

## Villepin Addresses French Ambassadors:

*“Our era is torn between proliferating threats and an historic opportunity: the chance for the international community to come together at last.”*

**I**N AN OPENING SPEECH on August 28 for France’s eleventh Ambassadors’ Conference, Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin addressed the French diplomatic corps in Paris. Following are excerpts of his remarks.

(...) Before starting, I propose that we observe a minute’s silence, in tribute to Sergio Vieira de Mello, to his courage, to his dedication to the service of peace, and to all those who died in the tragic bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. Let us also remember our two soldiers who were struck down a few days ago in Côte d’Ivoire.



**Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin opens the 11th conference of France’s Ambassadors**

It is time to move resolutely towards sovereignty for Iraq. It is not enough to deploy more troops, more technical and financial resources. There must now be a real change of approach. There must be an end to the ambiguity, a transfer of responsibilities with the Iraqis allowed

to assume their full and rightful role as soon as possible. It is essential to put in place, on the basis of the interim government council, a genuine provisional government whose legitimacy will be strengthened by the United Nations and enjoy the support of the countries of the region; steps must also be taken to organize the election of a constituent assembly by the end of the year. There must be a Security Council resolution to establish this new framework, with the support of the whole international community, as a precondition for the restoration of security and an effective reconstruction effort. (...)

### RESPONSE TO THREATS

Because in recent years it has taken on a strategic dimension, the terrorist threat calls for a global response. We have to tackle it head-on, with all the resources at our disposal: military, police, judicial, financial and intelligence. Then we have to fight the scourges on which terrorism batters, from regional crises to chronic poverty. For terrorism breeds on the running sores of the world. It feeds on feelings of injustice, humiliation and incomprehension. (...)

Islamic fundamentalism calls for particular vigilance. Playing on people’s fears, on their despair, their frustrations, sowing violence, radical Islamism is affecting the Middle East as it does South and East Asia, and some parts of Africa as well as the major cities of Europe. Combining rejection of the West, resentment at political or economic injustices, a strictly literal approach to religious texts and the exaltation of sacrifice, it is creating a harmful disturbance in minds which are already troubled, discontented, anguished.

Its first victim is the Muslim world. (...) It is up to all Muslims to speak out against this hatred proffered in their name. It is up to Europeans, who are bound to the Arab-Muslim world by ties of geography, history and culture, to show the way of dialogue and understanding.

### IRAQ CRISIS

(...) At the heart of a region torn by strategic and cultural divisions, the efforts of the coalition are coming up against the proliferation of terrorist acts, while the Iraqi people despair of taking control of their own destiny. (...)

### MIDDLE EAST

The same requirements apply in the Middle East, and with the same degree of urgency. (...) As in Iraq, only an acceleration of the timetable, in order to outstrip the extremists, and the search for a real solution to the fundamental problems will enable progress. If we want the peace process to succeed, let us all join together, members of the Quartet, parties to the conflict and countries of the region, to add to the momentum created by the adoption of the road-map. To that end, a conference can make the commitment to peace irreversible, and give practical consideration to the idea of an international security presence on the ground. Support also needs to be given to the organization of Palestinian elections as soon as the conditions are right.

(...) France stands ready to contribute to this, since it is our conviction that peace in the region will be lasting only if it is global in nature. France has already asked for groups openly engaging in terrorist activities to be put on the European Union’s list. In this respect, we shall make no allowances, and shall remain particularly vigilant.

### NEW GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION / MULTIPOLAR WORLD

(...) In the space of fifteen years, we have witnessed a veritable strategic turnaround. Yesterday, bloc-to-bloc confrontation was expressed indirectly, in the form of peripheral conflicts. Today, the real threat is indeed that of an overt conflict between the “centre” and the “periphery”. Today, the imperative is not to transform a

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**FRANCE FOILS IVORY COAST REBELS**

French authorities foiled a plan to destabilize the Ivory Coast peace process by arresting, on August 23, ten suspected rebels believed to be preparing an attack, including the rebellion's military leader, Ibrahim Coulibaly. Mercenaries, acting on behalf of rebels, have been trying to enter the Ivory Coast to challenge the peace. A Paris-brokered January peace plan, enforced in part by a 4,000-strong French contingent, has put an end to a four-month civil war but remains vulnerable. Two French soldiers recently lost their lives in a clash with rebels.

**FRENCH TRADE MINISTER VISITS CHINA**

France is pushing trade with China to the top of its agenda. Following Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin's trip in April (which he did not cancel despite the SARS outbreak), François Loos, the minister delegate for foreign trade, traveled to Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong in July, to further promote French interests. A 10-billion euro, 1,500-km high-speed railway is being planned between Beijing and Shanghai, and the French TGV company Alstom is well placed to win the project.

**"HEATWAVE" PLAN IN DEVELOPMENT**

On August 21, the government asked Electricité de France (EDF) to rapidly develop an action plan that would better protect the country's power supplies against heat waves similar to the one that befell France this summer. Minister Delegate for Industry Nicole Fontaine said her priority this year will be to reinforce already existing emergency measures.

**CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL APPROVES REFORM**

The Constitutional Council, the Supreme Court's French counterpart, approved the government's pension reform law on August 14, three weeks after it was voted by parliament. Longer life expectancies and slowing population growth made reform necessary to preserve France's "pay-as-you-go" system, in which intergenerational solidarity plays a key role. The success of this major law, called "the most important reform since 1945" by François Fillon, the minister of social affairs, should provide an impetus for further reforms.

