued, he looked into it, digging deeper and deeper. His research would lead him to found A La Recherche de l'*Oiseau Blanc* two years later.

Mr. Decré's findings led him to a pair of conclusions: one, that Mssrs. Nungesser and Coli made it to North America, and two, that their wreckage could be dredged from the original crash site. Following reports of a white airplane from Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, a French island territory off of Canada's eastern coast, Mr. Decré conducted the first of several searches with the help of six divers

from the French Navy. Subsequent research would involve American authorities, including the National Archives Administration (NARA) and the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as French research centers in Aix-en-Provence and Paris.

In 2012, the association partnered with Safran, who underwrote the rental of high-powered equipment to further explore the area where Mr. Decré believes remains of the airplane will be found. From May 15 through June 7 of this year, A La Recherche de l'Oiseau Blanc launched another search campaign to finally establish the facts surrounding the airplane's disappearance. Results of the latest search were inconclusive at the time this article was printed.

Honoring Flight's Pioneers

The embassy event served to commemorate the best elements of an otherwise tragic story.

François Delattre, Ambassador of France to the United States, provided opening remarks for the occasion. He praised the "shared history of daring and innovation" between France and the United States. That both countries were at the forefront of flying technology and adventure speaks to the driving spirit that characterizes them both, he explained.

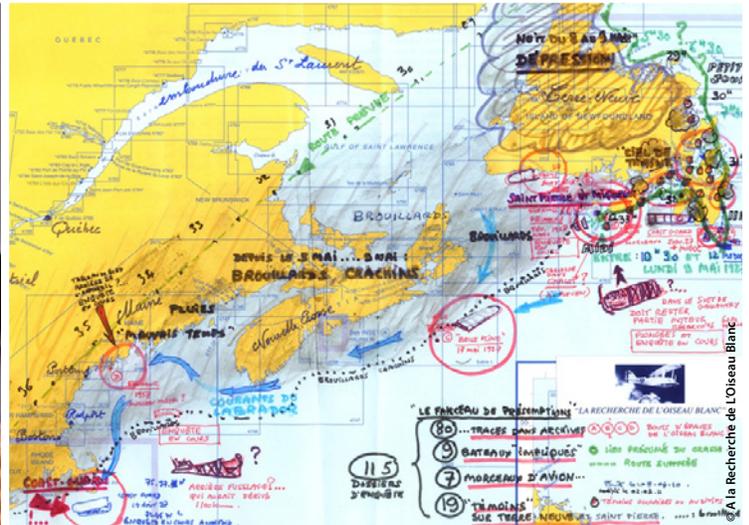
Rear Admiral Mark Butt, U.S. Coast Guard, also lauded the character of each pilot. Their ambition demonstrated "pure bravery," he said, in remarks made during the event.

Peter Lengyel, President and CEO of Safran USA, paid tribute to what he called the "honor and daring" of the two veteran aviators. Since their plan was to make a water landing outside New York City, Mssrs. Nungesser and Coli jettisoned their wheels and other ground-landing gear before take-off, committing their mission and materials—indeed, their very lives—to the endeavor.

"It was truly a go/no-go situation," Mr. Lengyel said, and in a critical moment of decision, the pilots chose to attempt an enormous challenge.

Speaking midway through the event, Mr. Decré thanked the National Archives and the U.S. Coast Guard for their sustained contributions to his group's efforts.

Whatever the outcome of the most recent search at Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, Bernard Decré will continue to glean clues from current and future research. Given the project's French-American aspect, the French embassy lends its support to all such endeavors. Partners in the search for the *Oiseau Blanc*, from French and American government bodies and industrial groups like Safran, to Mr. Decré's foundation, all help to carry on a rich tradition of common transatlantic causes. Stories like the *Oiseau Blanc* demonstrate the connectedness of France and the United States in science, innovation, and progress writ large.



