Change is coming: News From France is going digital

In this issue...

2 Current Events
New format! Chateaubriand fellowship

3 Interview
BuzzFeed France editor

4 In Depth
French-U.S. economic ties

6 Science & Technology
FACT-O conference, French labor laws

7 Culture & Society
Albertine Festival, French cookbooks

8 Destination of the Month
Dijon

A message from
Ambassador Gérard Araud

Dear Friends,

The past few months have been an important period of work with our global partners, when we have been able to move forward major projects of international diplomacy.

In October, Ministers Jean-Yves le Drian and Florence Parly’s visits to the U.S. reinforced cooperation on matters of defense and counter-terrorism, among others.

We celebrated together the liberation of Raqqa, an example of the success of our Global Coalition Against Daesh, in which France and the U.S. are leaders. During France’s UN Security Council Presidency, Minister Le Drian presided over efforts to bolster international support to the Group of 5 (G5) Sahel forces from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger as they combat terrorism in the region.

Minister Parly reiterated our appreciation of U.S. support during her presentation of France’s defense priorities. The U.S. pledge of up to $60 million to this important security initiative attests to the fruitful exchanges that have occurred between our Ministers and our U.S. partners.

The environment has also been a major focus for France. After participating in the COP23 to draw up specific procedures on the rules for the implementation of the Paris agreement, Paris has kept the momentum going by hosting the “One Planet Summit” to further the dialogue on climate change, focusing especially on how public and private finance can innovate to support and accelerate our common efforts.

The fall has also seen some important French-U.S. collaborations on one of today’s most salient issues in both our countries and across the world: gender equality. In this regard, Sciences Po Paris joined Wellesley College and the Consulate General of France in Boston to organize the International Symposium on Education and Gender Equality in late October. There, the public engaged with experts and activists to exchange good practices and offer solutions across disciplines.

In early November the dialogue continued with the Festival Albertine in New York. The event, curated by feminists and activists Gloria Steinem and Robin Morgan, celebrated the exchange of ideas between French and American artists on the theme “Feminism Without Borders.” We will continue to host and support this sort of deep and thoughtful exchange between French and American thinkers.
EACH YEAR, A SELECT NUMBER of students from American universities are awarded the competitive Chateaubriand Fellowship grant from the Embassy of France in the United States. Chateaubriand fellows are selected through a merit-based process which involves expert evaluators from the United States and from France. After being chosen, fellows conduct research in France for a period ranging from 4 to 9 months.

The program is subdivided into STEM and HSS Fellowships.

The Fellowship in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Biology-Health (STEM) is determined by the Office for Science & Technology (OST). Between 40-50 Ph.D. students are selected for the STEM program, with the goal of initiating or reinforcing collaborations, partnerships, and joint projects between French and American researchers.

The Fellowship in Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) is determined by the Embassy’s Cultural Services and accepts between 15-20 Ph.D. students. HSS Chateaubriand grantees may conduct research in any humanities topic, with history being the most popular. The purpose of this program is to foster bilateral cooperation and to develop and strengthen bridges between the United States and France.

Founded in 1981, the Chateaubriand Fellowship has allowed over 750 American students to conduct research throughout France. While the grant was initially offered to both undergraduates and doctoral students, since 2010 the grant is only available for Ph.D. students. In 2017, 50 students were selected for the STEM Fellowship and 19 were selected for the HSS Fellowship.

More information about the Chateaubriand Fellowship, including the list of recently named fellows and testimonials from program alumni, is available at https://www.chateaubriand-fellowship.org. Students interested in the fellowship can apply for the 2018-2019 academic year until January 16, 2018.

This year, in support of the Make Our Planet Great Again initiative launched by President Emmanuel Macron, additional fellowships will be offered for projects related to climate change and environmental research.

---

Sign up for our new e-newsletter!

After many years of print publication, we have made the decision to move the News From France to a new, digital-only format. Our new online version will allow us to bring more flexibility to our Newsletter.

