

A triweekly review of French news and trends
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French Defense Minister Visits U.S.

Michèle Alliot-Marie met with her American counterparts in an atmosphere of trust and friendship

In her first trip to the United States since the beginning of the war in Iraq, French Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie paid a visit to U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice in Washington, D.C., on January 15 and then met with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan in New York on January 16. After her talks in Washington, Alliot-Marie said she believed there was a "real willingness to turn the page on tensions between the United States and France." She added, "I really had the impression that the situation has become unfrozen and that there is a desire to resume normal relations."

AMBASSADOR LEVITTE PRESENTED WITH KING LEGACY AWARD

The King Legacy Award for International Service was presented to French Ambassador Jean-David Levitte on January 18. Every year since 1992, the Committee for the International Salute to the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., has awarded groups and individuals who have positively impacted both the national and international communities and who have displayed extraordinary leadership that reinforces the ideals set by Dr. King.

Back in Paris, the Minister of Defense confirmed her initial impressions, telling the deputies of the National Assembly that she "noticed a distinct situation of détente and a desire to turn the page." She declared that "in short, there is now a clear will in Washington to strengthen dialogue with France and the European Union and thus a basis for renewed and solid cooperation."

Minister Calls For Renewal of Transatlantic Security Partnership

IN A SPEECH HOSTED by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (a Washington think tank) on January 16, Defense Minister Michèle

more to the Arab-Muslim world."

Addressing the issue of Iraq, the French defense minister stressed that "the stabilization of Iraq is in everyone's interest" and that "we all want Iraq to be sovereign, stable, democratic and prosperous." She reiterated that though there are currently no plans to send French troops to Iraq, "France is standing ready to be involved in the reconstruction of Iraq as soon as the Iraqi people have regained their sovereignty." She told the audience that France is

also willing to train Iraq's future military and police forces, something that the French are already doing in Afghanistan.

In her address, Alliot-Marie constantly emphasized France's commitment to NATO as well as its desire to continue building a common European security and defense policy. She repeated that Europe's defense ambitions are aimed at strengthening -not weakening- the NATO

alliance. Finally, she underscored France's allegiance to the United Nations, explaining that the U.N. "is our common home, the international norm of reference and the place for dialogue and collective action." She noted, however, that the international body will need to be reformed in order to better face future crises.

Alliot-Marie also sought to rekindle a friendly dialogue with her U.S. counterparts. She spoke of the importance of renewing and strengthening the transatlantic partnership between France and the United States and of maintaining a Western Alliance in general. Although Alliot-Marie acknowledged past and present tensions between the two countries, she mainly highlighted current examples of U.S.-French cooperation. She noted, for example, that French troops continue to operate alongside Americans in Afghanistan and in the Balkans, and that the two countries' naval forces operate together to secure sea lanes in the Indian Ocean.

She also emphasized the significant cooperation taking place between the two nations in the fight against terrorism, saying that "the cooperation between our intelligence services clearly reflects our common concerns." Inserting a hint of caution, however, she added that "anti-terrorism efforts will only succeed if we also address the causes of terrorism, namely the sense of frustration in the face of injustice and poverty." Expanding on this point, Alliot-Marie said that "humiliation is exploited by fanatics" and she urged both the French and Americans to "work together to eradicate blind violence, but also its roots and to listen



French Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie speaking at CSIS
(Courtesy: Embassy of France - Aude Rabault)

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SCHROEDER INVITED TO NORMANDY

French President Jacques Chirac has officially invited German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to attend June ceremonies in Normandy marking the 60th anniversary of D-Day. It is the first time a German chancellor will be joining other leaders for the commemoration of the Allied landings, a welcome sign that Europe has put its last great war behind it. The ceremonies in Normandy are meant to honor the Americans, British and Canadians who stormed the beaches on June 6, 1944, dying by the thousands to liberate France and the rest of Europe from Nazi rule. President George Bush has naturally also been invited to the ceremonies.



MORE AUTONOMY FOR FRENCH POLYNESIA

The French National Assembly definitively approved on January 29 moves to increase autonomy for French Polynesia. The change is part of France's decentralization process and is aimed at granting the territory more powers in line with requests from the French Polynesian leadership. The changes would transfer to the local authorities powers in a number of areas, notably in matters concerning civil, employment and tax laws, and they would allow positive discrimination for native residents.

BRITISH, GERMAN AND FRENCH GET-TOGETHER

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw hosted France's Dominique de Villepin and Germany's Joschka Fischer at Chevening, his official country residence outside London, on January 19. During the informal dinner, the British, French and German foreign ministers discussed Iraq, Iran and other major issues. British authorities said they have "always worked closely with France and Germany" and the meeting suggested Britain's desire to boost its trilateral relationship with its two biggest European partners. British Prime Minister Tony Blair wants London to hold such policy meetings with their Paris and Berlin counterparts every six weeks. The next one will take place on February 18 in Berlin.

FRENCHMAN HEADS FRANCO-GERMAN OFFICE FOR YOUTH

Frenchman Max Claudet was named the new secretary general of the Franco-German Office for Youth (OFAJ) on January 22, succeeding Germany's Babette Nieder. The purpose of the 40-year-old OFAJ is to organize youth exchanges between the two nations and to promote cultural understanding. German Eva Sabine Kuntz will join Claudet as the new co-secretary general.

FRENCH BRIGADIER GENERAL TO TAKE OVER U.N. FORCE IN LEBANON

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has chosen French Brigadier General Alain Pellegrini as the new head of the U.N. Interim Force for Lebanon (UNIFIL). Pellegrini will take command of the force, which supervises the Israeli-Lebanese cease-fire along their common border, on February 17.