Clockwise from top left: Amb. François Delattre with Peter Lengyel, President and CEO of Safran USA. A map of the search area off of the Canadian coast, where airplane debris may still remain. Bernard Decré, founder and head of A La Recherche de l'Oiseau Blanc. A monument at Étretat, where the pilots were last seen.

Facebook France Names Laurent Solly New CEO

In a move announced in late April, French politician and businessman Laurent Solly was named the head of Facebook France. With his appointment, Mr. Solly becomes CEO of the French operations of the world's largest social networking platform.

Facebook hopes that Mr. Solly's experience will allow the company to further boost its rapid growth in France. After graduating from France's prestigious *École nationale d'administration (ENA)*, which prepares students to enter the civil service, Mr. Solly worked as chief of staff under then Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy.

In more recent years, Mr. Solly has begun to orient his career toward business. Since 2007, he has worked for one of France's leading television stations, TF1, where he was appointed to the position of managing director.

In French-U.S. Venture, ZenKars Takes Off Quickly

When Jean-Mathieu Chabas and Venkat Jonnala entered their used-car business idea into competition, they could hardly have known they would win the grand prize—and major start-up support.

The two entrepreneurs met as students at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, one of the country's leading business programs. Their win was announced in April at the conclusion of the annual Wharton Business Plan Competition.

Their business, called ZenKars, is an online aftermarket car retailer that connects wholesalers with individual buyers. The idea beat out 200 other contestants for a \$30,000 grand prize and other associated funds.

The entrepreneurs' success hardly came overnight. After entering their school's Venture Initiation Program (VIP), the feedback they received from organizers made them realize they had a lot more work to do. They reapplied with a beefed-up version of their business model that carried them through the four-part competition.

The spirit of risk-taking also fed their success. "We eschewed a typical summer internship," they explained in a co-authored blog post on Wharton's website. Instead, they "focused on using VIP resources and mentorship to build" their brand.

The pair intend to continue developing the ZenKars concept into a full-fledged online business.

Inventors Join History, Innovation at the Concours Lépine

▲ History and innovation don't often go together. But at the fabled *Concours Lépine*, held April 30 through May 12 in Paris, entrepreneurs and attendees converged to explore what inventions might shape tomorrow's times.



The original Moulinex appliance was shown at the 1931 *Concours Lépine*. The event spurs business and creativity.

First held in 1901 as part of the Universal Exposition of Paris, the competition, a brainchild of Prefect of Police Louis Lépine, urged all kinds of creative minds to invent new tools and toys for a rapidly industrializing France. That spirit of striving has continued through the 21st century, and this year, over 2,000 exhibitors showed their prototypes to 620,000 visitors.

The stands were organized along three broad categories: the home and the environment, leisure and well-being, and global cultures. "We are also developing family-gear activities," said Carine Preterre, Director of the *Foire de Paris*, the larger event in which the *Concours Lépine* has traditionally taken part. The first event was meant "to familiarize the general public with the latest innovations, trends, and curiosities," Ms. Preterre said, a spirit that has only grown in its 113 years of activity.

Though some inventions may be mere curiosities, others mean serious business. Ms. Preterre estimates that \$460 million in economic benefit are spun off from the deals the convention generates. The average visitor, she says, spends around \$800 on the experience, between hotel rooms, travel, and other expenditures. With a third of all exhibitors coming from abroad to build their business, that means an inward flow of capital and innovation, with France in the middle of it all.

Past successes from the *Concours Lépine* include Moulinex, a French appliance brand with a global presence, as well as now-household items like the ballpoint pen. Inventors will compete for a group of prizes, like the President of the Republic Prize, as well as gold, silver, and bronze medals.

Whether an invention takes home formal recognition may be less important to the entrepreneurs hustling to establish their business or product, who may develop key contacts and financial support.

Inspired by the *Lépine* tradition, the *Concours Lépine Européen*, an inventor's expo for all of Europe, is scheduled for this September in Strasbourg, France.