**De Villepin (continued from page 1)**

world threatened by marginalization into a new bloc, united around opposition to the West. (...)

Our country embodies an original and determined vision, founded on three objectives: the primacy of the political; the demand for action guided by the principles of solidarity, justice and respect for the Other; the necessity, finally, of an international order based on collective responsibility.

First, the primacy of the political. We do not want a world held hostage to market values or purely security considerations. (...) Next, the principle of action. (...) France cannot go along with the status quo if that means injustice, oppression, or the law of the jungle. Balance, order and stability are worth nothing unless they serve the imperative of democracy (...). France's efforts are above all based on principles and values (...). Our third objective is to broaden the efforts of the international community in order to construct a world order based on collective responsibility. (...)

Today, a new and positive dynamic is at work: the creation of regional groupings. The European Union is undoubtedly the best example of this to date. But in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America, things are developing in the same direction. (...)

These great regional groupings are not called upon to balance each other in some sort of armed peace, as in the nineteenth century, but to work together. I want to state clearly that France's vision of a multipolar world in no way seeks to organize rivalry or competition, but rather aims at responsibility, stability and initiative. (...)

**UNITED NATIONS REFORM**

We must institute a veritable world democracy commensurate with the challenges and our urgent need for action. To achieve this, we must reform the United Nations so as to equip it with the modes of operation, the tools and the leverage it will need in tackling the world's problems.

The first thing we need is a fully legitimate decision-making body. That will probably mean enlarging the Security Council, for both permanent and non-permanent members, to make it more representative. We shall also need to think how the Security Council can best exercise its responsibilities and ensure respect for the values enshrined in the Charter. (...)

Next, the United Nations needs to be equipped with the capacity to act rapidly and effectively in all the key areas. France is therefore calling for the start of a high-level reflection on ways and means of more effectively guaranteeing the affirmation of and respect for human rights in the world. France also wants to see the creation of a Disarmament Corps, comprised of permanent inspectors, to meet the new needs thrown up by the present risks of proliferation, from Iran to North Korea. This body could be available to the United Nations Secretary-General, under the authority of the Security Council.

It is imperative that we reduce our reaction time. For that purpose, we could make more frequent use of the concept of lead nation for multinational operations, whether military or civilian, or more often call upon the forces of regional organizations, as has just been done in Liberia. (...)

**NATO Takes Over Peacekeeping Force in Afghanistan**

**S**TEPPING OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS of Europe for the first time in its 54-year history, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) took command of the U.N.-sanctioned international force called the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) on August 11. The 5,000-member, 31-nation ISAF has been keeping the peace in Afghanistan since the U.S.-led coalition toppled the Taliban in December 2001.

About 500 French troops are currently stationed in Afghanistan under the aegis of the ISAF. They are what remains of a much larger French force that participated in military operations alongside its American allies. A German military officer, Lt. Gen. Goetz Gliemerth, is heading the NATO contingent.

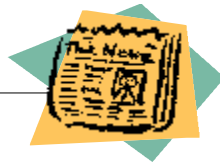
Until now, command of the peacekeeping force rotated among its member nations every six months. Now, NATO will provide a permanent force commander and strategic coordination, command and control capabilities, thus delivering a more sustainable security presence in Kabul.

However, neither ISAF's name or mission will change. The operation will continue under the U.N.'s mandate and the ISAF's banner, and the alliance will continue to welcome non-NATO contributors.

NATO's new role in Afghanistan is a positive development for the Afghans, as well as for the transatlantic alliance. It reflects NATO's ongoing transformation to take on missions in new areas and to adopt novel strategies in the global war on terror.



**Lt. General Norbert Van Heyst (center left), former Commander of ISAF, shakes hands with Lt. General Götz F.E. Gliemerth, newly appointed Commander (centre right). (Courtesy: ISAF)**



# Tombs of U.S. Soldiers Honored in France

*French citizens show gratitude to their American liberators*

**T**HIS YEAR'S FOURTH OF JULY gave the French people another opportunity to show their gratitude to the American soldiers who fought and died in Normandy during World War II (WWII). A large group of French citizens, calling themselves "America's friends," decided to gather and to commemorate the 4th of July in their own special way. Unlike the joyful celebrations occurring everywhere in the United States, theirs was a low-key and subdued gathering.

In the quiet surroundings of the American cemeteries of Colleville, located in Normandy, and Suresnes, near Paris, they visited all the American graves and adorned each one of them with a single red rose. A simple gesture to mourn the dead soldiers and make known the fact that "the French people will never forget" as the group's members proclaimed in unison.



**In remembrance of U.S. soldiers  
(Les Fleurs de la Mémoire)**

This independent and spontaneous initiative was soon followed by an official statement that emphasized the historical ties that have linked France and the United States for more than 225 years. Those ties date back to 1776, when France helped the United States achieve its independence from the British. Two years later, both countries cemented their relationship by signing a treaty of friendship, making France America's first ally.