Chinese President Hu Jintao in France

THE PRESIDENT OF CHINA, Hu Jintao, marked the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between France and the People's Republic of China by visiting France for four days, from January 26 to 29 at the invitation of President Jacques Chirac. France was the first Western power to recognize the PRC, and the two nations have excellent relations, although France continues to express its concern over the human rights situation in the world's most populous nation.



French President Jacques Chirac and Chinese President Hu Jintao
(Courtesy: Ministry of Foreign Affairs - F. de La Mure)

Hu appeared before the French Parliament on January 27, during which he insisted on the importance of maintaining strong ties between the two partner nations. Hu felt that France and China must strengthen their political, economic, and cultural cooperation, thus reinforcing their partnership. He also expressed confidence in the improvement of China's record

on democracy and human rights in his speech, saying there was "a great deal of change going on in China."

Trade was also a key issue during the visit. China is the second biggest market in Asia (after Japan), but French imports there only represent about 1.6 percent of the country's trade. Hu signed several trade agreements, announcing for instance that state-owned China Southern Airlines plans to purchase 21 new planes from European plane maker Airbus. Other contracts were signed with white-goods maker Thomson, glass and packaging manufacturer St-Gobain

and car maker Peugeot-Citroën, among others.

Following Hu's visit, the two leaders jointly signed a declaration that lays out the two countries' partnership goals for the future. This declaration reaffirmed the "strategic partnership" created by the two countries in 1997.

Villepin Calls For Russian-E.U. Strategic Partnership

IN THE CONTEXT of the ongoing dialogue that France wishes to have with Russia on major international issues, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin went to Moscow on January 22 and 23 for talks with his counterpart, Igor Ivanov. During the visit, Villepin gave a speech to students at the MGIMO, the Russian Institute of International Relations, on the subject of France, Russia and Europe.

Addressing the group of students in the presence of Igor Ivanov, Villepin praised Russia's "original vision of the world." The two foreign ministers agreed there had been a "major rapprochement" between Paris and Moscow in recent years, and they highlighted their similarity of views on such issues as Iraq and the Middle East. The French minister called for the European Union and Russia to establish a "strategic partnership," with in particular the creation of a "permanent institutional mechanism" that

would "analyze threats that the European continent faces, particularly with regard to proliferation and terrorism." This might include "joint operations in peacekeeping," he noted.

Referring to Iraq, the two foreign ministers called for an international conference to discuss rebuilding the country, but both said progress on reconstruction was contingent on the full restoration of Iraqi sovereignty. Dominique de Villepin said an international conference could "bring together all the countries in the region and in the world community to deal with all the difficult issues." France, he said, was prepared to help Iraq in security matters.

Villepin did not shy away from deploring the situation in Chechnya. He emphasized the "urgent need for a solution that will put an end to the years of suffering" in the region,

which he described as still being in a state of "open war," contradicting those who say that Chechnya has been stabilized.

**ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE
120 YEARS OLD**
The Alliance Française, which promotes and defends French culture around the world, organized from January 27 to 29 its 26th international seminar in Paris. The directors of the world's 1,400 French Alliance committees were invited. Created in 1884 by Paul Cambon, the Alliance Française is celebrating its 120th anniversary this year! Today, about 176,569 students go regularly to Alliance facilities on all five continents.

Anti-Corruption Forum Held in Paris with Kofi Annan

AS PART OF THE GLOBAL Pact initiative, the United Nations organized a forum in Paris on the fight against corruption on January 26 and 27. The Global Pact initiative was launched in July 2000 by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan in order to encourage better cooperation between nations and businesses, by emphasizing the ethical, social, and environmental responsibilities of corporations. Participating organizations share best practices and commit themselves to upholding the pact's nine founding principles in the fields of human rights, social standards and the environment.

Annan, who attended the anti-corruption forum, congratulated France for being "at the avant-garde of the Global Pact

movement." Indeed, more than 200 French companies have adhered to the Pact (out of a total of 1,200 from 20 different countries), including such heavy-weights as Carrefour, Dassault, EADS, France Telecom, LVMH, L'Oréal, Renault, Thales and TotalFinaElf.

At the Paris meeting, the participants discussed the possibility of adding a tenth principle to the Pact, regarding financial transparency and corruption. President Jacques Chirac put his weight behind this effort, and called for the rapid establishment of "international financial norms" during a meeting with the participating business leaders at the forum's conclusion. A final decision will be taken during a larger summit, which will take place in New York on June 27.



MADONNA'S HEART BELONGS TO FRANCE

European radio group NRJ awarded Madonna a career achievement award on January 24 in Cannes, at France's most important music awards ceremony. In accepting the award amidst the crowd's standing ovation, Madonna thanked her French fans for their support and said, "My ambition may be American, and I may have married a Brit, but my heart belongs to France." Other American artists present were Christina Aguilera and Beyonce Knowles, as well as Britney Spears, who performed and presented Madonna with her award.

FRENCH LOUISIANA WEB SITE LAUNCHED

A new Web site dubbed "French Louisiana" has been created to mark the bicentennial anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase. At www.louisiane.culture.fr both French and English speakers can follow French colonial history in North America from 1682 to 1803, through more than 300 archival documents. Accompanied by rich historical images and sound bites, the documents emanate from a wide range of French and American institutions.

