

A triweekly review of French news and trends
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First Constitution for the European Union

Fundamental law is "good for Europe and good for France" according to Chirac.

EUROPEAN UNION LEADERS adopted the bloc's first-ever constitution at the end of a two-day summit in Brussels on June 18, after almost two and half years of intense negotiations. All agreed that the new constitutional treaty is a great achievement for Europe and for all Europeans, and a very significant milestone in the evolution of the E.U. French President Jacques Chirac signaled the importance of the event for his country by giving a rare national television address on June 19. He called the agreement "genuinely historic" and emphasized that the constitution is "good for Europe and good for France," because, "for the first time in Europe's history, 25 countries are expressing together their will to strengthen peace and democracy on our continent and give it new opportunities for prosperity and solidarity."

FRANCE DETERMINED TO ASSIST IRAQIS

On June 8, the U.N. Security Council voted unanimously for resolution 1546, concerning the restoration of Iraqi sovereignty. After the resolution's initial text was "amended and improved" at the request of France, Germany, and Russia, the members of the Security Council met and formally adopted the American-British resolution by a vote of 15-0. President Jacques Chirac's spokeswoman, Catherine Colonna, noted that the resolution "clearly reflects the return of sovereignty to the Iraqis," by, for instance, asserting their control over their nation's oil resources and security forces.

In related news, Abel Abdel Mehdi, finance minister of Iraq's interim government, who was in France on a private visit, was received on June 22 by French Finance Minister Nicolas Sarkozy and the secretary-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The secretary-general emphasized the importance France gives to the success of the transition in Iraq. France's policy is guided by one simple principle: to restore sovereignty to the Iraqis and assist them in rebuilding their country.

France is ready to take its full part in Iraq's political and economic reconstruction in a bilateral capacity and in the context of the European Union, in accordance with the conclusions of the European Council on June 17-18.

With regard to the question of debt, France confirmed to Mehdi that, as President Jacques Chirac had announced at the G8 summit in Sea Island, GA, it would examine with its Paris Club partners the modalities for a substantial cancellation.

Bolstered by an opinion poll that indicated that 66 percent of the electorate would support the charter if it was put to a referendum, Chirac said that the document will enable the E.U. "to function more efficiently and address more effectively today's challenges." He explained that "Europe will see its institutions strengthened with a stable European Council president and an E.U. foreign minister who will amplify the role of each of our nations." He also emphasized that "the role of the European Parliament will be broadened," and that "a new voting system in the Council, based on a double majority (55 percent of the member states representing 65 percent of the Union's population), will better take into account what Europe actually is—i.e. not only a union of States, but also a union of peoples and citizens." He then welcomed the fact that the new constitution clarifies the distribution of powers between the E.U. and its member states.

While the new constitution will give the E.U. more clout on the international stage, President Chirac explained that "it will also give France more weight within Europe and enable citizens of our country to make their voices heard (...). That is why this agreement is very important, and that is why I call it historic." Chirac, who would have liked the summit to have gone fur-




President Jacques Chirac speaking on June 17, during the European Summit in Brussels.

(Courtesy: Agence France-Presse)

ther toward harmonizing fiscal and social policies, expressed satisfaction that "the 25 nations have put into place mechanisms that will allow States who so wish to make headway faster without being blocked by those who need more time."

Before the constitution is put into effect, it must be ratified by all 25 member states, and several have already committed themselves to holding a referendum on the matter. Chirac stated earlier that it could take him up to a year or more to decide whether to hold a referendum or seek parliamentary ratification instead.

The Netherlands will take over the E.U. Presidency in July, and will oversee the clarification and translation of the text—which is expected to take three months—after which there will be a formal signing ceremony. 

INTERIOR MINISTER SETS HIS SIGHTS ON SIX PRIORITIES

As he seeks to tackle some of France's most serious social issues, French Minister of the Interior Dominique de Villepin announced on June 24 six top priorities on which he will focus his Ministry's efforts. They include the fights against terrorism, cybercrime, drug trafficking, racism and anti-Semitism, as well as protecting minors and ensuring that all French citizens benefit from the same opportunities. Each taskforce will be headed by Villepin's cabinet in conjunction with a leading independent authority.

Villepin himself will direct the anti-terrorism taskforce, thereby signaling its critical importance for France. As a first step, Villepin announced the creation of a new government agency in charge of analyzing and exchanging information concerning possible terrorist threats. Cooperating under this new umbrella agency, to be known as the Conseil du Renseignement Intérieur (Council of Domestic Intelligence), will be the Directorate of Territorial Security—France's equivalent of the CIA—, the gendarmerie, and the Department of International Police Cooperation.

The Interior Minister also emphasized the importance of the fight against drug trafficking. According to him, "Behind every joint, there is a connection with a criminal or terrorist activity." Indeed, drug smuggling helps finance many of the terrorist networks operating in Europe.

With regards to providing equal opportunities to all, Villepin, who dismissed affirmative action as contrary to the principle of equality, announced nonetheless that measures will be taken by his Ministry to hire more minorities.

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MORE FRENCH TROOPS SENT TO AFGHANISTAN

France is sending more troops to contribute to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan this August. General Henri Bentégeat, French chief of staff, said on June 2 that a French general will take command of the ISAF on August 11, and 300 men will reinforce the French troops participating in ISAF, bringing their total to 1,000. ISAF is conducting peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan under a U.N. mandate and NATO control. Of the French troops deployed in Afghanistan, 200 special forces have been part of America's military operation, Enduring Freedom, since August 2003.

