Paris hosts world’s largest agricultural fair

Every year, Paris hosts the Salon de l’Agriculture. FARMERS AND PRODUCERS FROM FRANCE AND AROUND THE WORLD gather to share their products, techniques and innovations.

A message from Ambassador Gérard Araud

Dear Friends,

The Francophonie Cultural Festival in Washington, D.C., has just ended with the Grande Fête de la Francophonie at the Maison Française. The evening brought together people from all over the French-speaking world, from Europe to Africa to the Caribbean, in a wonderful mix of cultures.

Our countries have much to learn from one another. Openness to cultural exchange and new ideas is one of the hallmarks of a thriving, healthy democracy, and an important tool for combating prejudice, or even extremist ideologies.

The United States is France’s partner in direct combat against the threats of Daesh. French Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean-Marc Ayrault visited Washington, D.C., to discuss moving forward against terrorism. He emphasized the impact our combined efforts have already made, and promoted political inclusivity as a way to defeat terrorism. Especially in the wake of the recent attack in London, it is more important than ever to reaffirm our solidarity in the struggle for peace.

Looking toward the future, both France and the United States have been stepping up and promoting gender equality. Coming off Women’s History Month in March, the SheBelieves women’s soccer tournament encouraged girls and women to follow their dreams. In celebrating France’s win, we also celebrate the accomplishments of women worldwide and support the women currently working toward a better future.

Finally, this month we recognize a very important anniversary. On April 6, 1917, at President Wilson’s urging to make the world “safe for democracy,” the United States formally declared war against Germany and its allies. To commemorate the 100th anniversary of this date, we have organized a series of events throughout the country.

WWI redefined the world order and strengthened the long-time French-American partnership that remains as important to this day. On April 6, French authorities and the Patrouille de France, France’s aeronautical jet team, participated in the commemoration of this anniversary in Kansas City, Missouri.

Throughout the year, we will host a range of talks, exhibitions, concerts, and screenings to tell the important stories of the Great War, whose horrors, and the vital international cooperation to come out of it, should never be forgotten.
ON MARCH 8, THE EMBASSY HOSTED a French Series event in honor of International Women’s Day, with back-to-back panel discussions entitled “Women in politics: where do we currently stand?” and “How do women shape the economy?”

The first panel questioned why fewer women than men hold political offices. Panelists asserted that representation of women in politics parallels representation in the general workforce. Data has shown that seeing women in leadership positions, regardless of the field, inspires others to run for political office. Even Hillary Clinton’s defeat in the presidential election has since inspired more women than ever to run for office, rather than discouraging them, as some had feared.

The second panel discussed women’s role in economic growth. The conversation centered on the positive economic impact of increasing the number of women in the workforce, as well as the importance of adopting policies that allow, but also encourage, more women to take on leadership roles.

Ylan Q. Mui, an economic journalist who moderated the panel, affirmed that “there are economic benefits to having more women in upper management positions. Not only is it something that will impact profitability, but it is something customers will notice.” Furthermore, economists have estimated that the GDP would increase by 20 percent if women were paid for work for which they are not currently compensated, such as childcare.

Both panels emphasized the importance of work-life balance policies such as paid leave and childcare assistance to achieve greater representation of women in both the public and private sectors. Not only should these policies exist, but executives must use them, and thus demonstrate a firm’s commitment to policies that can positively impact women at all levels in the workforce.

**French Series: International Women’s Day**

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**France’s CrossCheck project combats fake news**

A TEAM OF French journalism students and media outlets launched CrossCheck in February 2017 to prevent fake news from influencing the French presidential elections. Students from Sciences Po and the Centre de formation des journalistes (Center for Training Journalists) will be responsible for detailing and summarizing false allegations, under the supervision of Agence France-Presse (AFP).

All news published online will be checked and verified for accuracy, whether it come from videos, memes, photographs, comment threads, or news sites.

The project was developed in partnership with Google News Lab and First Draft News. It was introduced at the News Impact Summit in Paris on February 6. Since then, Facebook, along with such French media outlets as AFP, Libération, Le Monde, Décodex, France Médias Monde, and Nice-Matin, have joined the project.