FRENCH CLARINET CONCERT IN DC

Jean-Louis Sajot, clarinetist for the National Orchestra of France, and the Octuor de France string quartet will make a special appearance in Washington, D.C. on February 17. Sajot will teach a free advanced clarinet class from 2:00 to 4:30pm, which will be followed by a concert at 7pm. The concert, whose sponsors include Washington D.C.'s Alliance Française and the international francophone channel TV5, will feature the String Quartet by Samuel Barber, the Quintet for Clarinet by Jean Françaix and Mozart's Quintet for Clarinet. For more information, or to book tickets, please contact the Alliance Française at (202) 234-7911 or visit their Web site, www.francedc.org.

17TH-CENTURY FRENCH SAILOR BURIED IN TEXAS

On February 3, a French sailor was finally laid to rest, more than 300 years overdue. His body was found in 1996, while researchers excavated the "Belle," French explorer Robert Cavalier de La Salle's ship. The ship sunk in 1686 in Matagorda Bay, off the coast of Texas. Through forensic tests, scientists have completed a full facial reconstruction of what the sailor probably looked like, and they estimate that he was between 35 and 45 years old. Although France still owns the ship and the artifacts in it, the French government has allowed Texas to display the discovery, and to keep the adventurous sailor in

Dr. Montagnier Recognized by U.S. for Vital HIV Work

ON FEBRUARY 11, Dr. Luc Montagnier of France will be formally announced as a 2004 inductee to the National Inventors Hall of Fame in Washington, D.C. Dr. Montagnier will be honored for his 1983 isolation of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark office founded the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 1973 in the hope of inspiring people to solve problems creatively and to achieve positive change using science and technology, as well as to encourage participation in the sciences. Inductees' inventions are honored for major advancements in fields such as medicine, computing, manufacturing, and engineering. Montagnier, along with the other 2004 inductees, will join the 201 current members through a

ceremony to be held on May 1 in Akron, Ohio.

Dr. Luc Montagnier was born in Chabris, France, and pursued his education in Poitiers and Paris. His past professional experience includes working as the research director for the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and as a professor at the Pasteur Institute. In 1983, while collaborating with Dr. Robert Gallo (a fellow inductee this spring), Dr. Montagnier's work culminated in the isolation of the HIV virus, and subsequently led to the development of an AIDS diagnosis. He is co-founder of the World Foundation for AIDS Research and Prevention and is co-director of the Program for International Viral Collaboration. Dr. Montagnier will be attending the February 11 announcement ceremony.

For more information, please visit www.invent.org. ■

U.S. Cheese-Making Nun Honored by France

IT IS A WELL-ESTABLISHED fact that the French love their cheese. And this winter, a Benedictine nun from Connecticut was given ample proof that the French can love American cheese as well. On December 15, Mother Noella Marcellino received the 2003 French Food Spirit Award in Paris for her contributions to French gastronomy.

Mother Noella is no amateur cheesemaker. She began experimenting with cheese-making in 1977 after her cloistered religious community got its first cow. Mother Noella makes Saint-Nectaire cheeses using a wooden whiskey barrel, a traditional method that she learned from a young Frenchwoman from Auvergne.

In 1994, Mother Noella received a Fulbright fellowship which allowed her to spend four years in France studying the micro-organisms found in cheese made from unpasteurized milk. "It is a

privilege to have done research in France, especially in an area that's so meaningful for the French," Marcellino recently said. Having earned her doctorate in microbiology and published her findings in scientific journals, Mother Noella is now considered an international expert on cheese-making.



Mother Noella prepares her fromage

(Courtesy: *The Cheese Nun* film by Pat Thompson)

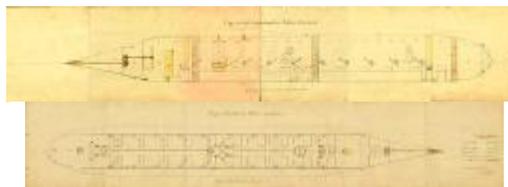
Some have credited Mother Noella's research with increasing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's leniency toward American makers of unpasteurized cheese. Although Mother Noella is a passionate advocate of traditional cheesemaking techniques, she feels, however, that more research on cheese safety is needed before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration should consider relaxing strict American cheese regulations.

Mother Noella is the subject of a documentary, "The Cheese Nun," which will be aired in the U.S. in 2004. ■

Alligator Blueprints Discovered in Paris

The U.S. Navy's first submarine was designed by French inventor Brutus De Villeroi

IN MID-DECEMBER, the U.S. Navy and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced the discovery of the blueprints of the Navy's first submarine, the *USS Alligator*. Catherine G. Marzin, a National Marine Sanctuary Program researcher, discovered



Alligator blueprints (Courtesy: NOAA)

the blueprints last May in France's Naval Archives, near Paris. Indeed, the green-colored *Alligator* was designed in 1861 by French inventor Brutus De Villeroi, a native of Nantes and a math teacher who probably helped to inspire one of his students, a certain Jules Verne, to write the science fiction classic *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.

The 47-foot long *Alligator* was built in Philadelphia and launched on May 1, 1862. It was initially powered by 16-20 underwater oars, but these were soon replaced by a screw pro-

peller. The submarine was equipped with state-of-the-art technology for the time, including an air purification system for its 20-strong crew, an onboard air compressor and a lockout chamber. This chamber allowed a diver to leave the submarine while it was submerged so that he could covertly attach an explosive charge to the hulls of enemy ships.

Not designed to operate in the open sea, the *Alligator* was lost on April 2, 1863, during a massive storm off Cape Hatteras, N.C., while being towed to help Union forces capture Charleston, S.C. After announcing the blueprints' discovery, NOAA and the Navy proposed a search for the *Alligator's* remains, which are believed to lie 10,000 feet below the surface.