In remembrance of this friendship and of the help given by US citizens during WWII, thousands of French people all around the world have made a written promise to lay flowers on the graves of American soldiers in Normandy at least once a year, until the day they themselves pass away. They have also stated that even after their deaths, their children would take over from them so that the American soldiers lying in Normandy will always be remembered. ■ ■

## A French Merci to the Harlem Hell Fighters

**T**HE ASSOCIATION OF VETERANS of the 369th Infantry company unveiled a monument dedicated to the heroic service of an all-black regiment that fought alongside French troops during World War I. The "Harlem Hell Fighters" earned their nickname on September 29, 1918, during the Meuse-Argonne offensive, when the fierce struggle to secure the coastal town of Sechault proved to be so intense that the Germans christened their adversaries the "Hell Fighters." When the troops were not busy intimidating their enemy, they were entertaining the French public with jazz concerts -at the time, a uniquely American style of Music.

The monument, erected in Albany, New York, serves as an additional homage to the fighters, complementing the French "Croix de Guerre" -the highest French military

honor-- that was awarded to the entire regiment shortly after the war. "They helped us liberate France, and for that we will be forever grateful," said French army Colonel Antoine Treuille, who was present at the ceremony. He was accompanied by Maurice Thornton, the vice president of the Association of Veterans of the 369th Infantry.

A recently published volume, *Harlem's Hell Fighters, the African American 369th Infantry in World War I*, written by Stephen L. Harris, sheds further light on the New York infantry's struggle and the music that inspired 3,600 African-American soldiers to fight for civil rights at home, and for justice abroad. Today, echoes of their heroism, and of their triumphant name, live on as the 369th Transportation Battalion, in the New York National Guard. ■ ■

## French Forrest Gump Running Across America

**F**OR THE PAST THREE YEARS, Toulouse native Sylvain Quenel, 21, has been on a grand quest to spread his message of world peace, friendship, and the importance of saving the environment. While other idealistic young people often take to protests to get their message across, Quenel has taken upon himself the task of gathering a worldwide audience -by running around the world. "I want to do something for a better world," Quenel declares. "I am out to save nature, protest against pollution, save people, and bring a message of peace."

Quenel, or "Syrun," as his fans call him, arrived in the United States in June after completing a circuit in northeastern Canada. "I have run through the northeastern United States, through New York State, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.," explains

Quenel, who has certificates of commendation from leading figures of the various locations he's visited to prove his exploits. He plans to continue his tour of the United States by heading to the southeastern seaboard, crossing Texas, and eventually entering Mexico.

Quenel indicates that he has a special mission in the United States. "Friendship between the United States and France, that's my goal," he says. "French people like Americans. When I arrived here in the United States, I had a warm welcome, and people invited me into their homes." Quenel plans to write a book about his worldwide travels in 2010, the year he expects to finish his stint as a worldwide peace runner. After that, he has more grand plans: "I want to become the Mayor of Toulouse, and an Ambassador of France!"

For more information, visit [www.syrun.com](http://www.syrun.com). ■ ■

## FRENCHMAN DIRECTS NEW YORK MUSIC FESTIVAL

The "Mostly Mozart" summer festival, held every year at the Lincoln Center in New York, was directed this year by newly appointed French conductor Louis Langrée. Langrée, 42, brings a new flavor to the orchestra, both in artistic style and choice of production. He is heavily influenced by his work with period instruments while with the Orchestra of The Age of Enlightenment. Langrée also plans on expanding the repertoire of the festival by adding neoclassical pieces influenced by Mozart's era to the more traditional 18th-century pieces it usually features.

## BASQUIAT EXHIBIT IN PARIS

The Maillot museum in Paris is currently presenting an exhibit of works by Jean-Michel Basquiat, the most famous American painter of the 1980s. Basquiat reached fame in the late seventies as a tagger when he covered the walls of Manhattan's East Side and Brooklyn under the pseudonym of Samo. Originally from Haiti, Basquiat was always acutely race-conscious, but his art touched many other dimensions as well. He intertwined autobiographical elements, auditory sensations, allusions to his black heroes, as well as denunciations of the American political establishment.

## AMERICAN HYPER-REALISTS IN STRASBOURG

Strasbourg's Museum of Modern Art has recently opened a unique exhibit entitled "Hyperrealism USA 1965-1975." With 70 pieces from 20 different painters, this exhibit is the first to retrace the American hyper-realist movement. Hyper-realism, often bordering on absurdity, encompasses works of art in which it is sometimes demonstrated, other times suggested, that realism itself does not actually exist. The exhibit focuses on showing how the work of the 20 painters living in the U.S. analyzed and explored their society's visual and representational styles.

## HAMBURGERS "À LA FRANÇAISE"

French chef Daniel Boulud has become a celebrity in New York thanks to his elegant four-star restaurant, Daniel, which attracts the city's most upscale clientele. Stars such as Barbara Walters, Dustin Hoffman, and Robin Williams, as well as intellectuals like Henry Kissinger, have all tasted Boulud's fine cooking at his lavish Park Avenue establishment. He recently made a splash with a "Franco-American" hamburger containing 23 ingredients, including meat marinated for 12 hours in red wine. Price: \$50.



## U.S. Tour Presence Growing

**L**ANCE ARMSTRONG is not the only American getting attention with success at the Tour de France. In fact, the sport of cycling is booming in America and the success of Americans abroad is both a catalyst and a consequence of cycling's new popularity in America. Since 1981, when Jonathan Boyer became the first American to compete in the race, American cyclists have won eight of the last 23 Tours. This gives Americans the most wins in that time period, followed by the Spanish with six and the French with five.