Google explains that CrossCheck partners will “make use of the collective reporting in their own articles, television programs, and social media content.” The ongoing reporting will keep the public aware of the misinformation circulating online and what sources can be trusted.

In addition, Google encourages the public to submit questions and links to disputed sites for CrossCheck to verify. A page on CrossCheck’s website will be dedicated to responding to these requests.

While the CrossCheck project’s primary focus is to limit fake news during the French presidential elections, it hopes to continue fact-checking sources for future elections and major events.
The French national women’s soccer team won first place in the SheBelieves Cup, an international invitational friendly tournament hosted by the United States women’s soccer team. From March 1-7, four teams — the top-ranked United States, second-ranked Germany, third-ranked France, and fifth-ranked England — competed in the highest-profile friendly tournament of the year. The event also showcased the rising popularity of soccer in the United States and women’s sports in all the participating countries.

The French team made it to the final round with wins against England and the United States and a draw against Germany. In the final, France’s victory was considered a significant upset as the American team, which had won the FIFA World Cup in 2015, is widely seen as the top team in the world.

Before their third and final game against the United States, which France ultimately won to seal its victory, we had the chance to talk to two of the French team’s players: Wendie Renard and Amandine Henry.

**Interview**

**Wendie Renard** was born in Martinique and now plays for Olympique Lyon while representing the French national team.

**What is the SheBelieves Cup?**
The SheBelieves Cup is a competition that began last year. It is a competition among the best teams in the world.

**How do you see the French team in relation to the U.S. team?**
They have a lot of assets and they're very strong. We saw their strength at the World Cup. It's clear they deserve their ranking. They did so much to earn it and our team knows that: On a physical level, they are impressive.

However, our team has also been working hard for several years to improve and to make positive changes. We are prepared physically, and are working on our tactics and playing strategies.

On a physical level and a technical level, we're getting there. Above all, we're working on our game plan. We know that, in soccer, the tactics are critical. But most importantly our team has a lot of spirit!

**Do you think your team will reach the level of the American team?**
Definitely. There are examples to learn from their team, but not only from them. The German team is also an example, with its victories at the European level.

In the U.S., players professionalize very early. We need to become more and more professional when it comes to details. Their level of play is the result of focusing on the details, starting at a very young age.

**Amandine Henry** was born in Lille and now plays for the Portland Thorns.

**What are your hopes for this tournament?**
We already have a full stadium, which is great! We know that playing against the U.S. is never easy. In my opinion, they’re the best team in the world. Playing against them allows us to measure ourselves against the best!

**Are you excited to be playing here in the U.S. with the Portland Thorns?**
Yes. I have already had a little preview, because I came here in June 2017 to play with Portland at the end of the championship, when our team reached the playoffs.

I am happy to be playing a complete season and to spend time with my teammates. It's very different in terms of athletic level. It's very intensive. In France, a championship is played by four teams competing for the title, and only the last matches are very intense. In the U.S., whether it is the last match or one in the middle of the season, every game is tough.

**Has the U.S. been welcoming to you?**
I haven't yet taken the time to think about it! I'm eager to play a full season. At this point, my time here in the U.S. has been going very well. The club welcomed me nicely and it's been a great experience. We will see how things continue from here!

**What are your hopes for this tournament?**
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**En chiffres...**

3,0519
the average number of foreign investments per day confirmed in France in 2016.

12
the number of time zones across France (including overseas territories), the most of any country in the world.

134
the number of restaurants in Paris with three Michelin stars.
Every Five Years, the time comes for France to elect (or reelect) a president and members of the National Assembly.

In the last presidential election in 2012, François Hollande faced then-incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy in the second round of voting. Hollande was elected with 51.6 percent of the vote compared to 48.4 percent for Sarkozy. This year, the first round of the presidential elections will be held April 23 and the second round on May 7 will decide the ninth president of the Fifth Republic.

The legislative elections to determine the 15th National Assembly of the Fifth Republic will be held on June 11 and June 18. While the presidential election will attract more international attention, the legislative elections are just as important in determining the future of France’s government.