FOREIGN MINISTER ON TOUR IN THE MIDDLE EAST

French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier traveled to the Middle East, June 20 to 22, and June 29 to 30, to discuss the current situation in the region. Barnier first visited Egypt and Jordan, where he reaffirmed France's support for the Road Map for Israeli-Palestinian peace. Barnier then visited the Palestinian territories from June 29 to 30, where he met the Palestinian government and its leader Yasser Arafat. He is planning to visit Israel in the near future.

2 PROGRAMS LAUNCHED FOR FUTURE WARFARE

During the Defense Show held in Villepinte, near Paris, from June 14 to 20, French Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie announced two new defense programs. EADS will receive 300 million euros to develop a drone program, called EuroMale (drones are pilotless planes that are flown remotely or by onboard computers). The project will attempt to design, by 2008, an observation drone with a range of 2,796 miles over a 24-hour period. The second program concerns the creation of a computer network that will collect and process military information in real time so that operational strategies can be implemented quickly.

CELEBRATION OF FRENCH-NORTH AMERICAN TIES

Xavier Darcos, minister delegate for cooperation and francophony, will pay an official visit to Canada from June 24 through June 27, during which he will participate in ceremonies commemorating the 400th anniversary of the founding of St. Croix by French explorers Samuel Champlain and Pierre Dugua de Mons. Established on June 26, 1604, St. Croix was France's first permanent settlement in North America.

French Aid Most Generous Among G8

A REVIEW OF FRENCH aid policies and programs released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) commended France for the rise in its official development assistance (ODA), citing it as the most generous G8 country in terms of its ODA/gross national income ratio. The report, released on May 26, applauded the increase of French ODA from \$4.2 billion in 2001 to \$7.3 billion in 2003. France plans to continue this rise by boosting its ODA to around \$9 billion by 2007, with over half of that money going to developing countries in Africa.



Computer class in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.
(Courtesy: World Bank- Ami Vitale)

France has consistently played a leading role in international efforts to harmonize aid policies, as well as to facilitate better aid management practices in developing countries.

Indeed, in addition to the dollar amounts it sends beyond its borders, France works tirelessly to secure the better integration of African countries into the world economy, and to promote sustainable development and democratic governance in developing countries. In 2005, France plans to host a follow-up meeting to a forum held in Rome in 2003 to discuss more effective ways to accomplish these goals.

While praising these numerous successes, the OECD has also challenged French authorities to bring their work to an even higher level, a task that is far from simple. Nevertheless, France hopes to respond to this challenge by setting a new policy direction for its ODA, as well as by improving its field operations, thus making French ODA that much more strategic, transparent, and effective. ■ ■

Environmental Charter Steams Ahead

Charter will constitutionally enshrine the rights of the French to live in a clean environment

FRANCE IS ON its way to making a historic change to its constitution by giving environmental issues as much weight as human rights. Indeed, the bill framing an environmental charter was adopted by the National Assembly on June 1. Notably, it will allow any citizen to bring legal action against state authorities if he or she believes that they are not taking adequate measures to protect the environment.

The charter, initiated by President Jacques Chirac, will enshrine the right of the French to "live in an environment which is balanced and respects health." The president, therefore, called on members of the National Assembly to support a "superior interest which is more important than ordinary laws." Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin agreed, saying, "It is very important that France show itself to be a leader in this matter." And Justice Minister Dominique Perben insisted that "it's time politicians responded to the concerns of our citizens about the protection of the environment."

The charter, consisting of ten fundamental articles and seven points explaining its goals, will have to be ratified by a national referendum or by a supermajority vote of the National Assembly and Senate in order for it to be included in the French constitution. ■ ■



The Charles de Gaulle, the largest combat ship in Europe.

(Courtesy: Marine Nationale)

BRITAIN AND FRANCE SET TIMETABLE FOR CARRIER

French Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie and her British counterpart, Geoff Hoon, met on June 9 to discuss the timetable for the development of their nations' joint project to build three new aircraft carriers (two for Britain and one for France, which already operates the Charles de Gaulle, Europe's largest ever fighting vessel). The ministers said that they hope to evaluate the progress made by September and have set June 2005 as the target date for a final agreement. Alliot-Marie explained that by working together, Britain and France are seeking to "optimize costs and interoperability, and reduce technical risks."

Defense Remains Priority

Chirac Reaffirms Commitment to Spending Increases

IN A PRESS CONFERENCE on June 24, President Jacques Chirac reaffirmed his commitment to increasing France's military hardware expenditure by 2.6 billion euros per year (from 12.5 billion to 15.1 billion, with total military expenditures amounting to approximately 31 billion euros in 2003), in spite of current budget difficulties. The budget increase, which would not reach its peak until 2008, is part of France's continued efforts to improve its military capabilities and resources.

Like many countries in Europe, France has fallen behind the United States in terms of its defense spending, particularly in regards to advanced research and development projects. This is cause for concern insofar as it diminishes France's ability to face uncertain future threats.

The proposed injection of money into the defense budget would, among other things, enable the development of

new weapons and weapon systems, as well as the purchase of current state-of-the-art weaponry (including the Franco-German Tiger combat helicopter and the NH90 transport helicopter). The proposed increase will likely amount to approximately 3-4 percent of the country's GDP, a significant investment that signals a deepening desire on the part of France to match its resources with its ambitions and responsibilities on the world scene. ■ ■



Space Seminar Heralds More Cooperation

The symposium was co-hosted by the Embassy of France and George Washington University.

THE EMBASSY OF FRANCE's Office of Science and Technology and George Washington University's Space Policy Institute co-hosted the third annual symposium on space exploration on June 21 and 22. Approximately 130 international space specialists, including 30 speakers, met at GWU to discuss space-related issues.