For more information, please visit:

www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/alligator. ■



RELIGION(S) IN FRANCE

A Religious Snapshot of France

Islam is France's fastest growing religion



President Jacques Chirac speaking at the Grand Mosque of Paris, with CFCM President Dalil Boubakeur

April 9, 2002

(Courtesy: Grand Mosque of Paris)



Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy (right) and Chief Rabbi of France Joseph Sitruk, June 22 2003

(Courtesy: CRIF)

FRANCE HAS COME a long way since the religious wars of the 16th-century and its policy of "une foi, un loi, un roi" (one faith, one law, one king). Since 1905, France has officially been a secular state, and it prohibits discrimination based on faith. Before this legislation, only four religions were "officially recognized." Today, all law-abiding religious faiths are welcome and represented in France. Staying true to its strong belief in secularism, the French government does not include questions on an individual's religious background on its census, however non-official estimates are available.

Traditionally a Roman Catholic country, 81.4 percent of the population identifies itself as Catholic, although only approximately eight percent are practicing. The second largest religion is Islam, with Muslims making up approximately 6.89 percent of the population (roughly 30 percent of French Muslims consider themselves practicing). Protestants have about 950,000 followers, or 1.64 percent of the total. France is also home to 600,000 Jews, which is the largest Jewish community outside of Israel and the United States. Other religions are also represent-

ed, with Buddhists making up 0.68 percent, and members of the Orthodox Church 0.34 percent. Approximately eight percent of the French population does not declare itself affiliated with any church.

The Muslim population in France finds its roots in France's colonial past. Muslim communities first became visible in the 1830s though immigration from France's colonies, largely from North Africa. The largest influx of immigrants came following World War II, when there was an urgent need for workers and France turned to its former colonies to find them. It is estimated that approximately 35 percent of present-day Muslims came from Algeria, 25 percent from Morocco, and 10 percent from Tunisia. Today, Muslim populations can mostly be found in metropolitan areas, such as Paris (home to approximately one-third of all French Muslims), Marseilles, Lyon, and Strasbourg. The French government has seen the importance of keeping an open dialogue with this important part of an ever evolving French society, as well as with other faiths, in order to continue to support the strong ideals of secularism and religious freedom. ■■

France's Strong Secular Tradition

FRANCE HAS ALWAYS been a religious melting pot. Though traditionally Catholic, France is home to the largest Muslim community in Europe, along with the third largest Jewish community in the world (after Israel and the United States). In fact, France was the first European country to grant citizenship to members of the Jewish community, in 1791, following the French Revolution. This openness to religion is in large part the result of the Revolution's ideals, in particular the notion of *laïcité*, or secularism, according to which the state must not actively promote any faith.

Laïcité, long part of France's political culture and further set into stone by legislation in 1905, put an end to religion's strong influence over state affairs, and so transcended the religious wars and strife that had long plagued France. By strictly separating religion from government, *laïcité* ensures that all of

France's citizens benefit from the same rights, regardless of their religious affiliation. It creates a level playing field for all, reconciling cultural diversity and social harmony.

Following several incidents involving students, President Jacques Chirac became interested last year in the prospects of upholding and strengthening social cohesion by reinforcing the principle of *laïcité* in schools. A commission created by Chirac and led by Bernard Stasi made several recommendations, many of which the president later endorsed in a speech on December 17. The commission determined for instance that schools should better incorporate the teachings of all religions so as to combat prejudices. It also proposed a ban on conspicuous religious symbols in primary and secondary public schools. The Stasi commission's recommendations were received with interest by Jewish, Muslim, and Christian leaders, who believe that enshrining *laïcité* is in the interest of all. ■■

Giving Religion a Strong Voice

THE PRINCIPLE OF *LAÏCITÉ* does not mean a lack of communication between the French government and major faiths. On the contrary, the government regularly consults with the major religious communities in France through various formal mechanisms, in a system that has no equivalent anywhere else in the world.

The Catholic community, for instance, has long been represented by the Council of Bishops, led by Lord Bishop Louis-Marie Billé. In February 2002, the government and the Vatican initiated a series of meetings that are expected to focus on administrative and judicial matters that concern both parties.

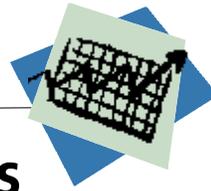
The Protestant Federation of France, established in 1905, comprises 16 churches and 60 associations. Its primary purpose is to contribute to the cohesion of the Protestant community. With Pastor Jean-Arnold de Clermont at its head, it also acts as an interlocutor with the government.

The Central Consistory of Jews of France, established in 1808, encompasses the entire country's Jewish associations of worship. It acts as a liaison with the government, trains rabbis, and responds to the needs of the Jewish community. In 1943, Jewish members of the French Resistance formed the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France (CRIF). The CRIF's stated purpose is to fight anti-Semitism, and it works closely with the French government. Joseph Sitruk, chief rabbi of France, is the Jewish community's leading authority.

In April 2003, the French government assisted the Muslim community in forming the national French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM) and 25 regional councils to serve as interlocutors with local and national French officials on issues such as the construction of mosques. The president of the CFCM is Dalil Boubakeur, head of the Grand Mosque of Paris. ■■

THE ALSACE-LORRAINE EXCEPTION

Although secular, France inherited an historical oddity. Three French departments have not officially separated Church and State. Between 1871 and 1918, Alsace-Lorraine, in western France, was occupied by Germany, therefore it was not part of France when the law separating Church and State was passed in 1905. When re-integrated into France in 1918, Alsace-Lorraine was not bound to the laws that had passed in the interim and instead was administered according to those that had been in place in 1871. Although some laws and provisions from the 1871-1918 period have since been adopted in Alsace-Lorraine, religious education is still required in the region's public schools and the State pays the salaries of Alsace-Lorraine's spiritual leaders from the four previously officially recognized religions.