The election process
French elections are unique for their two-round system. Candidates can only win in the first round if they receive more than 50 percent of the votes. While this is theoretically feasible, it has never happened — Charles de Gaulle came closest with 44 percent of the vote in 1965. Due to France’s multi-party system, major candidates rarely receive more than one third of votes in the first round, which means French voters cast their votes in the first round expecting to be back two weeks later for a run-off between the top two finishers.

French elections are always held on Sunday, the traditional day off in France. Voters must cast their ballots in person and bring a proof of identification, either in the form of a voting card or a photo ID in larger municipalities. French citizens residing abroad may vote at their local embassy or consulate.

The rules regarding the elections are quite stringent. All campaigns must end 48 hours before the election, which notably differs from American elections, where rallies are often held in the wee hours of the morning on election day.

Voting stations open at 8 a.m. and close at 6 p.m., or 8 p.m. in major cities. Publication of any results is strictly prohibited until that time, meaning voters first begin to see results after all the polls have closed. Voters in French territories in the Americas, such as Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guyana, cast their ballots on Saturday; otherwise, they would know the initial results before polls closed.

Parliamentary elections
After the president is elected, French voters will return to the polls on June 11 and 18 for the two rounds of legislative elections for the National Assembly. Because this election occurs so soon after the presidential election, the same party typically wins both the presidency and the majority in the National Assembly.
The role of the president
While France has both a president and a prime minister, it is the president who holds the most power, including the authority to nominate the prime minister. The president also represents France on the international scene. Thus, as the international symbol of leadership and the one who is directly voted in by the people, the president holds the highest office in France.

The president almost always nominates a prime minister from his own party. However, in the event that the majority party in the National Assembly is different from the president’s party, it is typically strategically useful to nominate a prime minister from the majority party.

The situation where the president and prime minister are from different parties is known as cohabitation, and has occurred three times since the creation of the Fifth Republic in 1958. Although cohabitation is necessary, it can create conflicts due to the differing agendas of the parties.

The presidential candidates
To be listed on the ballot, candidates must collect 500 signatures from national or local elected officials from at least 30 departments or overseas territories, with no more than one tenth of these signatories from the same department.

The official signature collection period this year ran from February 25 to March 17 and the final list of candidates was published on March 18, with the order determined by drawing lots.

Candidates also face strict caps on campaign donations. Individuals are restricted to donations under $6,000 and super PACs do not exist in France. Campaigns may not exceed $17 million leading up to the first vote, and those who reach the runoff may not exceed $22.5 million, while attack ads against opponents are forbidden. All TV appearances are regulated and each candidate on the ballot must be afforded equal airtime.

While every election has implications for specific policies, perhaps more international attention than usual is being focused on the French election this year, as neither June’s Brexit vote in the United Kingdom nor Donald Trump’s presidential win in the United States were anticipated by leading political analysts. France’s new president will likely be viewed around the world as either a continuation of this changing momentum or as a more traditional choice.

The presidential candidates
This year’s election has 11 candidates, listed here alphabetically:

Nathalie Arthaud of Worker’s Struggle. Arthaud is 49 years old and has led the Worker’s Struggle party since 2008. She is an elected town council member in Vaulx-en-Velin, where she is responsible for youth affairs.

François Asselineau of the Popular Republican Union (UPR). Asselineau is 59 years old and has led the UPR since founding it in 2007. He previously served as a municipal councillor for the 19th arrondissement of Paris.

Jacques Cheminade of Solidarity and Progress. Cheminade, who is 75 years old, also leads the LaRouche movement in France, which is an international political organization led by American Lyndon LaRouche.

Nicolas Dupont-Aignan of Debout de la France (“Stand up France” in English). Dupont-Aignan is 56 years old and has been leader of the party since 2008. He is the mayor of Yerres and a member of the National Assembly.

François Fillon of the Republicans. Fillon is 62 years old and won the Republican primary in November. He previously served as the prime minister of France from 2007 to 2012.

Benoit Hamon of the Socialist Party. Hamon is 49 years old and has served in government for several years, including as minister of national education in 2014, and previously as Junior Minister for the Social Economy.