Vincent Sabathier, space attaché at the French Embassy, said that France, as the leading European space nation (with its powerful aerospace industry and its funding of the European Union's space program to the tune of 40 percent of its budget), has been a major bilateral partner in U.S. space exploration efforts for the past 40 years.

Sabathier said the symposium started a global dialogue on space exploration and laid the ground for additional international cooperation. According to him, it was also an opportunity to better familiarize Europeans with the new U.S. vision of space exploration, which President George W. Bush presented in January 2004 during his State of the Union speech.

John Logsdon, director of GWU's Space Policy Institute, noted that the United States is the uncontested leader in space exploration because it spends much more money on

space endeavors than any other country. However, he said NASA needs to come up with an agenda that will offer new opportunities for international cooperation. He added that NASA hopes to have such a plan ready for November. ■

THE NORMANDY LIBERTY BELL.



(Courtesy: Cornille Havard 2004)

"In Philadelphia, they were ringing the Liberty Bell," said late president Ronald Reagan of D-Day, in a speech commemorating the 40th anniversary of the landings. Twenty years later, an exact copy of the 252-year-old, 2,077-pound bell was rung during the 60th anniversary ceremonies in Normandy. Laser scanning technology allowed for precise duplication of the original, and the new \$60,000 bell was cast in copper and tin by Norman Paul Bergamo and his father. The bell, which sits outside the Abbaye-aux-Dames in Caen, will be rung again as part of a July 4 ceremony called "Let Freedom Ring," during which bells will ring out across America (and in Caen!).

American Tourists Rediscover Paris

AT LAST, AMERICANS are reclaiming the streets of Paris. Hotels are booked, restaurants are full, and museums are packed. Figures for March 2004 showed a marked increase in the number of American tourists in Paris, up 12 percent from March 2003. The director of the luxurious Hôtel du Louvre in Paris noted with surprise a leap of 77 percent in the number of his American guests compared with the same period last year. The anniversary of D-Day in particular attracted a great number of American visitors interested in the commemorations. The recent decline in the euro has also made Europe more

affordable for American travelers. Increasingly common as well is the resurgence of tour groups—the trend in recent years had been to see more individual and less organized tourism (which implied a growing level of comfort and a gradual rapprochement between the two societies). For its part, the tourist industry in France is doing its best to attract an even greater segment of the American clientele, offering special discounts and promotions on hotels and tours. All in all, it's a good time to be an American in Paris! For more information, please visit www.franceguide.com. ■

Ubisoft Creates "Political Machine"

IN THE PRECARIOUS window of time between July's Democratic National Convention and August's Republican National Convention, a new tool for political analysis will hit the markets. The tool's producers are none other than Ubisoft, a French company that produces interactive entertainment products. Founded in 1986 by the five Guillemot brothers, the company now distributes their games to an impressive list of international markets, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

This summer, Ubisoft, in cooperation with Stardock Entertainment, is scheduled to release *The Political Machine*. The game, targeted towards PC owners, is nothing less than a full-fledged computer simulation of U.S. presidential elections. In addition to simulating the upcoming Bush-Kerry match-up,

players can also compete with historical candidates, such as Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan, and even create their own candidates. By controlling the actions that a candidate takes, the player essentially becomes the candidate's campaign manager.

Although game creator Brad Wardell admits that it is possible for the game's model to incorrectly make predictions, he stands by his assertion that it is an accurate reflection of American public opinion. If this is the case, then, Kerry may be in luck; in certain scenarios, the simulation predicts that George W. Bush will lose by a substantial margin come November. ■



(Courtesy: Pascal Rostain and Bruno Mouron)

"STAR TRASH" IN NEW YORK

Two French photojournalists turned trash into glamour by photographing selected items from the garbage of famous people. Pascal Rostain and Bruno Mouron have been working on their "Star Trash" project for 15 years and are selling their poster-sized works for a cool \$6,000 a piece (much of the proceeds will go towards helping the homeless). Their goal is to record culture and lifestyle: Marlon Brando's penchant for hot dogs, Tom Cruise's 13-strong facial product toiletry list, and Arnold Schwarzenegger's Casillas Cuban cigar stubs. Their photos will remain on display until July 16 in the eponymous Star Trash Store (28 Wooster, Soho, New York City).

TV5 ON COMCAST

Francophones across the country can now turn their dials to the French-speaking television network TV5. Indeed, Comcast Cable Communications recently added TV5 to its programming. Comcast is the nation's largest cable company, with over 21 million subscribers in 35 states. Other operators that offer TV5 in the U.S. include Starpower and Dishnetwork.

FACC PRESIDENT HONORED

Serge Bellanger, founding president of the French-American Chamber of Commerce and president of the Association of French Chambers of Commerce and Industry Abroad, will formally receive his insignia as a Commander of the French Legion of Honor on June 30. Bellanger will be presented with this honor by Ambassador Jean-David Levitte for the major role he has played in the development of French-American relations. Recently, for example, Bellanger played a key role in raising funds to ensure the successful trip to France of 100 U.S. WWII veterans. He has received numerous other awards during his career, including the title of "Corporate Ambassador" from the city of New York.

FRANCE AND AMERICA STRENGTHEN ACADEMIC BONDS

On June 3, representatives from both French and American universities met in Paris to discuss ways in which to further improve their academic cooperation. They focused on developing internationally standardized degree programs that would seek to attract the best students from all over the world, programs offering not only rigorous academic standards but also the opportunity to obtain a degree that would be widely recognized in both countries.

OLIVER STONE HONORED IN PARIS

Oliver Stone, distinguished American producer, screenwriter, and actor, was awarded the Grand Vermeil medal by Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë on June 4. Stone, whose mother was French, confessed that his love for film began with French stars such as Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jeanne Moreau and Jean Gabin. A number of Stone's movies will be shown at the Paris Cinema Film Festival (see page 7).