France's 2004 Economic Resolutions

President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin announce their 2004 plans

IN A MAJOR POLICY SPEECH on January 6, akin to President Bush's State of the Union address, French President Jacques Chirac announced his priorities for the new year, in particular his plans to attack the still too high unemployment rates that plague France and "to stimulate a healthy and durable economy." He proposed to exempt companies from their professional tax ("taxe professionnelle") on any new investments for 18 months. This policy is one of several initiatives contained in the *loi de mobilisation pour l'emploi* (law for job creation). The bill, to go before Parliament in the coming months, is to cost 1.5 billion euros over the 18-month period.

Antoine Seillière, president of the *Mouvement des Entreprises de France* (the French Business Association), said that Chirac's plan "is a measure which is necessary. ... For the French economy, this is good news." Like Seillière, many entrepreneurs praised the bill because it allows them to further stim-

ulate investment. Chirac expressed his wish that, in time, the business tax be replaced by a different, all-encompassing mechanism. He stated that the replacement mechanism should "not penalize industry and should better take into account the diversity of economic activities."

Also in the light of economic reform, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin presented his government's plans to the nation on January 12, highlighting its priorities as the "reduction of unemployment and health insurance reform." Despite the recent rise of the euro, which hinders French exports, Raffarin confidently predicted growth of at least 1.7 percent during 2004. He called for the European Central Bank to lower its interest rates so as to re-adjust the dollar/euro exchange rate to a more sustainable level. Raffarin ended his speech by declaring that 2004 will be the year of Solidarity, and that "in 2004, as in 2003, the government will stick to its commitments in terms of reform." ■ ■

Mars Express Finds Water, Sends First 3-D Photos of Mars

ASPECTACULAR IMAGE of the solar system's biggest canyon was unveiled by the European Space Agency (ESA) on January 19, inaugurating what is hoped will be a very successful scientific mission over Mars. The picture, the first ever high-resolution, three-dimensional image of Mars's surface, was taken by the European probe Mars Express, which was built by a consortium of 24 European and American companies led by Astrium, a French company based in Toulouse.

On January 23, the ESA further announced that a team directed by French astrophysicist Jean-Pierre Bibring had discovered water, in the form of ice, on the planet's south pole. Scientists have long suspected the presence of ice on Mars, and the probe's French-built spectrometer was able to definitively confirm its presence. According to Mike McKay, Mars Express's flight director, "This [finding] strengthens hope of finding sub-

terranean ice and even liquid water on the surface of Mars."

Mars Express will take pictures of the entire surface of Mars at a high resolution of 10 meters per pixel, and will focus on certain areas at an even greater resolution of 2 meters per pixel, thus ensuring that should any little green men exist, they will be found. The probe will also map the mineral composition of Mars, analyze the planet's atmosphere and explore its sub-surface structure up to a depth of a few kilometers with a radar jointly developed by Italy and NASA. In order to perform these measurements, the probe is carrying seven sophisticated instruments, including the German-made high-resolution stereo camera and a French-made mineralogical mapping device. It will remain in orbit for at least



Part of Valles Marineris, the solar system's longest canyon (4,000 km).

(Courtesy: ESA / DLR / FU Berlin -G. Neukum)

one Martian year, the equivalent of 687 Earth days.

For more information, please visit:

www.esa.int/marsexpress. ■ ■

France Embracing the Internet

ARECENT STUDY conducted by GfK (a European survey group) and SVM, a magazine specializing in technology, shows that 40.2 percent of homes in France own computers, falling just short of the average European statistic of 43 percent. This is up from 36 percent in 2002, representing an astonishing increase of 21 percent. Of the 9.9 million computer-equipped homes, 72 percent—or 7.1 million—have Internet access, almost half of them through high-speed connections.

Indeed, the main motivation to buy a computer in France seems to have become the Internet. According to an article from VNUNET France, 91 percent of the people who bought a computer in 2003 also subscribed to an Internet service provider. The study found that the rise in the number of peo-

ple with Internet access is in all likelihood due to the fact that France has the cheapest rates in Europe for high-speed Internet services. The study also notes that for the first time since the poll was conducted, surfing the Web has become the main use of the Internet, according to 45 percent of respondents, beating out e-mail (41 percent), downloading music and software (9 percent), and chatting (6 percent).

The survey showed that, on average, French people surfing the Internet spend 11 hours and 24 minutes each week in front of their computer screen. This fact is particularly interesting because the average time spent in front of the screen in previous years was a mere half hour. Also rising are sales of laptops. In 2003, 39 percent of computers sold were laptops, which was an increase of 13 percent from 2002. ■ ■

FRANCE FIGHTS SPAM

On January 8, the French National Assembly adopted a law on the *économie numérique* (digital economy) making it illegal for organizations to gather e-mail addresses without the express permission of their owners. Legislators hope this will counter the growing scourge of spam, known as *pourriel* in France (a combination of the French words for trashcan—*poubelle*—and e-mail—*courriel*). The French Association of Access Providers would like even tougher legislation that would allow it to pursue spammers in court.

ROSETTA HEADS FOR COMET

The launch of the European Space Agency's (ESA) Rosetta spacecraft is scheduled for late February 2004. The spacecraft will be the first to attempt the long-term exploration of a comet. Rosetta's mission will take the spacecraft to Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko in 2014. The mission is designed to be the most detailed study of a comet to date and will include the release of a lander onto the comet's frozen surface. Rosetta will spend two years orbiting Churyumov-Gerasimenko.

