On History’s Anniversaries, France Honors its Defenders Throughout the U.S.

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To express our gratitude, we organized award ceremonies to U.S. veterans of France’s liberation all over the United States. From California and Montana to Texas, Louisiana, Florida, and Washington, D.C., France honored those brave Americans to whom we will be forever indebted.

I also took part in a ceremony on June 24 in Charleston, S.C., in which seven veterans received the Legion of Honor, France’s highest award. Among those recognized was former South Carolina Governor and U.S. Senator, Ernest “Fritz” Hollings.

France celebrated two key historical dates in June. On June 6, the anniversary of D-Day, the French diplomatic network in the U.S. honored dozens of veterans of World War II. Above, Amb. François Delattre honors three U.S. military personnel at an event commemorating Charles de Gaulle’s “June 18 Appeal,” a 1940 radio address (more below).

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

Other activities have taken place within the French embassy’s own gates. In keeping with our active commitment to environmental responsibility, we inaugurated our “Green Roof” on June 17. I presided at a ribbon-cutting alongside leaders from the U.S. Department of Energy, the D.C. city government, and local groups like the Anacostia Watershed Society. With a roof now covered with low-maintenance vegetation, the installation will cut heating and cooling costs, reduce run-off into the local works, and beautify the space.

This month also marked the 73rd anniversary of the “June 18 Appeal.” On that day in 1940, General Charles de Gaulle delivered a radio address calling for the French to resist foreign occupation. The embassy marked the occasion with a medal decoration for three U.S. military personnel with exceptional service records in French-American military operations. As part of the same event, I welcomed a visit from the Normandy Institute, a historical society founded by U.S. philanthropist Albert Small. The group is dedicated to remembering the sacrifices made on D-Day.

The month concluded with a visit from Manuel Valls, the Minister of the Interior, to Washington and New York from June 26 through 28. He met with several U.S. counterparts to collaborate on domestic issues including immigration, the fight against terrorism and organized crime, and other priorities shared by our two countries.

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Fête de la Musique Returns to French Embassy

Music, dancing, and delicious food attracted more than 5,000 people to the 11th annual Fête de la Musique at the French embassy's cultural center, La Maison Française. Washingtonians from all over the world celebrated their shared love of music during the two-day event on June 21 and 22.

The first Fête de la Musique took place in Paris in 1982. It was the brainchild of Jack Lang, the former French Minister of Culture and co-founder of the European Culture Capital program (see p.4). In partnership with Mr. Lang’s appointed Director of Music and Dance, Maurice Fleuret, the festival was created to promote “the democratization of access to artistic and cultural endeavors.” The event encourages professional and amateur artists to play for free in open-air venues.

Today, the festival is celebrated in more than 100 countries around the world, including other European capitals, regions of Latin America, and other major cities in the U.S. like San Francisco, New York, and Chicago.

More than 50 bands were featured at La Maison Française, including numerous local artists.

U.S. Defense Personnel Honored on French Anniversary

U.S. military and defense personnel were honored during a ceremony on June 18 to observe a historic French anniversary.

In a celebration commemorating General Charles de Gaulle’s now-famous June 18 Appeal, Ambassador François Delattre decorated three Americans at the French embassy in Washington. The Legion of Honor was awarded to Major General Tod Wolters, U.S. Air Force, who led a command including French and American forces in Afghanistan. Brigadier General Mark Clark, a U.S. Navy pilot, received the National Order of Merit with the title of Officer. Frédéric Ruiz-Ramon also received the National Order of Merit for his work with the U.S. Department of Defense.

In his June 1940 broadcast from BBC studios in London, Gen. de Gaulle, the leader of the French Free Forces, made an appeal to French resistance in the face of foreign occupation. U.S. and Allied troops would later fight to liberate France during and after the D-Day operation that began on June 6, 1944.

France and the United States have been “bound in blood,” Ambassador François Delattre said, referring to the numerous wars in which France and the U.S. have fought side by side.

Paris Air Show Celebrates 50th Anniversary at Le Bourget

Among the innovations of the 2013 Paris Air Show was the Airbus A350-XWB, which made its first flight just three days before the event. The trade show welcomed 350,000 general-admission attendees as well as industry professionals.