FRENCH RUGBY TEAM TO TOUR U.S., CANADA

The French national rugby team will play the United States on July 3 in Connecticut, and Canada on July 10 in Toronto. A few months after having won the Tournament of the Six Nations, the most prestigious European competition in the sport of rugby, France is already preparing its future successes with a series of exhibition games, including the ones that will take place during this rare trip to the Americas. For more information, visit www.usarugby.org.

**PIERRE DE COUBERTIN:
FATHER OF THE MODERN
OLYMPIC GAMES**

Pierre Frédy, Baron de Coubertin, was a man of singular determination. His pas-



sion was education, the intellectual and spiritual instruction of new generations. It was this passion of his that led to the

revival of the Olympic Games. He was convinced that sport was a source of moral energy; he believed the values of free and fair competition, the interaction of youth from all over the country and the world, and the physical challenge of athletics helped build better individuals. He believed that nations themselves could be shaped thus, that peaceful competition could serve as a nonviolent outlet for aggression while at the same time promoting all the values he felt were so essential to society.

At the age of 31, Pierre de Coubertin announced his greatest ambition—to revive the Olympic Games. It was his dream that, no matter what troubles or conflicts plagued the nations of the world, they would gather every four years in peace, regardless of alliance or enmity. They would leave politics behind and devote their attention to the pure art of sport and sportsmanship.

However, it would not be quite that easy. Few initially took up his call for the revival of the Games. Undaunted, Coubertin founded the International Olympic Committee in 1884. He designed the five interlocked rings of the Olympic logo to represent the five original continents: Africa, America, Asia,

Australia, and Europe—a symbol of unity and interdependence. Two years later, the first Games were held in Athens, where the ancient games had been held. History had come full circle.

The Olympics have always been and continue to be far more than a simple athletic competition; they have from the beginning symbolized peace, chivalry, egalitarianism, and a celebration of the beauty and potential of mankind. They represent an island of sanity and tradition in an ever-changing world, thanks primarily to the vision of their modern founder and his commitment to peaceful and fair competition. As Baron de Coubertin would say, "The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part."

In Depth Review **PROFIL**



France and the Olympics

French Olympic Glory Through the Years

FOLLOWING IN THE SPIRIT set forth by Baron de Coubertin, France and its numerous Olympic athletes have certainly produced their fair share of Olympic glory over the years.



The Panathenaic stadium hosted the first modern Games in 1896.
(Courtesy: Stadia.gr)

After de Coubertin successfully organized the first Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, Paris played host to the second set of games in 1900. Then, in 1921, the International Olympic Committee voted to stage "International Sports Week 1924" in Chamonix, France. This event was a complete success, and, as a result, became retroactively known as the first Winter Olympic Games. Since then, France has hosted the Olympics three more times, most recently in Albertville for the 1992 Winter Games. In addition, France is currently a top contender to host the 2012 Summer Games in Paris.

**TEAM FRANCE AT A GLANCE:
ATHENS 2004**



After racking up 38 medals in the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia, France will seek to maintain its fifth place position among medal winners in the modern era by sending an extremely talented and experienced group of athletes to Athens. Key athletes to watch:

Cecile Argiolas

Sport: Women's Fencing
Previous Olympic Medals: None (Athens 2004 will be the first Olympic Games to hold individual women's fencing).
Noteworthy: France has won more Olympic medals in fencing than any other country. Argiolas is looking to contribute to France's total sum, and is currently ranked eighth in the world.

Laurent Gané

Sport: Sprint Cycling
Previous Olympic Medals: Gold - 2000; for team sprint cycling
Noteworthy: Since 1972, no Frenchman has won the individual cycling sprint. With four world cycling championships under his belt, Gané hopes to become the first to strike Olympic gold since Daniel Morelon.

Fabien Lefevre

Sport: Canoeing/Kayaking
Previous Olympic Medals: None; this will be Lefevre's first Olympic Games
Noteworthy: Although Lefevre has not yet participated in an Olympic contest, he has won the last two world championships in men's K-1 whitewater.

Jackson Richardson

Sport: Handball
Previous Olympic Medals: Bronze - 1992
Noteworthy: In addition to being the star of the handball team, Richardson will also be the French flag bearer at Athens. After having participated in three Olympic Games, Athens will be his last. May it be his best!

Throughout the years, France has produced a plethora of great athletes who have gone on to Olympic glory. One of the earliest of these is Georges André, who made his first appearance as an 18-year-old high jumper in 1908, in which



The new Peace and Friendship stadium in Athens, which will host the volleyball games.
(Courtesy: Stadia.gr)

he won a surprise silver medal. At the 1912 games, André competed in six track and field events. His career was then brought to an abrupt halt by World War I, in which he was badly injured. Despite his injuries, André competed in two more Olympic Games, earning a bronze medal in 1920 and taking fourth place in the 400m race in 1924 at the age of 34. When World War II broke out, André again answered the call of his country, and was killed in 1943.

Another French athlete lived what she called a "divided life." Three months after graduating with high honors from the Paris Conservatory of Music and Art, concert pianist/track and field athlete Micheline Ostermeyer competed in the 1948 Olympics in London. She won gold in both the shot put and the discus, and then captured a bronze in the high jump. She delighted her teammates with an impromptu Beethoven



M. Ostermeyer, 1948
(Courtesy: IOC / Olympic Museum Collections)

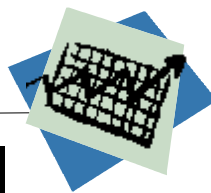
recital following her shot put victory. At the 1964 Olympics in Innsbruck, 18-year-old Marielle Goitschel finished second in the Olympic slalom. The only woman to beat her happened to be her older sister, Christine. Two days later, the French "slalom sisters" switched places, with Marielle taking the gold in the giant slalom and Christine sliding to a silver. The younger Marielle would return to the Olympics in 1968 and capture the slalom gold that her sister had denied her four years earlier.