PEUGEOT JOINS AUTOSAR ALLIANCE

PSA Peugeot Citroen recently became a member of the Automotive Open System Architecture (Autosar) partnership. Autosar's purpose is to define and supply a common electronic software architecture standard to its members. Through standardization, the French car maker hopes to reduce the cost and time required to develop electronic systems. PSA Peugeot Citroen joins other car makers such as BMW Group, DaimlerChrysler, Ford, Volkswagen, and Toyota in the Autosar partnership.

ORANGE LAUNCHES PUSH-TO-TALK SERVICE

French telecommunications giant Orange, a subsidiary of France Telecom, has announced its plans to launch a push-to-talk (PTT) service which will be incorporated into its cell phones. This technology simplifies calls between previously specified users, turning phones into the equivalent of walkie-talkies. Orange will use technology from Kodiak Networks, a U.S. company. The service will become available in France and the United Kingdom in 2004, and will eventually be expanded to 10 European countries in which Orange operates.

JEWISH GROUP PRAISES FRENCH GOVERNMENT

Yaïm Musicant, director of the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France (CRIF), an umbrella group of French Jewish organizations, expressed his conviction on January 26 that the French government is working aggressively to deal with acts of anti-Semitism in France. According to Musicant, who was responding to criticisms by Israeli minister Nathan Chicharansky, "Measures are being taken by the ministers of the interior, national education, and justice... the government is not remaining passive in the face of anti-Semitic acts." He noted the fall last year in serious anti-Semitic incidents, such as the fire-bombings of synagogues.

CREATION OF A COMMITTEE IN MEMORY OF SLAVERY

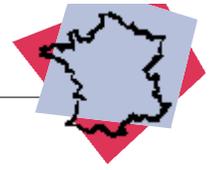
French Minister for Overseas Departments Brigitte Girardin announced on January 15 the creation of a committee in memory of slavery. The committee's first mission will be to decide the official commemoration date for slavery's abolition. Officially abolished in France on April 27, 1848, this commemoration is now celebrated on four different days in the overseas departments, coinciding with the date the official abolition decree arrived in them. Projects will also include proposing school programs, research ideas, and public information to commemorate the abolition of slavery. Guadelupian author and professor Maryse Condé will preside over the committee.

EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Educational videos that follow the French national curriculum are now available over the Internet for subscribing educational institutions. Through a partnership between the educational television channel France 5, the Ministry of Culture and Communication, and the Ministry of Education, www.lesite.tv covers five subjects—history, geography, languages, social sciences and life sciences—and provides over 800 videos, representing 4,200mn of programming.

LILLE JOURNALISM SCHOOL TURNS 80

The Lille School of Journalism, founded in 1924, is celebrating its 80th birthday. One of the first professional journalism schools in Europe, the Lille School of Journalism produces elite journalists, admitting only 56 students per year, and, with alumni from over 80 different nations, it now boasts a strong international presence. The birthday celebration falls at a perfect time, as Lille is currently the cultural capital of Europe.



Crime Down in France

Energetic measures taken by the government have reduced crime for the first time in six years

ON JANUARY 14, French Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy announced that the level of crime in France decreased by 3.38 percent in 2003. "France is on the right track" reported Sarkozy. The current government has made security a top priority, increasing police spending and adding 13,500 new officers. Improvements were seen in the areas of theft, financial offenses, drug offenses, and public delinquency. The 2003 results bode well for the government's plan to diminish crime by 20 percent by the end of 2006 (compared with 2002 levels).

The decrease in crime was felt almost universally across the country, with 85 of the 95 French departments reporting improvements from last year. Metropolitan areas such as Lille,

Marseille and Paris were particularly successful in reducing crime. In fact, Paris saw a decline of 7.4 percent (or 38,000 fewer incidents), which is in line with Sarkozy's goal of a decrease in crime of 30 percent for the capital by the end of 2004.

In 2004, countering urban violence, organized crime, and illegal immigration will become priorities. Indeed, Sarkozy drew particular attention in his press conference to the need to decrease violent crimes and attacks on individuals, and he plans to do so by focusing specifically on 20 cities or areas with the highest crime rates. Another intended measure proposed by Sarkozy is to increase security around middle and high schools, in order to ensure that education is not disrupted by violence. ■

New, Continual Census Program Launched

THE FRENCH NATIONAL census is revamping its look, starting from the bottom up. INSEE, the French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies, announced that 2004 will mark the introduction of an annual census. Traditionally, the census was taken every seven to nine years and counted the entire population at one time. However, the long periods of time between censuses led to more and more outdated results. The landmark decision to renovate the polling method was made while keeping timeliness, relevance, and precision as the overriding goals.

The new procedure cuts down on time by polling only a portion of the population, then calculating overall figures based on that information. The system divides larger *communes* into five sec-

tions and will poll one section per year. The smaller *communes*, those with less than 10,000 inhabitants, will be placed into one of five groups which will be polled annually as well. Based on the results from that fifth of the population, the INSEE will be able to make accurate estimates of the population as a whole.



Over 60 million and counting
(Courtesy: Tom Connelly)

More current statistics on France's population will also result in the more efficient distribution of public funding. The new method will allow the government to track demographic changes throughout France more closely, thus identifying the changing needs of each region in terms of, for instance, public day-care centers, schools and hospitals. The up-to-date statistics will also help businesses better analyze potential markets. ■

France Celebrates Bicentennial of Napoleonic Code

“**M**Y TRUE GLORY is not to have won 40 battles. ... What nothing can efface, what will endure forever, is my Civil Code.”