Armstrong's most notable co-contenders are Tyler Hamilton and Levi Leipheimer. Of these two Hamilton made the biggest impression this year, coming in fourth overall in stunning fashion. In the last 500 yards of the first stage of the Tour Hamilton broke his collarbone in a massive pileup that also left Leipheimer with a fractured pelvis and kept him from finishing the race. Hamilton, however, insisted against doctor's orders to continue the race and determinedly gritted through stage after stage with a massive bandage on his left side. Armstrong,

Hamilton's former teammate and good friend, was impressed with Hamilton's perseverance. "Tyler is a tough dude, he's a fighter...he has a lot of ability to suffer." And suffer he did. "The mind is a powerful thing," Hamilton said. "I just tried to block the pain out by giving myself happy thoughts of my family."

The sport is growing in America, and Americans are increasingly traveling to France to compete in and watch this famous race. With American riding success gathering more fans every year, and with the French welcoming Americans with fine food and hospitality, the crowds of Americans lining the Tour roads every summer is expected to continue to grow. ■ ■

# Tour de France History Reflects European Integration

**T**HIS JULY THE TOUR DE FRANCE, the three-week race that has become the world's premier cycling event, celebrated its 100th anniversary with extra festivities and a gripping finish. To honor the Tour's long history this year's race was set to follow much of the original 1903 Tour route. American Lance Armstrong won by the slim margin of 61 seconds in a nail-biter over German rival Jan Ullrich.



Welcome extended to the E.U. newcomers

Although the competition remains fierce and unpredictable, much has changed since the race was first run in 1903 as a fledgling newspaper's publicity stunt to "bring together, regenerate, and educate" the French youth.

In particular, the Tour has undergone significant geo-

graphical changes that mark its relevance as a cultural and political event. After the disaster of World War II, Tour organizers had a powerful vision of a united Europe and began expanding the Tour accordingly. In 1954 the Tour departed not from France but from Amsterdam. In 1958 the Treaties of Rome were signed strengthening the historic path toward a united Europe. The next year the Tour symbolically departed from Brussels, the political headquarters of the emerging union. To mark the decision taken at Maastricht in 1992 to go for economic and monetary union (EMU) and the eventual emergence of a single currency (the Euro) the Tour departed from San Sebastian in Spain and traveled through seven different European countries.

The Tour's 100th anniversary also marked a historic year for the European Union (E.U.). Before next year's Tour ten new countries will be added to the 15 E.U. member states (Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Cyprus, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Slovenia). To mark this occasion the E.U. flag was attached to the jersey of every E.U. rider, present and future. The best rider from the ten new members was given a special prize called the "prize of European Enlargement."

The first hundred years of the Tour were full of excitement, rivalry, and symbolism. The athletic force of the race was mixed with the politics of the times to create a near mythic image of heroism and purpose. With a past this rich who knows what the next hundred years will bring. ■ ■

## American Lance Armstrong Wins 5th Straight Tour

**O**N JULY 27 AMERICAN cyclist Lance Armstrong became only the second person ever to record five consecutive Tour de France victories. After three weeks of action-packed riding the outcome was a familiar one as Armstrong, a cancer survivor, rode triumphantly into the center of Paris. Only Spain's Miguel Indurain has also won this grueling race five times in a row.

In what was clearly the toughest of Armstrong's victories, he overcame illness, crashes, and motivated rivals to impose himself by a mere 61 seconds over principal rival German Jan Ullrich. Armstrong looked vulnerable for the first time ever in the early stages of this year's Tour, but his consistency carried him through to victory. In one memorable stage, a misty 3.1-mile climb to the ski station of Luz-Ardiden in the Pyrenees, Armstrong fell hard and broke his bike after a spectator clipped him with a bag. Armstrong managed to compose himself and blaze past Ullrich further up the mountain to claim the stage and cement his dominance.

This year's race was not as easy for him as the previous four, which he had dominated from start to finish. The sight of a man truly struggling helped Armstrong win over French

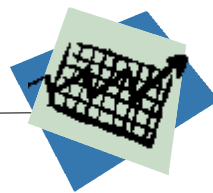


Racing toward Paris

fans who had previously considered him standoffish and overbearing. This year, they came out in force to applaud him along the entire course.

While Armstrong's victory puts him among the most accomplished riders in Tour history, he is not satisfied. "I can promise you I will be back next year. I'm not coming back to get second or to lose, but rather to return to a level that I had for the first Tour victories. This year was not acceptable."

Armstrong says he will be back, and this time spectators will eagerly await the return of an unquestioned champion attempting to do something no man has done before, win six Tours de France. ■ ■



# Virgo Seeks Out Gravity Waves

*French-Italian observatory may usher in a new form of astronomy.*

**F**RANCE AND ITALY have joined the international race to detect gravitational waves by unveiling an ambitious new scientific instrument, Virgo.

Inaugurated on July 23 in Cascina (near Pisa, Italy), Virgo is one of Europe's largest and most sophisticated research projects.