Jean Lassalle of “Resistons!” (“We resist” in English). Lassalle, who is 61 years old, is a member of the National Assembly representing the Pyrénées-Atlantic Region. He founded the Resistons! movement in 2016.

Marine Le Pen of the National Front. Le Pen is 48 years old and has served as the leader of the National Front party since 2011. She is also a member of the European Parliament.

Emmanuel Macron of “En Marche!” (“Forward!” in English), a new party he founded in 2016. Macron is 39 years old and served as Minister of the Economy, Industry, and Digital Affairs from 2014 until 2016.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon of Unsubmissive France, a party that he founded in 2016. Mélenchon is 65 years old and has served in several government roles since 1976. He was also a candidate in the 2012 elections.

Philippe Poutou of the New Anticapitalist Party. Poutou is 50 years old. The New Anticapitalist Party was founded in 2008. He is a trade unionist and worker in a car factory in the region of Aquitaine.
THE CITY OF PARIS HAS PASSED a new law requiring registered drivers to display emission stickers that identify the car’s pollution level on a scale of one to five. The new law, in effect since March 31, 2017, is a response to the elevated pollution levels that shrouded the city in smog for days last December.

The least polluting vehicles will be required to purchase a green or level one sticker, while the most polluting vehicles must purchase a dark-blue level five sticker. These stickers will make it easier for drivers and authorities to identify which cars to keep off the roads when pollution levels spike.

The stickers are distributed by the Crit’Air anti-pollution agency and can be purchased on its website for €4.18 each. Any driver registered in Paris without an emissions sticker on their vehicle will be fined between €68 and €135.

Crit’Air’s website allows users to input information about their vehicle’s age, its emissions cleanliness, and its energy efficiency to determine what level sticker to purchase. Electric or hydrogen-powered vehicles are the cleanest with a green or level one rating, whereas diesel vehicles are the dirtiest with a level five rating.

Certain vehicles have already been banned from driving in the city between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. including:

- Vehicles manufactured in 1996 or earlier
- Motorbikes & scooters from before June 2000
- Trucks and buses from before 2001
- All vehicles with a level 5 sticker

Berlin has been successfully enforcing emissions stickers in Germany since 2008. And according to the Paris City Council, about 200 European towns and cities have already initiated similar anti-pollution measures, including Lyon and Grenoble.

By 2020, the practice could spread to 22 other towns and cities in France, such as Bordeaux, Le Havre, and Toulouse.

THE 54TH PARIS INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE SHOW brought together breeders, local farmers, research institutes, governmental agencies, agricultural businesses, and the general public under the theme “Farming: a passion, a set of ambitions.” The show was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Agrifoods, and Forestry and the National Center for Agricultural Shows and Trade Fairs.

This year’s show featured over 1,000 exhibitors from 21 countries. The exhibitors were divided into four sectors: livestock and breeding, crops and plants, culinary products, and agricultural services and professions. Each sector offered its own workshops, networking events, and lectures, as well as other specialized exhibitions, including a dairy products tasting bar.

Farmers, businesses, and young professionals could also compete in the General Agricultural Competition, which highlighted the excellence of French genetics research. The General Agricultural Competition for Animals was one of the show’s biggest attractions, with participating breeders entering about 2,600 animals from seven different species. Separate competitions were held for the best wines, food products, and restaurants.

To encourage the transmission and growth of agricultural knowledge, special competitions for young people were held in the fields of animal-judging, wine-making, agricultural education, equestrianism, and farming. In total, the Paris International Agricultural Show gave out over 5,000 awards.

With over half its territory composed of agricultural areas, and the largest agricultural sector in the European Union, France is committed to using the new ideas introduced at the show to look to the future of farming.
Frédéric Bazille at the National Gallery of Art

THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART in Washington, D.C., will hold the first major American exhibition on French impressionist Frédéric Bazille in almost 25 years.

The National Gallery is the exhibition’s last stop. The 75 works by Bazille and his contemporaries—including painters like Claude Monet and Auguste Renoir—have already been featured at the Musée Fabre in Montpellier and the Musée d’Orsay in Paris.