Napoleon Bonaparte was perhaps justified in calling the Civil Code of 1804 his crowning achievement, as it helped revolutionize civil law in France, and by extension in much of the world. As First Consul, he commissioned four jurists of the Ancien Régime to complete this codification: Tronchet, Portalis, Maleville and Bigot de Preameneu. The first written legal code established in a country with a civil law legal system (as opposed to the Anglo-Saxon common law system), the *Code Civil*, renamed the "Napoleonic Code" in 1807, unified French law under the principles of the French Revolution.

Rooted in Roman law and following Justinian's *Corpus Juris Civilis*, it divided civil law into three categories: personal status, property and acqui-

sition of property. The Civil Code serves as a model most notably for Switzerland and Germany, but also for Belgium, Italy, Poland, Romania, Portugal, Spain, Egypt, Turkey, Japan and many Latin American countries. In North America, both Quebec and Louisiana continue to use a version of the Napoleonic Code.



Napoleon in his Study, 1812, Jacques-Louis David

To celebrate the bicentennial of the promulgation of the Civil Code, a "chef d'œuvre de l'art législatif" (a legislative masterpiece), on March 21, 1804, Paris will host a colloquium at the Sorbonne featuring eminent members of the French and international legal communities as well as a visual exposition at the National Assembly. A compendium of nearly 30 articles examining the role of the Civil Code will also be published. This celebration is sponsored by the Supreme Court of Appeals, the Henri Capitant Association for Friends of the French Legal System and the Council of State's Order of Barristers. ■



Paris Starts Year of the Monkey in Style

THE EIFFEL TOWER has changed color many times since it was first opened to the public in 1889. This year, in celebration of the Chinese New Year, the international symbol of Paris and France was bathed in the Chinese color of luck and prosperity: red. The five-day illumination of the Eiffel Tower was the culmination of an elaborate parade which took place on the Champs-Élysées in Paris on January 24 and which was attended by Chinese President Hu Jintao during his state visit to mark the 40th anniversary of the reestablishment of diplomatic ties with France. The parade, which is normally held in the capital's Chinatown, marked the continuation of the Year of China, a season of cultural exchange between China and France which began in October 2003.

Since 1997, Beijing and Paris have been linked as sister cities and Beijing contributed groups of singers, actors, and mar-

tial artists to make this year's parade a memorable success. In addition to the Chinese contingent, the parade featured breath-taking floats and colorful kites, interspersed with dancers, musicians, and acrobats. The centerpiece of the extravaganza was a gigantic, red-and-gold dragon created from materials donated by Chinese merchants. Brought to life by 200 performers and spanning the length of eight flat bed trucks, the dragon is considered to be the largest in the world.



A Lucky and Prosperous Eiffel Tower

(Courtesy: Jean-Marc Charles / EDF)

By welcoming the Year of the Monkey, Paris also ushered in a year dedicated to Franco-Chinese friendship and cultural exchange. Chinese concerts, circuses, films and art exhibitions are scheduled to be held throughout France until July 2004. Although the Eiffel Tower was illuminated in red only for five days, the spirit of Franco-Chinese friendship which it represents will continue to shine the whole year through. ■ ■

2004 Is George Sand Year!

FRANCE WILL CELEBRATE the bicentennial of the birth of George Sand this year. In fact, at Minister for Culture Jean-Jacques Aillagon's personal request, 2004 has been declared "George Sand" year. The festivities will officially start on February 3, when the French Assembly will host lectures of George Sand's political and literary texts by actors and 100 school students from different regions of France. Throughout the year, book expositions, new editions of her works, and special TV and radio broadcasts will help the French rediscover this seminal author.

Born Amandine Dupin on July 1, 1804, George Sand changed her name so that her writings would be judged purely on their merits, and not as those of a woman (women were still discrimi-

nated against at the time). Unappreciated for years by French critics, studies of her work have undergone a renewal these last years, first in the United States then in France. With her pacifist and ecological inclinations, her political writings were often very controversial and could be prophetic. Author of countless letters, novels (such as *Iélie* and *François de Champi*), plays, articles, and an autobiography, George Sand perhaps became most famous for her numerous love affairs with such prominent artistic figures as Alfred de Musset and Frédéric Chopin.



Portrait of George Sand, 1838, Auguste Charpentier

Seminars on literacy and politics as related to George Sand will be organized by universities in France and in the United States (including Wellesley College and New York University). ■ ■

All That Jazz

Two major events show that France's jazz scene is alive and kicking

WITH A HISTORY OF FAMOUS jazz performers spanning the 20th century, France is no stranger to the constantly evolving jazz scene. Two recent events highlighted France's ongoing passion for this typically American form of music.

La Cité de la Musique in Paris, a forum for musical events, held an eclectic series of concerts from January 17-25, each headlined by American jazz pioneer Wayne Shorter. Shorter, a former member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, traveling companion of Miles Davis and co-creator of Weather Report, chose to invite Malian singer Salif Keita and Brazilian legend Milton Nascimento. A delight to Parisian music lovers, Shorter performed Mozart, Milhaud, Bartok and Prokofiev with the Lyon National

Orchestra and teamed up with acclaimed American jazz pianist Herbie Hancock.

In Tours, the renowned underground jazz club Le Petit Fauchoux celebrated its move from its small, 80-seat poster plastered locale on rue des Cerisiers to the larger 243-seat Tours Regional Drama Conservatory with three jazz-filled nights (January 15-17). The three nights featured the National Jazz Orchestra (headed by Claude Barthélémy) accompanied first by *À suivre X'tet*, then by promising local jazz artists and finally by the Philidor Ensemble.