A number of you already read the News From France online. For our online readers--the new News From France will come to you in an easier to read, web-adapted format. The new format will also allow us to give you more content. We will curate the best stories from our consulates, ministries and departments to share a wider variety of perspectives, the latest event information.

For all of you who receive the print version, we hope you will stay with us and subscribe to the new version of the News From France. Go online to FranceintheUS.org and select News From France in the subscription sidebar to sign up for our new e-version. Or send us the information below to Service de Presse, Ambassade de France, 4101 Reservoir Road, Washington, D.C. 20037.

Thank you for your readership and we look forward to sharing our new format in the New Year!

Yes, I’d like to sign up for News From France Online! Register at Franceintheus.org or send back your information by mail:

Name:

Email address:

Comments:
Interview: Buzzfeed France’s Cécile Dehesdin

Cécile Dehesdin became the first Editor-in-Chief of Buzzfeed France when the publication opened an office in Paris in 2015. Buzzfeed is an American online media company with offices in 11 different countries. Although Buzzfeed operates as a single company, it curates content by country based on local events, cultural preferences and national language. In our interview, Cécile Dehesdin discusses different French and American approaches to online content and Buzzfeed’s role in facilitating intercultural exchange.

What are your main goals?
Our main goals are to connect with our readers and to help our readers connect with each other. We’re an information and entertainment website, so we produce a lot of content that aims to engage with our readers and have them connect with their loved ones through shared experiences.

What is the most popular content for French readers?
French readers like news a lot. The articles or videos that have gone really well for us are those where we have added value, such as scoops and investigations that conducted throughout the year. This year was very political in France, so for example we did a month long investigation on the the Front National candidates where we basically investigated their online presence, and that was one of our big hits for the political season.

In terms of entertainment, we have a lot of success with our regional content. French regional identities are pretty strong and we have a lot of fun with them with articles and quizzes. We also do a lot of content on all the variations of French identity. For example, what it’s like to be French and fast during Ramadan, what it’s like to a French lesbian or a French black man. Those also resonate with people.

Is the content preferred by French readers similar to that favored by American readers?
I think it depends. We produce a lot of original content from France but we also have a great translator and editor on our team who translates the best of Buzzfeed around the world for French readers and viewers. Translations can have as much success as domestic content if they hit on a global feeling, for example, women related content.

More generally, I think the American audience likes “cute” more than French readers. This is very cliché but also very true! The French are more cynical, even in the content that we like to read and share, we will have more shares of funny sarcastic posts than of earnest ones.

How does Buzzfeed France choose which content to translate from English to French?
A lot of it is done by our great editor who looks at everything that is being published. She also uses proprietary Buzzfeed technology that helps her look for topics or themes that regularly do well for us. We use the fact that we are a global network as one of our digital advantages, if we have data that tells us this post did well in Germany, and in the U.S. and in Brazil, we think it will probably do well in France.

How do publications like Buzzfeed promote intercultural exchange?
That’s a good question. I think that Buzzfeed’s values are very much geared towards openness, cultural exchanges, loving your culture and the cultures of other. So in everything that we do, there is a sort of playfulness. We use the fact that we are all over the world to have fun with each other’s cultures. For example, we made a video where a French guy tries to say the hardest German words. We are publishing it in France and they are publishing it in Germany. And two weeks ago we did the opposite, we published the German guy trying to say French words. It’s hilarious and people tag each other and connect about their next vacation or memories about German and French class. By connecting those two languages, the idea is also to make those two cultures closer.

We also have Tasty Miam food network. We produce French recipes for our fans but we also end up adapting recipes from other places, like Japan. Seeing the French audience react to recipes like that and get excited about food that isn’t necessarily part of their everyday lives is something that can seem small but is in fact significant, because those online interactions with foreign cultures become part of your daily life.