Titans of the aviation industry gathered at Paris’s Le Bourget airfield from June 17 through 24 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Paris Air Show. As the world’s largest aerospace industry exhibition, this year’s Paris Air Show was an opportunity for cutting-edge engineers and business leaders from 44 countries to display their latest innovations and promote international trade.

Among the 130 registered aircraft was the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, the A400M tactical airlifter, and the A350-XWB carrier (pictured), which took its inaugural flight three days before the exhibition.

Another leading French manufacturer, Dassault Falcon Jet, brought together aerospace innovations of the past and present, including the Rafale fighter plane. The aircraft was first developed in the 1970s in response to the needs of the French Navy and Air Force. The newest version of the aircraft promises even greater technological advances, such as fleet-wide communication upgrades. Dassault’s aircraft is also unique as a purely French creation and was assembled in-country.

This year, industry experts hosted more than 350,000 general admission guests at its nearly one-million-square-foot exhibition space, where visitors witnessed flight demonstrations and learned about the aerospace sector.

With 290 international delegations conducting meetings on airstrips and making deals over the din of jetliner engines, the 2013 Paris Air Show industry sales are expected to surpass last year’s numbers.

Nadal and Williams Make History at French Open 2013

Spaniard Rafael Nadal and American Serena Williams won French Open titles in Paris the weekend of June 8. For Mr. Nadal, the event signified his eighth French Open victory in nine years and his 12th Grand Slam title. His success over fellow Spaniard and underdog David Ferrer marked Mr. Nadal’s recovery after a seven-month absence due to a knee injury. Mr. Nadal is also the first man ever to win eight titles in the same Grand Slam tournament.

Ms. Williams, ranked the number-one female tennis player in the world, gained her second French Open crown, 11 years after her first win in 2002. The Grand Slam contests consist of the Australian Open, the French Open, Wimbledon, and the U.S. Open. Each lasts for two weeks. At the Australian and U.S. Opens, participants compete on hard courts, while Wimbledon is played on grass and the French Open on clay.

The French Open’s origins can be traced back to 1928, when the first tournament occurred at the Parisian tennis complex called Roland Garros. This year’s French Open is estimated to have done $205 million in business.
Interview with the expert

Jacques Delfosse, Diplomatic Property Manager

You're in charge of the French foreign ministry's real estate in Washington, D.C. What does that entail?

The French real estate department is in charge of all the French properties in this area. We are in charge of purchasing, renting, renovating all kinds of properties. Here in Washington, we manage France's North American, Central American, and Caribbean properties in 13 different countries. That represents almost 150 properties all around the region. The properties are mostly embassies, residences for ambassadors, and also staff houses. In some countries we also have French schools and cultural centers, such as in Haiti.

What we do involves not just real estate functions like renting and selling, but also managing renovation, construction, and security improvements. We also help all French buildings become more energy-efficient.

Tell us more: What are the main green projects at the embassy in Washington?

Since 2009, we have been working on a huge greening project here. As the largest building of the French diplomatic network in the world, we also want to set an example. It is also part of France's diplomatic policy in the U.S. to show what we are doing for sustainability and climate change. We have already decreased the embassy's energy consumption by 10 percent in three years. We are going step-by-step through a strategic plan, which is set for the next four years.

The latest step to be completed was in June, when almost 10,000 square feet of "green roof" was installed on the top of the embassy building (see sidebar, this page). The project was done in partnership with the mayor's office of Washington, D.C., the U.S. Department of State, and local authorities including the District Department of Environment and the Anacostia Watershed Society.

I could provide other examples, too. We bought three electric bicycles to reduce the use of taxis and cars. This decreases the embassy's carbon footprint and operating costs. We are also improving water use in bathrooms and the heating system. The last major project will be the geothermal system. Once we complete that project, we will be the first embassy in the world to be heated and cooled through geothermal means.

You're renovating the ambassador's residence. Can you tell us more about the property and the project?

The residence of the ambassador is in a historic neighborhood of Washington, D.C. It's on Kalorama Road, just north of the Dupont Circle neighborhood. It's one of the largest houses of this area, so we have to do something special. And we'd like to do it as a partnership with the local authorities. We will work with Washington's landmark commission and also the neighborhood, which is really important for us. We have to show that we are working with the neighborhood and we are proud of the residence. We really want to show our desire to work with the community. We are proud of our residence and its history, and the time has come to maintain it.