Both jazz scenes showcased France's unique and privileged position not only as a central hub for jazz, but also as a smorgasbord of musical genres that invites originality, experimentation and, after all, a little bit of fun. ■ ■

FREE PARIS MUSEUMS ATTRACT SWARMS

Since 2001 Bertrand Delanoë, mayor of Paris, has made the permanent collections of the city's national museums free of charge in order to attract new visitors, such as youths and families. The city controls 15 museums, including the Modern Art Museum of the City of Paris, the Carnavalet Museum on the city's history, and the houses of Balzac and Victor Hugo. These permanent collections, which benefited from a 78 percent increase in visitors in 2001, saw another 27 percent increase in 2003.

HAPPY 80TH BIRTHDAY ROLAND PETIT

On January 13, well-known French choreographer Roland Petit celebrated his 80th birthday. A surprise party given by the Opera of Paris, with participation from the Russian Bolshoi Ballet (currently playing at the Garnier Palace and for which Petit choreographed), marked the occasion. Petit, who began taking dance classes at the Paris Opera at age 10, is known for his innovative style and elegance. Up until 1998, he was director of the National Ballet of Marseilles. With his classics still playing in Paris, and with his newest project debuting in March, his career is far from over.

OPERA SEASON IN FULL SWING

Music is everywhere in France during the month of February, as theaters and concert halls are in full swing for the 2004 season. The Opera of Paris will debut, on February 23, *L'Espace Dernier* by Matthias Pintscher and based on works from Arthur Rimbaud, while the Lyon Opera will debut *Nègres* from Michael Levinas. Classical music is also on the menu, with a *Festival Haendel* under way at the Champs-Élysée Theater, as well as concerts at the City of Music (information at www.cite-musique.fr) and at the Louvre Museum (www.louvre.fr).

FRANCE'S BEST SOMMELIER FOUND

Dominique Laporte, having won the 23rd edition of the "Concours du Meilleur Sommelier de France" on January 19, has been deemed France's best wine waiter, out of more than 100 contestants. The 31-year-old, who works for the Great Eastern Hotel in London, had to undergo several trials that tested his sense of taste, his decantation technique, his English-speaking aptitude, his service skills and his ability to match meals with wines. In second and third places were Aurélien Blanc, from Badrutt's Hotel in Saint-Moritz (Switzerland) and Pascal Leonetti, from the Ill Auberge in Illhaeusern (France).



TV5, the francophone international television network, celebrated its 20th anniversary on January 2 and announced a new programming schedule. The network, a partnership between Belgian, Canadian, French and Swiss channels, will feature more documentaries, sports and cultural events as well as debates. With a daily audience of 18 million, TV5 is the world's second largest network, after MTV but ahead of CNN (www.tv5.org).

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French Fashion and the Modern Woman

The New York Fashion Institute explores the influence of French couturières from 1919 to 1939

THE LATEST EXHIBIT at the New York Fashion Institute of Technology Museum, "Fashioning the Modern Woman: The Art of the Couturière, 1919-1939," explores the inter-war period and the major impact the most famous women fashion designers in Paris had at this turning point in history. Indeed, between World War I and World War II, among the many things that were rapidly changing in society was the idea of the "modern woman." Changing trends in fashion houses and the withdrawal of the corset in lieu of looser, more flowing garments, bear witness to this revolutionary period.

The exhibit will feature almost a hundred outfits from various designers of the day, and will seek to show the public why female couturières in particular were so important to the movement: they helped create the modern woman through their modern styles. Just granted suffrage and beginning to move slowly but surely out of the home and into the work force, women were seeking comfortable and practical clothing with an easy elegance. As Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel observed, "[Earlier] designers [forgot] that there are women inside the dresses. Most women dress for men and want to be admired. But they must also be able to move, to get into a car without bursting their seams! Clothes must have a natural shape."

Thus Chanel became famous for her simple, boxy cuts that required no corset or waist definition. She allowed women to be fashionably comfortable. In 1926 she intro-

duced the famous "little black dress" for all occasions, and also created a line of accessories inspired by the "art deco" movement of the 1930s. Chanel, who passed away in 1971, remains to this day one of the most important figures in fashion, and several of her rare pieces are on display at the exhibition.

Another integral figure of the period featured in the exhibition is Madeleine Vionnet. If Chanel was the workingwoman's designer by day, it was most certainly Vionnet who dressed her by night, in stunning signature evening gowns. Striving always "to dress a body ... not to construct a dress," Vionnet popularized the figure-flattering bias cut, and introduced the halter neck and the cowl neck. However, visitors will also have the opportunity to view some rare pieces from Vionnet's daywear collections alongside her famous formalwear.

The fashions of Chanel and Vionnet are joined by other such distinguished names as Elsa Schiaparelli, Jeanne Lanvin, the Callot Sisters, Augusta Bernard, Louise Boulanger, and Alix Grès, among others.

The exhibition runs from February 10 through April 10 at the Fashion Institute of Technology's (FIT) Museum, in New York. A two-day symposium, Friday February 20 and Saturday February 21, will also accompany the exhibition, featuring several renowned authors, curators, and scholars discussing couture and culture in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s. For more information,

you may contact the museum at (212) 217-5800 or visit their Web site at www.fitnyc.edu/museum.



**Lanvin Evening jacket, 1935.
Yellow silk satin and silver lame**

(Courtesy: Fashion Institute of Technology Museum - Irving Solero)

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