What are some of the benefits of working in the online content and tech sector in France?
I haven’t necessarily thought of it that way, that’s something for me to ponder. I think where our real advantage is is that we are a French office that’s part of a global company with deep tech roots in the U.S. That allows us to get the advantages of the technical network in New York and access tools that we use everyday to increase our efficiency. But we can also use the fact that Buzzfeed has relationships with Facebook and Google in the U.S. to improve our relationships with those companies in France.

In 2016, 785,000 babies were born in France. Fertility rates were 1.93 births per woman. The Energy Star Score (out of 100). The Energy Star rating is part of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency voluntary program measuring Energy Efficiency. The dollar value of trade between France and the US is $110 billion.
THE FRENCH-AMERICAN ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP is mighty, and the 2017 France-U.S. economic report, launched this fall by the Department of Treasury and Economic Affairs, puts figures to the important levels of trade between France and the United States.

The report brings together key data on French-American trade and the footprint of French companies in each American state. “The economic partnership between France and the United States is a key pillar of the unbreakable friendship between our nations,” Ambassador Gérard Araud remarked at the report’s launch. “Our report shows that the French-U.S. economic relationship is both deep, balanced and mutually beneficial, with a total of $110 Bn annual trade and over one million jobs across the Atlantic”, said Renaud Lassus, Minister Counselor for Economic Affairs at the French Embassy. “French companies are the 5th largest foreign employers in America.” Trade has long been a part of the French-American relationship, and is rooted in the historic relationship between the two countries.

Early economic ties
French-American economic ties date back to before the founding of the United States. The original thirteen colonies were part of the British mercantile economy which favored trade with Britain. Despite this, American businesses—including fur trapping, ship-building, fishing, and farming—often took part in trading with both France and French colonies in the New World. After the passing of the Navigation Acts in the mid 17th century, Americans were officially prohibited from trading with colonial powers other than Great Britain. The economic frustration of these Acts contributed to the American Declaration of Independence.

Thereafter, American trade with France expanded greatly and the U.S. was provided with 1.3 billion livres (13 billion dollars in today’s money) from the French government in support of the American War of Independence. After Napoleon became the French Emperor, the U.S. made the Louisiana Purchase for 68 million francs (around $250 million today). The treaty was a major milestone in expanding U.S. territory across the North American continent.

Twentieth century
Industrialization of both countries expanded global trade. After WWI, American presence in Europe reached a higher level than ever before. American troops were stationed in France, and U.S. businesses began selling in France. During and after the Great War, there was a massive influx of American food, money and raw materials into France.

After WWII, the United States’ Marshall Plan helped revive the French economy. France was provided with $2.3 billion with no repayment required, and total American grants and credits from 1946-53 were $4.9 billion. In return, France reduced trade barriers. The overall impact was greater economic integration. As new technologies and globalization became widespread in the post-war era, French-American economic ties have continued to grow.
The Congressional French Caucus hosted the launch of the report with several French companies. The report, presented to the U.S. Congress before a panel of Representatives and Senators from across the country, reveals the contemporary economic situation. Among the Congressmen present were John Boozman from Arkansas, Joe Wilson from South Carolina and Ro Khanna from California.

Overall, French companies generate over 590,000 jobs in the U.S., and France is the second largest source of foreign employment in 5 states: Hawaii, Mississippi, New York, South Carolina and Utah. Demonstrative of the significance of the mutually beneficial economic relationship is the fact that the United States is the top destination for French investment, and the United States is the largest foreign investor in France.

According to Eurostat data, the United States has a surplus for certain goods such as machines and electrical and electronic equipment ($2.5 billion), aeronautics ($1.7 billion) and energy ($1.6 billion), whereas France has a surplus in wine and liquors ($3.2 billion), pharmaceuticals ($1.1 billion) and cosmetics ($1.1 billion). Of note is the fact that Texas is the main exporter of goods to France, largely as a result of its energy industry, and California is the first importer of goods from France.

Several French companies participated in the launch, including Air Liquide, Airbus, Michelin, Total, Alstom, Sanofi, Sodexo and Safran representing some of the 590,000 jobs that French firms generate in the United States.