French athletes have also excelled in more modern times. David Douillet became judo's first triple medalist when he won bronze in 1992, then gold in both 1996 and 2000. Douillet's story is even more remarkable because he came back from a serious motorcycle accident to win his third medal. Twenty-year-old Karine Ruby became the first woman snowboarding champion, taking gold in the giant slalom at the 1998 Olympics. She won silver in the same event in 2002.

Marie-José Percé, the first woman ever to win gold in both the 400m and the 200m in the same Olympics, recently announced her official retirement this June. Percé had been troubled by injuries for years and had not officially raced since July 2000. She won her aforementioned two gold medals in 1996—which came in addition to the one she won for the 400m race in 1992—and for these exploits she will certainly be remembered as one of France's greatest athletes.



Marie-José Percé
(Courtesy: George Herringshaw)



French Senate Adopts Bioethics Bill

This revision of 1994's bioethics law creates a new Agency of Biomedicine to regulate research.

THE FRENCH SENATE adopted, on June 9, a heavily revised version of the bioethics bill that was first passed in 1994. Before being definitively adopted, the new bill must be examined by a joint National Assembly-Senate commission, but political observers do not foresee any major obstacles. The bill primarily regulates cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and organ donation. According to Health Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, the proposed law "would give our country legislation illustrating what our vision of mankind is."

One of the important points of the 2004 bill is the creation of an Agency of Biomedicine. According to article L.1418-1., the Biomedicine agency would be "competent in matters of

transplantation, reproduction, embryology, and human genetics." One of its missions would be to ensure that the laws regulating these matters be enforced.



Dolly (the world's first cloned animal) and her lamb Bonnie.
(Courtesy: Roslin Institute)

Reproductive cloning would be unlawful, with penalties of up to 30 years' imprisonment and fines of up to 7.5 million euros. Therapeutic cloning would also be a crime punishable by up to seven years in prison and a fine of up to one million euros. Embryonic stem cell research would only be permitted on a case-by-case basis, after authorization from the Agency of Biomedicine.

Finally, organ donation between living human beings would be permitted between extended family members, and with any person who can prove that they have been living with the organ receiver for at least two years. ■

Renault Unveils Budget Car for Developing Countries

Priced at \$6,000, the Renault Logan is designed to make maintenance a breeze

FRENCH CAR MANUFACTURER Renault, ranked eighth in the world, unveiled its new inexpensive model at its technical center in Guyancourt, a city in the southwest suburb of Paris, on June 2. The X90, also known as the Logan, starts at 5,000 euros (\$6,000) and will at first target markets outside Western Europe.

Renault created the 14-foot X90 to meet the needs of those who want modern vehicles but who have limited buying power. "Designing a modern and reliable car at a base price of 5,000 euros was considered to be impossible. Logan is proof that we, at Renault, were able to meet the

challenge," said Louis Schweitzer, Renault chairman and CEO. Renault explained that the X90's design has been optimized

to reduce costs. It is plain and simple, with a technology adapted to driving on poorly maintained roads, and it is easy to repair.

Renault has already started to produce the car at Dacia's factories in Romania (Dacia, a Romanian car manufacturer, was purchased by Renault in 1999). The X90 should hit the Romanian market as well as those of other Central European countries in the fall. Factories in Russia, Morocco, Iran, Colombia and China will also produce the X90. Renault's objective is to produce 700,000 units per year by 2010. ■



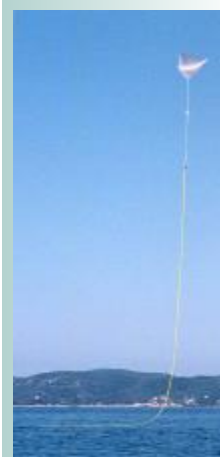
The new Renault Logan.
(Courtesy: Renault)

Digital TV to Explode on French Screens in 2005

Digital technology will triple the number of stations available over the airwaves

DURING ITS MEETING on June 8, the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (Higher Audiovisual Council, or CSA), which regulates French networks, agreed on a launch date for land-based digital television (known as Télévision Numérique Terrestre, or TNT, in France). Fourteen free channels will be unveiled beginning March 1, 2005, followed by 15 premium channels after September 1 of that same year. The 14 free channels will include current broadcast networks, as well as many channels that for the moment are only available via cable. TNT's roll-out will be gradual, with 35 percent of France being covered by March 2005, half by September, and, if all goes according to plan, 85 percent by 2007.

Dominique Baudis, CSA president, declared that TNT will triple the number of free TV channels in France, and will ineluctably lead to the end of the traditional analog broadcast network. Indeed, digital TV signals will be picked up by the same antennas that now receive broadcast channels. French television viewers will simply need to purchase special decoders in order to have access to thirty public and private channels. As well as increasing the number of channels available, TNT will also greatly improve image and sound quality, and make possible a wide range of interactive services, such as personalized weather updates and online shopping and reservations. ■



(Courtesy: CNRS)

FRENCH GOVERNMENT UNVEILS CO2 QUOTAS

In accordance with its Kyoto Protocol commitments, the French government has elaborated a plan to reduce France's CO2 emissions over the next three years. Factories belonging to the eight most polluting industrial sectors will be asked to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide by 1.8 percent relative to their current forecasts. This plan will be submitted to public scrutiny, before being presented to the European Commission on July 7.