Can you give us examples of places you've sold, or times when you've negotiated a contract?

The best example is in San Francisco. We have a general consulate there, which was set up for the French community. Later, we were able to move into another, more modern, and more efficient space in the center of the city. We were able to negotiate at least a 25 percent decrease in rent. The new space we found was a more efficient layout, with a more welcoming waiting room and public space, while cutting the cost. It was win-win for everybody.

You've seen a lot of French government buildings in North America. Do you have a favorite?

Clearly, the ambassador's residence in Washington in the Kalorama district is absolutely wonderful. It's a beautiful house and a historic building. We have almost 150 properties in the Western Hemisphere, so it's difficult to say, 'Oh, this one is the best.' The UN mission in New York is incredible. They work night and day. When you are in the offices, you have a beautiful view of the city. We have to make it cost-efficient, but we also have to be welcoming. France's properties play a key role in its diplomacy.

Embassy, U.S. Partners Inaugurate “Green Roof”

As part of France's ongoing efforts toward green initiatives in Washington, the French embassy hosted leaders from diplomatic and development circles to inaugurate its “Green Roof” on June 17.

In a meeting of the D.C. Greening Embassies Forum, Ambassador François Delattre welcomed the U.S. Department of State, Keith Anderson, Director of the District Department of the Environment, members of D.C. city government, and the local Anacostia Watershed Society. All joined in a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The embassy roof has been covered with plants of various kinds to cut heating and cooling costs, reduce run-off into the city drainage system, and beautify the space.

The Green Roof stands as a "symbol of the French government's commitment to sustainable development" with local officials and partners, Amb. Delattre said.

The U.S. company, Furbish, designed and established the Green Roof and will maintain it for the embassy.

The most recent conference stands as the second such event hosted by the French embassy. The first took place in February 2011.

Ambassador, D.C.'s DAR Honor Rochambeau Legacy

Ambassador of France, François Delattre, along with the District of Columbia chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, conducted a wreath-laying ceremony at the statue of General Rochambeau in Lafayette Park on May 30. The statue, situated in front of the White House, commemorates the military efforts of the French officer and statesman during the American Revolutionary War.

Count of Rochambeau, Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, traveled across the Atlantic to Newport, R.I., in 1780 with 5,500 troops to aid American soldiers during the Revolution. His best-known accomplishment was commanding of joint forces of 10,000 American and French troops. Together, they marched to defeat the British at Yorktown, Va., in 1781, which would be the final battle in the American struggle for independence.

The ceremony took place on the 110th anniversary of the unveiling of the Rochambeau memorial statue. A replica of the monument stands in Vendôme, France, General Rochambeau's birthplace.
Six months after the opening weekend on January 12 and 13, the yearlong Capital of European Culture celebrations in the Marseille-Provence region continue through 2013 to deliver enlightening exhibitions that showcase artistic, cinematic, literary, and culinary creations from the area.

In 1985, the Ministers of Culture to France and Greece created the Culture Capital project to promote prosperity and solidarity between member nations of the European Union. This year, Marseille and Košice, Slovenia, have been given the honor of representing the vibrant creativity and diversity that exists within the EU. The history of Marseille harks back to its founding as an ancient Greek port. Today, it is the largest metropolis in southern France. The seascape opening up to neighboring Mediterranean nations serves as the ideal stage for the principles of the Culture Capital project: to unite Europeans through shared historical and cultural experiences.

Urban Inspiration

As Marseille witnesses the conclusion of the first of three segments in its cultural festivities, it ushers in a new summer line-up of inspiring creations. The first segment, entitled Episode 1: Welcoming the World, took place in various cities throughout the southern province and featured alternative genres of art such as circus performances. Between January and May, hundreds of artists, musicians, athletes, and performers traveled to the region, culminating in a two-week exhibition of street art—including impromptu performances, installations, and interactive presentations—that represented the artistic vitality of the French urban scene.

Making Connections

Episode 2: Marseille-Provence, Open Sky departs from urban themes to "venture off the beaten path, where the natural and the spiritual collide." This segment of the Culture Capital festivities focuses on reaffirming connections between the East and the West, as well as the past and the present. Several key projects support this theme, the largest of which is the opening of the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations (MuCEM). Adjacent to Greek ruins and overlooking the Vieux Port, the museum’s location is symbolically significant for its recognition of the Greek origins of the city of Marseille. The museum reinforces the idea of cultural cooperation by exhibiting art created exclusively in Mediterranean countries. The museum will also host debates, theater productions, cooking workshops, garden tours, and educational activities for children.