The U.S. and France also have a close technological partnership, which is intertwined with the economic relationship. A full 12% of foreign research and development (R&D) in the U.S. comes from France. This means that France is the world’s second source of manufacturing R&D in the U.S.

Read the report and see maps of French-U.S. economic ties at the following website:
ON THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN TRAIL, one of Emmanuel Macron’s promises to France and the international community was to reform labor laws. Now, after months of consultation, President Macron’s reforms are taking shape, with many set to be implemented in 2018.

The aims of the reforms are multifaceted, focusing on developing pragmatic social dialogue and a more flexible and job-friendly labor market. Reforms to France’s social dialogue system are central to these initiatives. The social dialogue system directs how work issues and policies are negotiated between and within companies. The reforms propose a streamlined system where staff representatives are part of a single works council, allowing for better trained and informed representatives, and more pragmatic negotiations. New guarantees to trade unions and staff are also included in the reforms.

Additionally, businesses will now be able to negotiate directly with employees. Particular attention was paid to small to medium-size enterprises (SMEs) in drafting these reforms. For example, 96% of SMEs—or, businesses with fewer than 50 employees—do not currently have trade representatives. Under this new law, SME’s without their own trade union delegate will be able to send a staff representative to sign a collective agreement.

These reforms are products of hundreds of hours of negotiations led by President Macron, Prime Minister Édouard Philippe, and Labor Minister Muriel Pénicaud, between the French government and labor unions. The substantial economic reforms underway in France are, designed to reduce unemployment and invigorate the French economy.

THE FRENCH AMERICAN CLIMATE Talks – Ocean, or FACT-O conference took place this year at the University of British Columbia (UBC) on November 17, 2017. The conference thus was held on the last day of the COP23 and one month ahead of the “One Planet Summit” in Paris.

Over 110 attended the conference, which focused on deep ocean and biodiversity and the impact of climate change on these little-known ecosystems. It received the financial support of the Institut Français, the logistical and organizational support of the Alliance Française in Vancouver and benefitted from its partnership with the University of British Columbia’s Beatty Biodiversity Museum, where the conference events took place.

The event was divided into three phases.

First, 19 posters were displayed at the Beatty Biodiversity Museum in an exhibit entitled “Biodiversity is life, Biodiversity is our life.” The posters emphasized the crucial role played by biodiversity in our living environment and the alarming loss of species that occurs every day.

Next was a youth seminar to enlighten children on the need to protect our oceans. The conference was moderated by Hélène Creusot from the Alliance Française, and focused on pollution, waste, rising temperatures and overfishing. Over the course of an hour, children were able to ask questions of the specialists.

Finally, the “FACT-O” conference took place. After a welcoming video from Santa Ono, President of UBC, and welcoming remarks by Philippe Sutter, Consul General of France in Vancouver, journalist and moderator Geoff Dembicki went onstage with the following panelists:

- Dr. William Cheung, Professor at the Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries, UBC
- Dr. Kim Juniper, Science Director of “Ocean Networks Canada”
- Laura Lallier, Lawyer at eCoast
- Dr. Daniel Pauly, Professor at UBC, founder of “Sea Around Us”
- Loreley Picourt, Head of Initiatives at the “Ocean & Climate Initiatives Alliance”

Speakers discussed the impact of climate change on the oceans and biodiversity, then answered audience questions. The audience and the panel addressed the issues of a “blue” economy, artisanal fisheries and aquacultures. They also talked about invading species and their impact on local ecosystems, and brought up local examples such as the Site C dam.

The conference was closed by Dr. Rick Taylor, director of the Beatty Biodiversity Museum, who summed up the discussion and invited the audience to join a reception.

New French labor reforms
French and American feminist thinkers in dialogue at Albertine Books

FROM NOVEMBER 1 TO 5, Gloria Steinem, Christiane Taubira, Roxane Gay, and others explored feminism between France and the U.S. at Albertine Books.