The existence of gravitational waves was predicted in 1916 by Einstein's general theory of relativity. Created by massive celestial objects, these waves propagate through space much like the ripples on the surface of a lake. They are extremely weak and do not interact with ordinary matter and so are almost impossible to detect.

As these waves travel, they do however briefly modify distances.

Virgo, with two orthogonal arms, each 3 km long, is designed to detect these changes: as a gravitational wave passes by, it will briefly lengthen one arm while shortening the other. This infinitesimal variation, about one billionth of a billionth of a meter, will be measured by lasers inside Virgo's structure.



The two, 3 km-long arms of Virgo  
(Courtesy: Virgo Project)

Such accuracy represents no mean feat of technological prowess, as the engineers had to eliminate all sources of interference, from seismic rumblings to the vibrations produced by human activity. Indeed, Ligo, Virgo's American counterpart, is suffering delays because it is not sufficiently sheltered from interference (it registers the vibrations caused by trees falling several kilometers away!).

Virgo's technology is so innovative and complex, it will take at least a year of careful calibration before it will become fully functional. Then, French and Italian researchers will have to hope for a violent cosmic event to occur near Earth, so as to detect the resulting gravitational wave. If Virgo succeeds, the study of gravitational waves may become a new tool in astronomers' kits, and help them better understand our interstellar environment.

(For more information, visit <http://www.virgo.infn.it>) ■ ■

## Renault Further Privatized

**T**HE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, pursuing its policy of gradually disengaging itself from state-owned companies, sold over a third of its remaining shares in Renault, one of France's top two automakers. In two separate operations, on July 28 and August 11, 26.6 million shares were sold, earning France over 1.3 billion euros. The state will now be left with a stake of approximately 15 percent of Renault's capital, far below the 52.9 percent it held in 1996.

Though the end of summer is usually a very slow period in the stock market, the Renault offer was extremely successful. In a matter of hours, it was oversubscribed by a factor of 2 to 1.

The operation was certainly well timed, as Renault recently announced that its net profit was up 31.6 percent over last year, and this despite a sluggish global economy. Its Japanese subsidiary, Nissan, was in large part responsible for these excellent results.

The success of this operation bodes well for the future of the government's privatization program. In 2002, the government sold 10.9 percent of Crédit Lyonnais, 13.64 percent of Thomson Multimedia and 49 percent of Autoroutes du Sud de la France. The next candidate may be Air France, whose stockholders approved its privatization in early August, and whose stock price has risen by 40 percent since the beginning of the year. ■ ■

## Warm Water Discovered Under Arctic Seas

**A** JOINT OCEANOGRAPHY CAMPAIGN by French and German scientists has discovered that the waters in regions of the Arctic Ocean can be as warm as 25C (77 degrees Fahrenheit), and, in some areas, even warmer.

This unprecedented discovery, under the auspices of the *Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer* (French Research Institute for Sea Operations), was made with the help of Victor-6000, a robot submarine capable of reaching depths of 6,000 meters. Cameras on Victor-6000 have allowed French scientists to discover the source of the

warm temperature. According to the scientists, the warm temperature of the water can be attributed to the activities of Hakon Mosby, an underwater volcano northwest of Norway. However, the scientists were stunned to discover that the heat source comes from pockets of hot methane gas emitted from the volcano, and not from lava production, as the scientists had previously thought.

The researchers were originally observing the activity of coral in waters off the coast of Ireland, and planned to visit an observation station in Norway, at the Spitzberg Archipelago. ■ ■

## FRENCH COMPETITIVENESS UP 25 PERCENT!

The French Central Bank, in a report released on August 25, announced that France's industrial competitiveness has progressed by about 25 percent relative to its European partners in the past 15 years. The report also noted that France's economy grew more rapidly than that of its euro-zone partners during the last six years, by about 2.2 percentage points. During this period, France had the highest trade surplus in the 11-strong euro-zone. Though smaller than in 2002, the surplus is already close to one billion euros for the six first months of 2003.

## TWO BIDDERS VIE FOR UNIVERSAL ASSETS

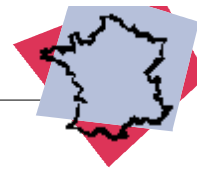
Vivendi Universal has selected two companies, out of an initial six, that will be allowed to continue bidding for its entertainment assets in America. NBC and a consortium led by Edgar Bronfmann Jr. were deemed to have submitted the most attractive offers, which would let Vivendi keep a minority stake in the business. Vivendi's board of directors will make a final decision by the end of September. On sale are Universal Studios, Universal theme parks and USA networks.

## SEA WORMS COULD DONATE BLOOD TO HUMANS

French researchers have found that a sea worm may help solve the shortage of blood for transfusions. Their hemoglobin is very similar to that found in humans, and is compatible with all blood types. *Arenicola marina* are also extraordinary because of their ability to produce blood quickly. Scientists at the Roscoff Center of Marine Biology, in Brittany, must still carry out a series of tests in order to demonstrate this solution's viability, but perhaps one day worms will be too precious to use as bait.

## FIRST EUROPEAN LUNAR PROBE LAUNCHED

On August 29, SMART-1, the first European Lunar Probe, was sent to the moon from Kourou (in French Guiana), on an Ariane-5 rocket, Europe's most advanced launcher. The SMART-1 is being sent both to test new technologies and to perform scientific research. It will put new state-of-the-art technology through its paces in order to demonstrate its viability for future missions. Among the technologies tested will be a new solar-powered electric propulsion system. The probe will also conduct research on the moon's formation, its precise composition and the possible presence and quantity of water.