The role of art as an integral element of the European identity can also be seen in the revitalization of Vincent van Gogh’s unfulfilled dream of establishing an artists’ workshop in the south of France. Mr. van Gogh spent the final years of his life in southern France, and many of his works remain in a permanent gallery in the town of Arles. To honor the artist’s unfailing admiration for the natural environment of France, this year’s Culture Capital will establish an exhibition that joins his works with other artists, including French painters Henri Matisse and Paul Cézanne.

Art will not be the sole focus in Episode 2 of the 2013 Culture Capital. Drawing heavily from the second segment’s title, “Open Sky,” Europride will open the door for social progress and further endorse the importance of building a bridge toward an inclusive future. In July, the international event supporting European LGBTQ communities will visit Marseille for a week of parades, demonstrations, and concerts. This year, Europride will carry special significance, since France legalized same-sex marriage on May 18. Not surprisingly, one of the main attractions will celebrate this new legislation and provide opportunities for same-sex couples to join in matrimony: Le Salon du Mariage.

On the last night of Episode 2, the cultural focus will shift from art and politics to technological innovation and the future of commerce. The factories of Martigue will serve as backdrops for the one-night-only event, “Industrial Night.” While visitors stroll through the city streets, digital maps and visual installations will be projected onto surrounding buildings. Drive-in movies will be projected on the walls of local factories. Musical performances and concerts will pay tribute to major industrial cities around the world, including Detroit, Mich. As indicated on the festival’s website, visitors will make “unique discoveries and unusual encounters at every street corner,” and they will catch a glimpse of things to come in the final episode of the Culture Capital celebrations.

Pathways to the Future

The last segment of the Marseille-Provence festival will take place from September through December. This period, titled Episode 3: Land of a Thousand Faces, will feature the culinary ingenuity of both world-renowned chefs and budding gourmets. Scheduled gastronomic experiences will include a seven-part series illustrating the local fare of Saint-Rémy, such as olives, wild herbs, and wine, as well as a guided tour of local farmers’ markets. The focus on food during the final segment of the European Culture Capital brings to light the art of living—or more precisely, the art of living together. According to the organization’s website, “One of Marseille-Provence 2013’s main goals is to support, encourage, and increase the visibility of local initiatives,” which will be essential resources as both France and the European Union move toward a more unified future.

In the meantime, visitors to the European Culture Capital have six more months to experience the southern province, and to take the advice of André Saurès, one of Marseille’s native sons: “Stop, traveler, spend some time in these overlooked areas … with all its flavors and the strength of its people.”
Clockwise from top: A computer rendering of an artistic treatment for a shingled Provençal skyline, as conceived by Félice Varini; an experimental image from the “One Hundred Photographs of the World” exhibition; and American jazz great Pat Metheny adds to the mix of Mediterranean cultures that defines the Marseille-Provence region.
French Car-Sharing Service to Operate in U.S.

A French maker of electric cars has announced it will begin operating in Indianapolis starting in 2014.

The company, Bolloré, which owns the Autolib’ electric car brand, confirmed June 11 its $35 million contract to expand the program abroad. Indianapolis, with a population of 830,000, will become the first city outside of France to experience the service. Indianapolis is likely to adopt a new name for the innovation, but a title has yet to be revealed.

After the program’s startup, 500 electric cars and 1,200 charging stations in 200 locations will be available in the city. Cars can be rented for short trips via smartphone and borrowed after using a special card to swipe a reader on the vehicle’s windshield.

Established in France in 2011, Autolib’ has 80,000 subscribers, 35,000 of which use the system year-round.

Bolloré hopes Indianapolis will be a stepping stone for its future endeavors in the United States. The business anticipates developing its name outside of France and spreading the service to other American cities.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Joins Open Data Platform

In an effort to promote freedom of information, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is now contributing to France’s Open Data website, data.gouv.fr. In disseminating government statistics and records, the platform provides easy access to economic, political, social, and educational data. It serves as a tool for French citizens, businesses, and administrations and offers a sign of France’s commitment to government transparency.