France, U.S. Sign Medical Agreement to Tackle Addiction

▲ Leading French and American health organizations aiming to advance research in the life sciences signed a Memorandum of Intent (MOI) on May 7, in an aim to enhance medicine's approach to addiction.

Agreed on by France's National Institute for Health and Medical Research (INSERM) and the U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health, the document, signed at NIDA's facility in Rockville, Md., outlines a multi-part plan to strengthen cooperation in the fields of neuroscience and psychiatry.

Results from the partnership will be applied to the full range of addictive disorders.

The accord will advance efforts to establish a framework for sharing skills and knowledge in these research fields, while stimulating exchanges and joint research, specifically at the post-doctoral level.

Dr. André Syrota, Chairman and CEO of INSERM, traveled from Paris for the ceremony. He was joined by Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of NIDA, and the Ambassador of France in the United States, Francois Delattre.

Amb. Delattre provided the opening remarks at

the occasion, where French and American officials and counterparts were also well represented.

The agreement builds on momentum from previous French-American efforts. At a gathering in October 2012 of the International Society for Neuroscience, held in New Orleans, INSERM and NIDA, along with France's Multi-Organization Thematic Institute (ITMO), jointly hosted a workshop that would pave the way toward the more formal agreement signed this May.

Areas identified in the MOI as potential subjects of study included animal research, drug discovery and development, clinical research, and brain imaging capabilities.

The agreed-upon methods of collaboration included training and exchange programs, seminars, supplemental research support, clinical trials, and a common website for the INSERM-NIDA partnership.

Conscious of the problems that addiction and related disorders can create in society, French researchers have long recognized the importance of effective medical counter-measures. France is currently ranked fifth worldwide in addiction research.

Urban Corps Festival Brings French Hip-Hop Dance to D.C.

▲ French dancers and musicians made audiences across Washington move to city beats in a series of performances called “Urban Corps,” organized by the Washington, D.C., branch of the Alliance Française.

Billed as a “transatlantic hip-hop festival,” the program, which ran from May 12 through 18, is now in its second year of celebrating the best of French urban and dance culture. With shows by performers and troupes trained in a variety of styles, from street dance to acrobatics and mime, the festival was a hit among audiences of all ages.

On May 13, performances by Cie de Fakto, Danse 2xs Mexico, and Cie Sébastien Perrault were featured at Washington’s Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Their goal was to act out “the journeys of love, the extravagances of hate, the fight for professional success,

and the inevitable passage into old age,” according to the festival’s website.

Beyond the live performances, attendees were invited to join in a series of events aimed at further exploring hip-hop culture on each side of the Atlantic.

On May 14, the Busboys and Poets restaurant played host to a conference titled “Comparing Dance Aesthetics & Funding in France and the U.S.,” which examined the ways in which the French and American public perceive urban artistic culture, as well as the government support that such artistic endeavors receive.

The discussion was followed by a screening of Jean-Pierre Thorn’s 2011 documentary *93: La Belle Rebelle*, which challenges negative views of urban art by pointing to hip-hop’s ability to combine words, music, and dance with social and political commentary.



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Shows like “What Did You Say?,” a one-man dance production that transcends the hip-hop idiom, gave Washingtonians a glimpse of France’s flourishing urban arts. Urban Corps events also included film screenings and a panel discussion.

French Team Celebrates Victories in U.S. “Robogames”

▲ A French robotics team celebrated its recent victory in style during a reception on May 29. The event was organized in recognition of the team’s winning performance at the “Robogames” international robotics competition in Palo Alto, Calif., on April 30. Considered the “Olympics of robotics,” the team beat out an international field counting over 40 countries and 200 machines.

The group of high school sophomores, who hail from Lorient, on France’s Breton coast, entered robots in the junior-level Best in Show category. They designed each

model from start to finish. At the end of the competition, the team was rewarded for its designs with three total medals, two gold and one bronze. They are the first medals won in this competition by a French team.

The Lycée Colbert, the high school the French students attend, is no newcomer to robotics excellence. Previous teams have won major events, including the UK-based RoboCup Junior competition in 2012, as well as France’s RoboFesta in both 2011 and 2012.