**FIRST PRIVATE MUSLIM LYCÉE**

Averroes, the first private Muslim school to open in France, will welcome its first students this September in the northern French city of Lille. Financed by the Muslim community, this school is not a religious institution and will welcome 30 students, boys and girls, with or without headscarves and whatever their religion may be: Judaism, Islam, Christianity. The school's motto highlights its goal of promoting mutual understanding: "to educate young people in a climate of tolerance and respect."

**UNIVERSAL INTERNET ACCESS FOR FRENCH STUDENTS**

Xavier Darcos, the delegate minister for education, would like all French students to have access to modern technology and information tools via the Internet within three years. According to Darcos, young people need computer skills to successfully compete in the job market. However, he believes it is necessary to control their access to the Web, to protect them from some of the dangers of the virtual world. Demonstrating the potential advantages of the Internet for teachers and students, Darcos signed an agreement on August 25 with the press's trade unions which will make newspapers, an essential educational tool, available to schools via the Internet.

**BENEFITS OF FRENCH DIET CONFIRMED**

The University of Pennsylvania published a study in the September 2003 issue of *Psychological Science* that confirms the benefits of the French diet. In addition to its slenderizing effects, incidences of cardiovascular diseases in France pale in comparison to other countries. The French eat more cheese, butter, and meat than their fellow Europeans. However, they also drink more wine, and researchers have speculated that certain compounds in grapes may provide protection from the typical side-effects of a high-fat diet.

**FRENCH WOMEN INTO "DIY"**

An increasing number of French women are converting to the "do-it-yourself" (DIY) philosophy. According to a recent survey, 54 percent of women are beginning to do some DIY in the house. It is less expensive to do it yourself than to pay a craftsman, but the financial aspect is not what comes first. Do-it-yourself gives them the satisfaction of shaping their own interior, which, in turn often becomes a full-fledged hobby. As a result, do-it-yourself superstores are starting to adapt their products to their new female customers

**New Faces of Marianne**

*Thirteen oversized photographs displayed over the National Assembly's facade*

**S**INCE THE 18TH-CENTURY, Marianne has served as a timeless image of Liberty to the French. Traditionally, she has been shown wearing a Phrygian cap, an object borrowed from ancient Greece and Rome, which was worn by the freed slaves. A new exhibit in the palace of the French National Assembly in Paris embraces these traditional republican symbols, while giving them a new twist.

"Marianne of Today" features 13 oversized color photographs of modern women proudly wearing the Phrygian cap, 8 of them of North African and Muslim descent. The display explores Marianne's changing identity in the 21st century. Fadale Amara, the woman behind the exhibit, hopes the 13 pictures will convey the message that Marianne is an "ordinary working-class woman facing all sorts of pressures and struggling for freedom from the tyranny of the housing projects. And she's saying, 'No matter what my origin, I am a citizen of the French Republic.'"

The exhibit is part of a movement founded by Amara which called *Ni Putes ni Soumises*, literally "Neither Whores Nor

Doormats." The ultimate goal of *Ni Putes ni Soumises* is to encourage women in ethnic neighborhoods to rebel against a "paternalistic culture and deep-rooted traditions" that divide



One of France's many Mariannes (Courtesy: National Assembly)

these women into two groups -those who are encouraged to be submissive because it's considered "respectable," and those who are assertive and so often labeled as "loose." Jean-Louis Debré, the National Assembly's president, said that "these young Mariannes are asking for protection in the face of violence, of threats to their physical integrity, to their freedom to choose their destiny freely, sometimes even to their life." He described the display as, "the remaking of the iconography of the Republic."

Time has already afforded Marianne a few face-lifts. Her features have been

modeled after actresses Brigitte Bardot and Catherine Deneuve, as well as models Ines de la Fressange and Latitia Casta, who was voted to become the new face of Marianne by France's mayors in 1999. The most famous representation of Marianne can be found in the painting of "Liberty Leading the People" by Eugene Delacroix, on display at the Louvre. ■ ■

**Initiatives Help Families Spend More Time Together**

**O**N MONDAY AUGUST 25, more than 10,000 French students returned to school a week ahead of their fellow classmates as part of a new scholastic philosophy. These students go to one of the 150 pre-schools and primary schools in France that have adopted a four-day school week, with three-day long weekends, in the hope that children will thus be able to spend more quality time with their families. The shorter school week is in part compensated by a longer school year, which will hopefully lead to a lighter average workload and less stress for children.

The schools, located in the French departments of Hautes-Alpes, the Somme, the Haute-Saône and the Ardennes, are taking advantage of socio-cultural trends in France that have left parents with more time for their children. One major contrib-

utor is the gradual phasing in of France's 35-hour workweek. This law, already in effect in most industries, is allowing many workers to finish their required work in four days rather than five, thus allowing them to have an extra weekend day.