FRANCO-GERMAN COOPERATION IN WIND ENERGY

France and Germany announced on June 4 their desire to promote wind energy through a joint program of off-shore wind-turbine construction. In particular, the two countries will attempt to reduce the costs of such turbines, making them more competitive. These off-shore wind energy parks could be built over the next decade for a unit price of between 250 and 500 million euros. Germany is the world's leading producer of wind energy.

AIR FRANCE-KLM ATTRACTS MORE PASSENGERS

Air France-KLM, Europe's leading airline, has reported a 21.3 percent rise in its passenger traffic in May compared with last year. This strong performance is due to the resurgence of traffic on its American and Asian networks (the latter had especially been hit hard by last year's SARS epidemic). The carrier's load factor (a measure of the average percentage of seats sold on each flight) rose to 76.3 percent from 72.6.

A FLOATING SWIMMING POOL ON THE SEINE

On June 3, the Paris town council entrusted French architect Robert de Busny with the task of building a floating swimming pool on the Seine, near the Bibliothèque Nationale. The pool, 90 m long and 20 m wide, will use treated river water—making it environmentally friendly—and will be able to accommodate 500 bathers throughout the year (it will be covered in winter). The 15-million euro pool is scheduled to open in 2006.

NEW WEATHER SOUNDING BALLOON TESTED

The National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the National Center for Spatial Studies have designed a new sounding balloon, the "Aeroclipper," which will be able to simultaneously study the surface of the sea and the lower strata of the atmosphere. This capability will help meteorologists better forecast tropical storms and cyclones, as well as the "El Niño" phenomenon, which regularly affects parts of the U.S.

PARIS IMMIGRATION MUSEUM TO OPEN IN 2007

Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin officially announced that a museum covering the history of immigration to France from 1850 to the present day will be inaugurated in Paris in 2007. At President Jacques Chirac's request, the museum will explain the political, social and economic impact of immigrants on France's culture and society and will thereby illustrate the museum's slogan, "Their history is our history."

POLICE SPECIAL FORCES MARK 30TH ANNIVERSARY

France's special forces, known as the GIGN (Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale), celebrated their 30th anniversary in June. Like SWAT teams—their U.S. counterparts—the GIGN intervenes in risky hostage situations, kidnappings, hijackings, and conducts anti-terrorism operations. The now 113-strong brigade has successfully completed 650 missions since its inception, freeing several hundred hostages and arresting 550 highly dangerous criminals.

HANDICAP-ABLE

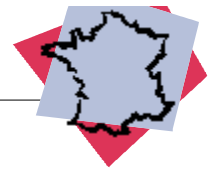
Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë wants to turn his city into a more handicap-friendly environment, and has set aside 24 million euros to do so. Improvements will include equipping 1,500 crosswalks with audible signals, lowering some 30,000 sidewalks to make them wheelchair accessible, and providing professional education and job market awareness to limit discrimination.

LIFE EXPECTANCY GENDER GAP CLOSING

According to a recent survey, French men are increasingly closing their life expectancy gap with women. The gap has decreased from 8.2 years in 1980 to seven years in 2003 (life expectancy in France is now 82.9 for women and 75.9 for men). Heightened awareness of men's health issues has helped bridge the gap, but men continue to be more susceptible to risks linked to the consumption of tobacco or alcohol.

TOUR DE FRANCE

America's Lance Armstrong is going for his sixth Tour de France win, a feat that has never before been achieved. Already a heavy favorite, Armstrong nevertheless had a close and challenging Tour last year, and his eternal rival, Germany's Jan Ullrich, will once again be back to try to prise the Yellow Jersey from Armstrong's grasp. The 2004 Tour de France will start July 3 in Liège, Belgium, and conclude on Paris's Champs Élysées on the 25th.



The Lost Dauphin Found at Last

DNA testing confirms that a preserved heart belonged to Louis XVII

FRANCE'S OWN Anastasia legend has fallen victim, like its Russian counterpart, to modern science. A heart discovered long ago has finally been categorically identified as that of the last Bourbon king, Louis XVII. Sophisticated DNA testing has established that the heart did indeed belong to the 10-year-old heir to the French throne who was robbed of his freedom and his life over 200 years ago.


The history books seem to have been right all along. According to them, the young king was imprisoned by his parents' executioners for three years before dying of tuberculosis in his cell. His heart was secretly cut out of his body for preservation, following royal custom, but the organ was not officially



Portrait of Louis XVII
(Anonymous Artist)

recognized as Louis XVII's until a recent DNA test proved it had indeed belonged to the son of Marie Antoinette.

Until now, a rumor had persisted that the child who perished in prison was not in fact the true Dauphin, but an impostor (according to this rumor, the real Dauphin had been smuggled out in secrecy and replaced with a commoner's body). For most, however, the DNA test has proved conclusive; although many still prefer to think that the child escaped the sad fate that awaited him.

On June 8, the remains of Louis XVII were given a royal burial by French royalists at the Saint-Denis Basilica, near the graves of his parents, hapless victims of the French Revolution Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. 


French Skipper Michel Desjoyeaux Breaks Transat Record

MICHEL DESJOYEUX won the 12th Transat, the British solo sailing race across the Atlantic ocean, on June 8. The 5,000 km race was first run in 1960 and is held every four years. Desjoyeaux smashed the previous race record with his 60-foot multihull, *Géant* (*Giant*), arriving in Boston in 8 days 8 hours and 29 minutes (beating the previous best time by 39 hours), at an average speed of 13.61 knots per hour.