Besides enjoying their win in the technological hub of Silicon Valley, the students also enjoyed exchanges with Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco, where they met American high schoolers, visited the city’s iconic landmarks and even took in an American high-school football game.

The participation of the Lycée Colbert at the Robogames 2013 was supported, among others, by the Embassy of France in Washington, D.C., and the Consulate General of France in San Francisco.



© Lycée Colbert

With robots like these “penguins” and “chameleons,” French high-schoolers won gold in the “Robogames” competition in the Bay Area. The winners celebrated on May 29.

PEN World Voices Festival Honors Courageous Writers

Now in its ninth year, the PEN World Voices Festival of International Literature brought over 100 of the world’s most renowned writers to New York City from April 29 through May 5 for a week of panels, readings, reflections, and discussions.

This year’s program focused on the theme of bravery in art, putting special emphasis on the experience of writers from politically precarious regions worldwide for whom writing serves as a means of resistance.

Among those invited was France’s Pierre Michon, whose 1984 novel *Vies Minuscules (Small Lives)* won the prestigious Prix France Culture and garnered him international praise in the process. Other authors featured at the week’s events included Salman Rushdie and Naomi Wolf.

Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Sonia Sotomayor brought the festival to a close with the 2013 Arthur Miller Freedom to Write Lecture, in which she spoke about her current role in the judicial system as well as about the struggles and hopes of growing up in South Bronx, NY, as the daughter of Puerto Rican immigrants.

Ambassador Supports Anti-Trafficking Function

On May 1, Amb. François Delattre traveled to New York City to support a fundraiser aimed at combating human trafficking worldwide.

Organized by the S.T.O.P. organization, which stands for Stop Trafficking of People, the evening rolled out in the upscale store of fashion designer Catherine Malandrino. Hundreds of New York’s movers and shakers attended and bought \$120,000 in store items. Part of the proceeds went to S.T.O.P.

A non-governmental organization founded by human rights journalist Célhia de Lavarène, S.T.O.P. seeks to limit human trafficking with a specific focus on the global sex trade. Ms. de Lavarène’s activism stems from her time directing the UN Special Trafficking Operations Program in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 2001 and 2003. Her action resulted in the rescue of over 260 women and girls.

Ms. de Lavarène took on a similar role at the head of the Trafficking In Persons Unit in Liberia from 2005 to 2006, during which women from North Africa, Eastern Europe and even Asia were freed, sheltered, and repatriated.

S.T.O.P. is active worldwide and is registered in France, the UK, and the U.S.

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Jacksonville French Week Fêtes Heritage, Innovation



From left to right: Paul Astleford, Antoine Beussant, François Kloc, Alvin Brown, Amb. François Delattre, Consul General Gaël de Maisonneuve, and Xavier Marin. These leaders celebrated French history and innovation in Florida.

▲ Visitors to Jacksonville, Fl., discovered the rich French heritage of the city during Jacksonville French Week, which began on April 26 and featured a week-long array of cultural events, capped with a historical reenactment of the lives of Jacksonville's first settlers, on May 4.

François Delattre, Ambassador of France to the United States, attended the kick-off of the festivities, accompanied by the General Consul of France in Florida, Gaël de Maisonneuve, and Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown. The Ambassador also met with innovative French business leaders in technology and manufacturing who operate in northern Florida.

The week-long celebrations included French Dining Week and a French film festival. Downtown Jacksonville was transformed to include its own French Quarter to accommodate the ArtWalk, in which vendors and artists displayed their goods on Jacksonville's Laura Street, while mimes performed and a French Poodle Parade delighted audiences.

This year marked the second French Week celebration in Jacksonville. The legacy of the first European settlers in Florida 449 years ago has had a lasting impact on the city. The French Huguenots, who landed with Capt. Jean Ribault, first established the colony of Fort Caroline on the banks of the St. Johns River in 1564.

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