In addition to these mandated caps on working hours, many workers, especially women, are opting to work part-time during their children's younger years. As for men, they have strongly endorsed France's generous paternity-leave law. According to a recently published study carried out in spring 2003, 19 out of 20 fathers use their right to stay at home during the 14 days following their baby's birth. Thanks to this measure, a link has been created between professional and private life, as more and more fathers, imitating their wives, talk about their babies at work. ■ ■

**Gay Paris**

**P**ARIS HAS INCREASINGLY become a top destination for gay tourists, due to stepped up efforts by Parisian businesses to become more gay friendly, and by travel agencies to entice gays from all over the world to discover the charms and exciting cultural offerings of Paris. In the United States, the gay tourist industry has become a booming phenomenon, and industry professionals have been promoting Paris as the perfect destination for those who seek a refined cultural tradition, historical landmarks, and a dynamic nightlife.

Paris has traditionally been a gay-friendly city, having been home to many famous gay artists and intellectuals. Writers Marcel Proust, Gertrude Stein, Alice Toklas, and poets Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Verlaine have all called Paris

home, and have done most of their notable work while living there. Areas in Paris, like the Marais, Les Halles, and the Hotel de Ville, that have historically been tied to the Parisian gay community, are also areas of great interest to all tourists, regardless of sexual orientation, with their offerings of upscale and trendy boutiques, cafés, and clubs. Gay-friendly businesses and hotels in these areas are increasingly displaying rainbow stickers or flags, the universal gay symbol, to signal their welcome and tolerance of gay tourists.

Another point that draws gay tourists to Paris is that its mayor, Bertrand Delanoë, is openly gay. Delanoë recently led the successful Paris Gay Pride Day parade this past June, which drew in nearly 500,000 to 700,000 supporters from around the world. ■ ■



## World Championships in Athletics in Paris


**T**HE NINTH INTERNATIONAL Association of Athletics Federation's (IAAF) World Championship in Athletics, held in Paris this summer, assembled more than 500,000 French citizens and international tourists. This nine-day competition, which took place at the Stade de France between August 23 and 31, was the last important international sporting event to take place prior to the summer Olympic Games in 2004.

Athletes from all over the world thus had one last opportunity to assess their adversaries' strengths before facing each other next year in Athens. More than 2,000 athletes from 210 countries met in the



Ready to compete  
(Courtesy: IAAF)

French capital, which had been specially fit out for the occasion. Among the competitors were the French Olympic medalist Christine Aaron and the American sprinter Gail Devers (the woman with the most medals in World Championship history).

But athletes were not the only focus of attention. As part of the "Let's go to France" operation, the minister for sports, Jean-François Lamour, the minister delegate for cooperation and francophony, Pierre-André Wiltzer, and the secretary of state for foreign affairs, Renaud Musilier, working through every French embassy in the world, selected and invited young people who would represent their countries in France during the ten-day period. 


## Vintage Wine Year in the Works

**P**ARTS OF FRANCE GREETED the summer heat wave with sheer jubilation. Indeed, wine growers could not be happier. For them, this year is expected to be one of the best ever. Thanks to the high temperatures, sometimes hitting 40 degrees Celsius (104 F), not only will the sweet flavor and taste be more concentrated in the grapes, but the alcohol content will also be higher. Another consequence of the very hot weather is that the grapes are smaller than usual, which means that this year's vintage will be significantly smaller than in the recent past.

And what should consumers expect from an outstanding wine and reduced production? High prices of course. Wine growers are thus counting on this year's harvest to help them get through a difficult time, caused by the strong euro, fewer

orders from the U.S. since its economic slowdown, and by the emergence of new wine-producing countries.

Some vineyards, such as those in the Beaujolais and Bordeaux regions, have recently started the picking, or are planning to begin at the end of the month, which is very unusual, this year's harvest being the earliest one since 1893. Indeed, finding laborers is proving very difficult as most of the people who usually participate are on holiday.


It is still too early to determine whether the 2003 harvest will indeed make a vintage year. It is essential that the weather remain warm, but not too dry, during the picking season. Some wine growers fear that their vineyards could suffer too much from the heat and are hoping for a little bit of rain. But it seems that we may yet refer to 2003 wines as some of the best ever! 

## The Amélie Effect

**J**EAN-PIERRE JEUNET'S hit film *Amélie* has not only proven to be a critical and box-office success. It has also inspired tourists and fans of the film worldwide to discover the world of the quirky protagonist, Amélie Poulain, and it has affected Parisian residents profoundly.

The film is set and was filmed on location in the northern Paris neighborhood of Montmartre, where director Jeunet has lived for over 20 years. He wanted to show audiences the beauty and simplicity of Montmartre, leaving out obvious tourist attractions like the Sacré Coeur Basilica and the infamous red light district of Boulevard Clichy. To achieve this effect, Jeunet chose cafés, grocers, and stores that he himself frequented. He also asked that the Montmartre streets be cleared of cars, and that its surfaces be cleared and cleaned of graffiti. During filming, Jeunet used golden and rose hued filters to create an ethereal and glowing effect, to enhance the film's sense of magical realism.

Jeunet's formula worked. Fans and viewers of the film, enchanted by its marvelous scenery, travel to Montmartre to follow in the footsteps of Amélie. Tourists come to the Café des deux Moulins, the café where Amélie waited tables, and to Au Marche de la Butte, the corner épicerie where Amélie shopped for her groceries. Another popular Amélie destination is the Canal St. Martin, where Amélie skipped stones for relaxation.