Desjoyeaux arrives in Boston on June 8.
(Courtesy: Benoit Stichelbaut - DPPI)

Desjoyeaux's race was nearly perfect. Taking the lead from the beginning in Plymouth, England, on May 31, he managed to stay first all race long. In spite of being unable to avoid some unfavorable winds during the last day, which made him lose much of his lead, he finally crossed the finishing line two hours ahead of his nearest rival.

Michel Desjoyeaux was the ninth Frenchman to win the Transat. His compatriot Franck Cammas came in third. 

To Hunt or Be Hunted

France tries to balance the welfare of wolves and farmers


FOR THE FIRST TIME since 1979, the French Government is considering whether to allow the controlled culling of France's wolf population, by granting hunting rights for as many as 10 wild wolves in the country's southeastern region.

Originally completely eradicated from France in 1924 due to unrelenting hunting by farmers intent on protecting their livestock, wolves have since made a small comeback, aided by legislation safeguarding endangered species. First spotted in 1992 in the southern Alps, where most researchers believe they crossed over from Italy, the wolf has managed to naturally reintroduce itself into the environment over the past 12



years. With an estimated population of some 55 animals in the mountainous regions of southeast France, the wolf is thriving in its new surroundings.

Yet, while a boon for naturalists, the growing wolf population is cause for concern for breeders and farmers in the region as the wolves turn to livestock for prey. An apex predator with a historically controversial reputation, the wolf is, for many, not a welcome addition to the region. Faced with the rising fear of farmers, the government is seeking to achieve a balance between the interests of man and the interests of beast. With the proposed elimination of a portion of the population, the Ministry of Ecology hopes to reduce the attacks on livestock while maintaining the safety of the majority of the wolf population.

For more information, please visit www.loup.org. 

POLICE DISMANTLE FROG POACHING NETWORK

Seven people in eastern France were arrested May 30 in connection with a poaching ring that preyed upon a much-prized but protected



delicacy: the frog. The slippery amphibian, whose legs have been on the menu of many a French restaurant for centuries, has become relatively rare in France, forcing the government to set rigid restrictions on its capture and consumption. Such restrictions have, however, driven up the price of frogs, making illegal fishing a lucrative business. A single night's catch can bring in 1,000 frogs, fetching upwards of \$300 on the black market. Accused of breaking quotas and flouting closed seasons for the catching of both pool and edible frogs, the poachers, along with a restaurateur who knowingly bought the illegal frogs, will face legal action.



"Faîtes de la Musique, Fête de la Musique"

THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE launched "La Fête de la Musique" ("The Festival of Music") on June 21, 1982, giving musicians a chance to fill streets with their music and city-dwellers an excuse to dance and celebrate. Typically, French cities set up designated areas where musicians are able to perform for anyone who wishes to listen. The festival becomes a concert marathon with the city as its stage, a hundred concerts going on at once, a medley of musical instruments and genres overlapping into a joyous summer evening. By late night, musicians of all types play in any spot left vacant, and lonely stragglers will often accompany a group and play or improvise a tune. The result: a whole city come to life, awakened and culturally stimulated.



Fête de la Musique Arequipa, Peru
(Courtesy: Ministry of Culture)

For the past 10 years, the Foreign Ministry has taken part in these festivities, and this year it organized a concert in the Quai d'Orsay's gardens entitled "Music From Around the World in One Garden." Conversely, the "Fête de la Musique" phenomenon has itself spread across the planet. This year, 110 countries representing five continents participated in the event (in 2003, seven large cities took on the role of a concert stage in the United States alone). Miami, for example, hosted its seventh annual "Fête de la Musique" on Miami Beach this June. Around the world, from Morocco to Mozambique, all the way to India and Japan, June 21 has truly become an international music festival! For more information (in French), visit fetedelamusique.culture.fr. 

THE SECRET LIFE OF VINTAGE CLOTHING

In an unusual exhibit, the Galliera Museum of Style in Paris is now offering visitors a rare, behind-the-scenes glimpse into the world of vintage fashion acquisition and restoration. In its introspective exhibition entitled "Overture pour Inventaire," the museum has chosen to create a "museum-style reality show" that highlights its priceless collection by displaying not only the clothes themselves, but also how museums collect and conserve such pieces for posterity. The Galliera's collection in its entirety comprises some 90,000 pieces that span a period of over 300 years. Stored in unmarked warehouses in Paris that are designed to keep the clothes dry, dust-free, pest-free and at a constant 64 degrees Fahrenheit, the collection includes articles worn by Marie Antoinette, Napoleon-era ball gowns and the Givenchy dress worn by Audrey Hepburn in the 1961 film "Breakfast at Tiffany's." "Overture pour Inventaire" is showing at the museum until August 8. For more information, please visit www.paris.fr/musees/Musee_Galliera/.

Fashion "Rises" to New Levels

PEOPLE MAY SOON be asking, "how does this baguette look on me?" if Jean-Paul Gaultier's newest line of fashion takes off! Every dress, thong, bag, boot, high heel, and umbrella in his new "Pain Couture" ("Bread Couture") exhibit is made from freshly baked bread. Baguettes, croissants, meringues and ladyfingers are produced on location and cleverly crafted into sweet smelling ensembles. Gaultier, 52, whose childhood dream was to be a baker, claims that "baking and fashion have a lot in common," and aims to prove this point in the exhibit. In addition, he believes


bread enhances fashion because of its sensuality and sexuality.

The real pleasure in fashion, Gaultier says, is "just surprising people and inventing." And invent he did, piecing together biscuits and wicker bread basket bustiers to create the culinary equivalents of some of Madonna's most outrageous outfits. The baguette is an especially integral part of Gaultier's designs because it is "the symbol of Paris and of the Parisian that I have become." Come see, smell,



Delectable

(Courtesy: Stefano Pandini - Fondation Cartier for Contemporary Art)

and taste *Pain Couture* at the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art in Paris before October 10. For more information, please visit www.fondation.cartier.fr. 