While the National Gallery features the largest collection of Bazille’s works outside France, his role in the impressionist movement is too often ignored. Bazille is little known to the public, but beloved by critics, according to Kimberly Jones, curator of Nineteenth-Century French Paintings.

During his artistic career, which was cut short by his tragic death in the Franco-Prussian War, Bazille both contributed to the birth of impressionism and became a central figure in the movement.

Born in 1841 in Montpellier, Bazille was inspired at an early age by the works of French romantic artist Eugène Delacroix, notably “Woman of Algiers” and “Daniel in the Lions’ Den.” He enrolled at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris under the tutelage of the Swiss artist Charles Gleyre, studying medicine at the same time to appease his parents. After failing his medical examinations, his parents let him study art full-time.

Bazille befriended many prominent French artists, including Auguste Renoir, Claude Monet, Edouard Manet, Camille Pissarro, Paul Cézanne, and Edgar Degas. Backed by his family’s wealth, Bazille was a major financial supporter of these artists as well, and often lent out his studio.

Bazille’s own work exemplifies one of the major challenges of early impressionism: combining traditional figure painting with an outdoor setting. In his most famous painting, “Family Reunion” (1867), Bazille does just that, depicting his family at their country estate in Méric while showing off his exceptional eye for color.

This work and others will be on display at the National Gallery from April 9 to July 9.

100th anniversary of the U.S. entry into WWI

From an exhibition on propaganda at the Museum of the City of New York, to a rare cine-concert screening of Wings, the French Embassy is remembering the United States entry into World War I through a series of events in New York and continuing across the country throughout 2017.

With support from the French Mission du centenaire de la Premiere Guerre mondiale, in charge of the World War One Centenary in France, and endorsed by the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, the nationwide commemoration program revolves around the year 1917, a year that saw the start of a new worldwide geopolitical arrangement and an unprecedented aesthetic revolution.

Launch of the Albertine Prize: Vote Now!

Albertine, the French bookshop within the Cultural Services of the French Embassy has just launched the first Albertine Prize, a reader’s choice award for best French fiction in English translation.

Reflecting the rich diversity of modern French fiction, the ten nominated authors hail from a variety of Francoophone nations.

The titles range from “Ladivine,” Marie NDiaye’s powerful account of four generations of women haunted by their country of origin, to “Eve Out of Her Ruins,” Ananda Devi’s poetic snapshot of life on the increasingly violent island of Mauritius, to “Infidels,” Abdellah Taïa’s tale of a Moroccan boy’s path to extremism.

All of the books are available at Albertine as well as at select libraries and bookshops throughout the US. Vote for the books you love before April 30! Discover the ten contemporary French novels shortlisted for the prize at: albertine.com/albertine-prize.
Nice or “Nice la Belle” as it is often called, is the capital of the Alpes-Maritimes department on the Côte D’Azur in France, also known as the French Riviera, the Mediterranean coastline of the Southeast corner of France. Clear blue skies, a mild climate, and abundant sunshine make it a great destination.

Sites to see include Place Masséna (the city’s hub), the Monastery Gardens of Cimiez, Hotel Negresco, and Vieux Nice, a neighborhood with many small restaurants and shops hidden within its narrow, winding streets. Visitors can enjoy Niçois dishes such as pissaladière, salade niçoise, socca, and pan bagnat. Pizza and pasta are also common on the menu, as Nice used to belong to Piedmont-Sardinia, present-day Italy, until 1860 when it was annexed to France.

For a striking view of the sea, visitors can walk up La Colline du Château, where remnants of the city’s fortress still exist. La Colline overlooks the Promenade des Anglais, which was named after the English aristocratic families who walked along its long, curved path during their winter visits in the second half of the 18th century.

Throughout the 19th and 20th century, many famous people found inspiration here including French artist Jean Cocteau, Russian playwright Anton Chekhov, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, and Queen Victoria of England. French artists Marc Chagall, Henri Matisse, and others came to paint.

Today, the city receives more than four million visitors each year, making it the number one tourist destination in France after Paris.