Etalab, the agency that established the nationwide French Open Data program in December 2011, is under the direction of French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault. The group manages circulation of the activities and services of French public-sector bodies.

Along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France’s Open Data website presents information from over a dozen ministries within the national government. The addition of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides Open Data visitors with information on travel, as well as studying and working abroad. Such information includes the various Alliancé Fransaise locations in the world, the addresses of French consulates and embassies, and fact sheets on France’s world affairs.

Summit Joins Policymakers, Creative Industries in D.C.

In a meeting of some of the world’s best creative professionals, the World Creators Summit came to Washington from June 3 through 5.

The fourth annual event, which alternates between the U.S. capital and Brussels, provides programs and informal opportunities for artists, musicians, media makers, and industry executives to brainstorm approaches to keep their areas vibrant while assuring respect of intellectual property in an increasingly digital world.

The conference is organized by CISAC, or the International Confederation of Authors and Composers, in partnership with Premier Cercle, a think tank with offices in Paris and Brussels.

Operating under the slogan “Create, Connect, Respect,” the conference invited U.S. officials in trade, Internet policy, and other areas to better understand the needs of authors’ rights societies.

The opening reception, held on June 3 at the Smithsonian Museum of American History, allowed “everyone a chance to get on the same page,” said Robinb Ahrold, a vice president at the BMI music group.

“Too often, authors just talk [about rights and protections] among themselves,” he said.

Mr. Ahrold praised the event for “opening up” opportunities for such dialogue among key players of the creative industries environment.

Jean-Michel Jarre, a French composer whose pioneering electronic music has sold 80 million albums worldwide, spoke with even more conviction at the event. “Intellectual property is in danger,” he said.

Mr. Jarre compared the field to sustainable development and called an artist’s ability to make a living the “legitimate remuneration” they are due for their work.

“We need a sustainable economy for intellectual property,” he said. Mr. Jarre is currently under nomination for the presidency of CISAC.

CISAC president Hervé di Rosa also provided remarks during the conference’s opening night. Artists have “a right to be heard, and rights to be respected,” he said before ringing in the event with a toast from the podium. A visual artist by training, Mr. di Rosa has held his position at the authors’ rights platform since May 2012.

U.S. officials participating included Stanford McCay, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for IP & Innovation, and White House IP expert Victoria Espinel, and senior leaders from the U.S. Copyright Office.

In Paris, Digital Conference Points to Future of Tech

Paris got a look at the future of digital from June 13 through 23, when the “Futur en Seine” conference gathered stakeholders to bring tomorrow’s innovation one step closer.

Organized by Cap Digital, an innovation cluster in Paris, the fourth-annual series ran nearly 100 events throughout the Paris region.

Businesses presented goods, services, and new ideas that could benefit a broad range of sectors, including healthcare, education, tourism, and urban management.

“It’s a window to digital innovation. It’s also a very cohesive place for networking and business discussions,” said Stéphane Distinguin, Cap Digital’s president, who also founded the innovation consulting agency, faberNovel, that now runs a handful of offices around the world.

One of the conference’s aims was to showcase the huge breadth of current or potential applications for the digital industry. The opening day saw the “Personal Democracy Forum,” in which experts described how dialogue between governments and citizens can be optimized through online communications.

Another event, called “Juice Up,” reported on what was billed as the “freshly squeezed” latest news from networks promoting development at national or international levels.

The world of digital innovation has some good reasons to bank on future business. At 3.7 percent (US$96 billion) of France’s GDP in 2011, the sector is anticipated to expand to 5.5 percent of the same by 2015.

Also, the project announced by the European Union in early 2013 will add over 850,000 new technology jobs by 2015, and France’s position as an innovation leader at the heart of Europe should only grow in coming years.

Cap Digital is helping lead the way toward tomorrow’s digital possibilities. In partnership with some 700 entities, the cluster joins over 600 small- and medium-sized businesses, 50 public-sector bodies, and other groups to drive innovation toward business development everywhere digital capacity is needed.

The Futur en Seine event was organized with support from the lÎle-de-France regional authority, Paris City Hall, and several private technology enterprises.
The French DJ duo Daft Punk have released a hit that may end up the anthem of summer 2013. But did you know their new tunes benefit from deep collaboration with U.S. musicians?