Curated by Gloria Steinem and Robin Morgan, the fourth annual Festival Albertine took place at the bookstore within the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in New York and via live stream.

This year’s festival celebrated the exchange of ideas between French and American artists, writers and thinkers based around the theme “Feminism Without Borders.” The festival’s timing was ideal, in light of international discussions in response to the Weinstein scandal and to France’s Minister of State for Gender Equality Marlène Schiappa’s proposal of a bill to fine men for catcalling and street harassment. French and American feminists were able to come together to focus on how our societies respond to sexual harassment.

Historically, both France and the U.S. have produced some of the world’s most influential feminist leaders, and yet neither country has elected a female head-of-state. The festival offered a unique opportunity to unite thinkers from both countries in conversations around questions feminism in the contemporary moment.

The festival commenced with “From the Voting Booth to Your Living Room,” a conversation between Gloria Steinem and former French Minister of Justice Christiane Taubira focused on the role of feminism in the political realm and the power of political representation. Taubira reflected on her involvement in French politics and gender discrimination in the political sphere.

“The mother of the battles is the battle for equality between women and men...If we succeed to impose that women and men are equal, it would invalidate all pretexts used to practice and justify discrimination based on gender, skin color, religion, gender or gender expression, and so forth,” said Taubira.

Both Steinem and Taubira emphasized the importance of intersectionality, how sexism, racism, and other forms of discrimination are intertwined.

The rest of the festival provided space to discuss differing perspectives on several issues. Panelists, including Roxane Gay, Guerrilla Girls, Cecile Richards, Houda Benyamina, Robin Coste Lewis, Daisy Khan, Mary Kathryn Nagle, Heidi Steltzer, and Elaine Welteroth, explored a variety of topics such as the influence of religion on women’s lives, the politics of language, work-life balance and visibility and representation in the new media landscape and artistic world. From conversations with Steinem to spoken word poetry, events highlighted the need for unity amongst feminists from different cultures.

For those not able to attend, all events were live streamed at Albertine.com, where they are still available to view.

Impress your family with new French recipes from Albertine!

With winter comes the holidays, and school breaks meaning quality time spent with family, sharing food. In the spirit of the holiday, the booksellers at Albertine have selected three cookbooks to spice up this holiday season. Maison Kayser’s French Pastry Workshop by Eric Kayser provides step-by-step instructions for creating your own French pastry masterpieces. Mimi, Fifi & Glouglou by Michel Tolmer takes readers through a hilarious and informative journey in wine dégustation. Bouillons by William Ledeuil is a wonderful way to warm up on a chilly day with over 60 broth-based recipes and expert secrets. Bon appétit!

More information at Albertine.com
Dijon

Dijon is nestled in the heart of Burgundy wine country, the capital city of the powerful and wealthy Dukes of Burgundy from the 11th to the 15th centuries. Fortunately for the city, and for today’s tourists, the Dukes of Burgundy were great patrons of the arts. Architectural treasures have been preserved from the Capetian, Gothic, and Renaissance periods!

Visitors will note the unique roofs of many of the city’s buildings: the toits bourguignons (Burgundian polychrome roofs) display intricate geometric patterns made from glazed green, yellow, and black terracotta tiles. The remarkably well-preserved Ducal Palace houses the city’s main (and free) attraction: the Musée des Beaux-Arts. The museum’s famous collection of medieval art is permanent, while works from other periods are displayed in temporary exhibitions.

Every autumn, Dijon hosts an International and Gastronomic Fair with over 600 exhibitors and 200,000 visitors! One of the most important fairs in the country, the event pays homage to fine local products. Each year, a particular country is chosen as a guest of honor to present its gastronomy, craftsmanship, culinary specialties, and folklore.

Of course, it would be impossible to talk about gastronomy in Dijon without mentioning its most famous invention: Dijon mustard. In 1856, Jean Naigeon of Dijon invented the world renowned condiment by substituting verjuice, the acidic juice of unripe grapes, for vinegar in the traditional mustard recipe.