(Courtesy: Nuits de Satin)

UNDERGARMENTS AND CORSETS EXPOSED

A historical exposition of lingerie, corsets, and other intimate garments entitled "Dessous et Corsets" (Undergarments and Corsets) will be on display at Paris's Viaduc des Arts through July 11 (www.viaduc-des-arts.com). Also on display are a photo collection of classic celebrities donning lingerie, including Marilyn Monroe and Sophia Loren, as well as a section on "Art and Lingerie" featuring works by Jacques Chereau and Félix Ugos.

BREST2004: MARITIME CULTURE AND MUSIC

The city of Brest, in Brittany, will host its fourth annual festival celebrating international maritime traditions and music from July 10 to 16. BREST2004 will feature the maritime cultures of four guest countries: Brazil, Norway, Switzerland, and Ethiopia. In addition to displaying a variety of fleets and replicas of historic vessels, the festival will also feature two concerts each evening by several notable performers. For more information, visit www.brest2004.fr.

FRENCH AUTHOR PRODUCES FIRST BOOK WITHOUT VERBS


A French author, writing under the pseudonym Michel Thaler, claims to have completed the first book without verbs. The feat, which has received mixed reviews from critics, has been compared to author Georges Perec's 1969 project to write a book without using the letter "e." Thaler, who entitled his work *Le Train de Nulle Part* (*The Train From Nowhere*), explained his motivation by stating that "the verb is like a weed in a field of flowers. ... You have to get rid of it to allow the flowers to grow and flourish." It is Thaler's hope that his work, published by Adcan Editions, will soon be translated into English.

Cinema Takes Paris by Storm



WITH THE SECOND edition of the Paris Cinéma film festival opening in the capital city at the end of June and the surrounding Ile-de-France region continuing its push to attract more filmmakers, Cannes and the Côte d'Azur may have found a worthy rival for the title of most cinematic spot in France.

Launched last year by Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë, Paris Cinéma (www.pariscinema.org) aims to be a rendez-vous point for French and foreign film professionals. This year's edition, which runs from June 28 until July 13, promises to be as vast and diverse as the inaugural one. Close to 450 films will be shown in theaters all across the city, 22 of which

will compete for four prizes, including the "Grand prix du Public." In addition to the screenings and competition, the festival will include several tributes to important filmmakers (such as Oliver Stone—see our brief on page 3) and a festival for children. The festival comes at a time when the Ile-de-France region is attempting to reinforce its reputation as the best location in France for directors to make their films. The French government recently expanded regional cinema budgets and Ile-de-France is cashing in: Jean-Paul Huchon, president of the region, expects to receive 12 million euros next year (up from 10 million last year) and up to 15 million thereafter, all to benefit French and foreign directors. 



As every year, *News from France* is taking a well-deserved break this summer. Your favorite French newsletter will be back and better than ever on September 1. In the meantime, the entire *News from France* team wishes you a great, warm and sunny summer, as well as a happy 4th of July and a rousing Bastille Day. The French Embassy in Washington, D.C., and our consulates throughout the country will be organizing events on July 14. For more information, please contact your nearest consulate.

French Curves: the Automobile as Sculpture

French automobiles from the 1930's are on display at the Petersen Automotive Museum in L.A.

VOLUPTUOUS, PROVOCATIVE, sleek and curvaceous; French automobiles of the 1930's evoke an image rarely glimpsed in cars today. Renowned for their beauty, the vintage French automobiles are currently on display for their one-of-a-kind craftsmanship at the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles, California.

The museum launched its "French Curves: The Automobile as Sculpture" exhibition on June 11 and the cars will remain on display until January 23 of 2005. The exhibition features magnificently restored, aerodynamically designed French cars produced between 1930 and 1939 by the masterful minds of Voisin, Delahaye, Bugatti, Delage, and Talbot.

The 1930's represented a time of great political and social turbulence. But the creators of these French masterpieces overcame the Great Depression, labor strikes and geopolitical tensions to manufacture automobiles that were nothing like those that had existed before. These elegantly crafted vehicles combined an unlikely duo, the science of aerodynamics and the art of fashion couture, to create unique works of art.

As the need for speed in automobiles became more relevant, the science of aerodynamics proved to be essential to new designs. Indeed, the creators of automobiles realized that in order to produce very fast cars, it was necessary to incorporate the teachings

of physics into their designs from the get-go. Cars therefore quickly progressed from basic "square box on wheels" shapes to a more rounded style inspired by teardrops ("*gouttes d'eau*"), since the teardrop shape was—and continues to be—considered by experts to be one of the most aerodynamic.

Surprisingly, fashion couture also played an important role in the design of these cars. Designers collaborated with legendary fashion icons, such as Elsa Schiaparelli and Coco Chanel, to create illustrious fashion ensembles. Glamorous women were often shown in couture dresses alongside a French streamlined car in matching color and style. Meanwhile, the Dupont Company in the United States and the Nitrolac Company in France were developing all new paint colors, including metallic paints, which gave both automobile and fashion designers a broader palette from which to work.

The streamlined French car designs of the 1930's quickly became a worldwide phenomenon. Their innovative curves left behind a legacy of improved technology, and modern models continue to display, sometimes overtly, sometimes subtly, their influence. Finally, these designs revolutionized not only the style and design of cars to come, but also those of all things in motion.

For more information, please visit www.petersen.org.



1938 Peugeot Darl'mat 402 by Pourtout (designed by Georges Paulin)

(Courtesy: Petersen Automotive Museum)

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