Montmartre's residents are also greatly affected by the film's impact. Real estate prices in the Amélie regions of Montmartre have risen dramatically. The owners of Au Marche de la Butte and Café des deux Moulins indicate that their business has increased significantly, thanks to the success of the film. Even François Fillon, the minister of labor and social affairs, has called for France to become more tolerant, "like the France of Amélie Poulain." 

### REMEMBERING TRINTIGNANT

A film star is mourned as French actress Marie Trintignant died as result of brain injuries on August 1. Born on January 21, 1962, to actor Jean-Louis and his wife, film director Nadine, Trintignant began her film career at the early age of 4 in *Mon amour, mon amour*. Originally planning to become a veterinary surgeon, Trintignant appeared in 45 films throughout her 36-year career, with her most notable being her role as a seductress in *Série Noire* (1978). Trintignant also made a name for herself on the stage, appearing in plays such as Claude Chabrol's, *Betty*.

### FRENCH FILMS THRIVE IN U. S.

Following a concerted attempt by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to increase the export of French films and television programs, the 2003 French film industry is booming in the U.S. Four highly touted films have propelled box office earnings, jointly amassing 20 million dollars since April. They include *Le Peuple migrant*, *Swimming Pool*, *L'auberge espagnole* and *L'homme du train*. This follows the unmatched success of the smash French hit *Amélie*, which grossed 34 million dollars in 2001.

### NEWLY DISCOVERED DEBUSSY PIECE PLAYED

A new Debussy piece, discovered only two years ago, was played for the first time last month in a small Swedish church. Debussy, the famous French composer who founded the Impressionist movement in music, had left it to his coal supplier as a gift. He wrote it in 1917, but succumbed a year later to cancer in Paris, and his composition remained lost until 2001. The French pianist Jean-Pierre Armengaud played the work for the very first time during the French-Swedish music festival last July.

### "PARIS PLAGÉ" BIS BIG SUCCESS

For the second year in a row, Paris transformed itself into a seaside resort. Thanks to the city hall of Paris, Parisians and tourists alike were able to enjoy summer activities while staying in the capital. *Opération Paris-plage* (operation Paris-beach) converted streets into recreational areas of sand or greenery for two months. This year, it attracted more than 3 million people seeking fun and frolic, versus 2.3 million in 2002. This success was due both to the recent heat wave and to better facilities. Indeed, Paris-plage 2003 required 3,000 tons of sand, 300 deckchairs, 40 hammocks and 240 parasols, all located along the Seine.



*News from France* is pleased to announce the arrival of our new senior writer, Aude Rabault, to whom we extend a hearty welcome. She will be replacing Wendy Piquemal, who has decided to pursue a postgraduate degree. The entire *News from France* team wishes both of them the best of luck in their new endeavors.

## French Impressions at the Corcoran

*How American Impressionist art grew from French influences*

**W**ASHINGTON D.C.'S Corcoran Gallery of Art is now showing a collection of Impressionists in an exposition that explores French influences on American 20th-century art. The exhibit, "The Impressionist Tradition in America," is on display until March 2004. It features painters such as Claude Monet and Camille Pissarro representing the French, and Mary Cassat and John Singer Sargent as their American counterparts.

The art work is divided into roughly five parts: French Impressionists; American Impressionists from an artists' colony in Lyme, Connecticut; American Impressionists from New Hope, Pennsylvania; the influence of expatriate American Artists; and Impressionism on the Gilded age as a response to industrialization and modernity. The expo concludes with the end of Impressionism and its evolution into Realism.

The term impressionism dates back to the 1860s, when Impressionists broke from the tradition of their predecessors, rejecting academic rules and traditional subjects. Instead, Impressionists chose to paint non-narrative scenes from day-to-day life, and focused their talents on the representation of light, atmosphere and movement. These painters worked "en plein air" (outdoors) favoring scenes of nature and voyeuristic compositions of people in their everyday toil. The style they employed can be characterized as more abstract than that of classical art. The artists adopted a technique of smaller brush strokes which they felt best captured a subjective reality of a scene. For example, themes of an



*Mrs. Henry White* by Singer Sargent  
(Courtesy: Corcoran Gallery of Art, DC)

Impressionistic painting could be a fleeting light of day, elements of nature, and unstaged scenes of people at various occupations.

Three main factors can help trace the appearance of Impressionism in the United States. When the Impressionists upstaged the classical, Beaux Arts painters in Paris during an 1870s art exposition of the Salon (an annual, state sponsored exposition), American artists who attended these shows were greatly taken by their technique and in turn brought these influences back to the U.S. Secondly, many American artists who traveled to France during their training also picked up the technique and employed it in their future work. Lastly, expatriates like Mary Cassat and John Singer Sargent did their part in bringing Impressionism to America by promoting French Impressionists to an American public through prominent patrons.

The collection of paintings and sculptures on display at the Corcoran conveys a diversity of styles within the definition of Impressionism. Although American Impressionists developed their own unique technique that they based on a French style, it is clear from the collection on display that one cannot classify all Impressionists as only utilizing a given set of rules. "The Impressionist Tradition in America" pulls together an array of styles, and a cornucopia of brush strokes rarely seen under one roof. This is a collection that leaves an impression of its own on the museum's visitors.

For more information, please consult the Corcoran Web-site at <http://www.corcoran.org>.

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