The group’s latest album, released on May 20, Random Access Memories, unites the duo with American artists Pharrell Williams on vocals and Nile Rodgers on guitar. Together, the four produced “Get Lucky,” the album’s lead single, which in April became Daft Punk’s first number-one single in France since “One More Time” and topped the charts in the United Kingdom. For four weeks in the U.K., the song maintained that ranking and was the most-streamed song on Spotify’s website.

Critics are hailing the single as “disco’s renaissance” and a song that is likely to expand the already strong Daft Punk following among young U.S. listeners.

The American-French collaboration underscores both France’s love for electronic dance music and America’s cross-generational musical appetite.

For 20 years, fans have gravitated toward the pair, whose real names are Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo and Thomas Bangalter, with their extravagant performances and signature robot costumes.

Mr. Rodgers, the guitar player, first met Daft Punk in New York at a listening party for their 1997 debut album, Hollywood. Scheduling conflicts repeatedly prevented the two music gurus from formally collaborating until Mr. Rodgers went to the Random Access Memories’ recording sessions in New York. “Get Lucky” was in draft form at the time.

With Mr. Rodgers’ rhythm guitar, the song transformed, supplanting the electric piano and drums, and encouraging Daft Punk to re-record the bass section.

Mr. Williams met the duo in Paris. The two had collaborated once before when Daft Punk co-wrote “Hypnotize U,” a 2010 single by Mr. Williams’s rock project, N.E.R.D. The rapper-producer described the Random Access Memories recording experience as spontaneous. When he later heard the completed song, he said it evoked “peachy color” sunrises and vacationing on an exotic island. The song’s music video bears the same theme and has now been viewed more than 57 million times on YouTube. Additionally, drummer John “JR” Robinson—a studio legend who has recorded with musical icons like Michael Jackson, Barbara Streisand, and Lionel Richie—can be heard on several of the album’s tracks.

“Get Lucky” took 18 months to complete. Random Access Memories’ 12 other songs are equally modeled after the groovy, late-1970s pop and disco.

The duo has inspired more than just a critic’s potential Renaissance. The Gauntlet Gallery in San Francisco hosted an exhibition—L’Univers Visuel du Duo Casqué Daft Punk—from the release date of their album Random Access Memories on May 20 to June 15, highlighting the helmeted duo’s contributions to art since 1993.

Bob Dylan Nominated to Receive Legion of Honor

A nomination to award musical icon Bob Dylan France’s highest distinction, the Legion of Honor, was finalized on June 3.

A popular 1960s musician with international acclaim, Mr. Dylan will join the ranks of some of the world’s most prominent artistic talents. As a symbol of the American counterculture, Mr. Dylan’s music was important in both the civil rights and anti-war movements. His lyrics challenged popular music standards. He has combined aspects of folk, blues, country, gospel, jazz, swing, and rock ‘n’ roll into his repertoire while playing different instruments.

In his fifty years as a musician, Mr. Dylan has sold more than 100 million records worldwide. Mr. Dylan has been featured on the cover of Rolling Stone 16 times, and the magazine has listed him as one of the greatest American artists of all time.

The Legion of Honor, established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, is a civil and military title given to nationals as well as foreigners for their service and contributions to France.
Ambassador’s Spouse Welcomes Schoolkids to Embassy

On June 4, a class of American schoolchildren visited the French embassy for a reception held in honor of the Embassy Adoption Program (EAP). Hosted by Sophie L’Hélias-Delattre, spouse of François Delattre, the Ambassador of France to the United States, the Shepherd Elementary School students, led by their teacher, Chantal Gadie, presented a short theater performance. The students then attended a class on making crêpes and had the chance to get their faces painted.

Since 1974, the EAP, in association with the Washington Performing Arts Society, has selected Washington-area schools for partnerships with embassies in the city’s diplomatic community. Fifth- and sixth-grade teachers request to participate in the program, after which their classes are paired with an embassy representative. With the goal of increasing cultural awareness, students are exposed to the history, culture, and other aspects of the partner country. Programs run for one year and afford students a broadened perspective on societies around the world.

Students are introduced to traditional foods and cultural life that offer a first look at a foreign country. As part of EAP, Ms. Gadie’s class also participated in a “Mini United Nations” in the spring, a project that unites all EAP classes in Washington to consider international affairs.

The gathering with Mrs. L’Hélias-Delattre capped off a year of interactions between the Shepherd Elementary students and the French embassy.