

High-Level Meeting at the U.N. on HIV/AIDS

FROM May 31 to June 2, 2006, the international community joined together at the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on AIDS in New York to increase global cooperation in the combat against the destructive pandemic. French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Philippe Douste-Blazy, delivered a message on behalf of President Jacques Chirac, urging leaders to increase resources, strengthen coordination between bilateral and multilateral donors, improve health care in impoverished nations, and to continue research to discover an HIV vaccination. These necessary initiatives should improve poor nations' access to effective treatments and represent a step forward in the fight against the pandemic.

Another notable event on AIDS was the launching of the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID/IDPF) founded by France, Brazil, Chile and Norway.

UNITAID/IDPF will be financed through a solidarity levy on airline tickets, which is a simple, equitable, and economically neutral tool. It will guarantee long-term predictable revenues for the purchase of drugs and will also aim at reducing prices. Through market mechanisms, UNITAID/IDPF will, in particular, negotiate multi-year large-volume purchasing programs with the pharmaceutical companies. It will also provide developing

countries with new resources to better sustain their public health care programs.

France will be the first to start applying an air-ticket contribution on July 1, 2006. The law passed by Parliament on December 22, 2005 sets out the following rate caps for all flights departing from the French territory: 1 euro (approximately \$1.25) in economy class and 10 euros (\$12) in first and business class for domestic and intra-European flights (European Economic Area), 4 euros (\$5.00) and 40 euros (\$50.00) on other flights, depending upon the travel class. This mechanism is expected to generate revenue of up to \$ 250 million per year.

As an active member of the U.N., France has already significantly contributed to the fight against the pandemic. For instance, in 2006 and 2007, France is the first largest contributor to the Global Fund, an important Institution in this fight, donating 525 million euros (\$656.25) over those two years.

On June 2, France, Brazil, Chile and Norway signed an agreement with FIFA, the Football World Cup organization, to help build AIDS public awareness during the World Cup. **■**



Kofi Annan and Philippe Douste-Blazy at U.N. meeting

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Humanitarian supplies being loaded for Indonesia

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France Quick to Send Aid to Indonesia

FRENCH authorities provided humanitarian assistance and medical personnel to Indonesia immediately after an earthquake that hit Java May 27. The 5.9 magnitude earthquake devastated the small, Southeast Asian island, leaving nearly 5,800 dead and 33,000 injured. Estimates of those left homeless range from 250,000 to 600,000, according to the United Nations.

The first cargo plane carrying a large amount of

humanitarian aid from France landed in Solo, Indonesia on May 28 and arrived only one day after Indonesian officials made an appeal for international assistance. The plane carried water tanks, hygiene kits, food and 1,000 kitchen kits among its 40 tons of equipment.

French officials immediately announced that more aid would be sent to the island May 30, beginning with two surgical teams, who joined the emergency teams already at Klaten Hospital on the outskirts of Yogyakarta. The Klaten district, more than 20 miles from the earthquake's epicenter, was hit especially hard.

France also sent a plane with 40 rescue workers and five tons of humanitarian aid on May 29, and the European Union has pledged \$3.8 million toward the relief effort, which is estimated to cost up to \$3.1 billion, according to Indonesian Minister of Development, Paskah Suzetta.

Since foreign aid began flowing into the tiny island, the health care situation has improved dramatically, according to U.N. officials. There has been a considerable reduction of the number of hospital patients and a notable improvement in the distribution of emergency supplies. The relief efforts are now focused on vaccinating the survivors from tetanus and measles, and providing housing to those left homeless. **■**

FRENCH-AMERICAN MILITARY COOPERATION

The French Navy Carrier Air Wing rejoined the coalition efforts in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan May 9, lending aid to ground troops and assisting with reconnaissance efforts. France hopes that this addition will enhance cooperation with countries in the Indian Ocean and the Asia-Pacific region, as well as facilitate an enduring military presence in Afghanistan. The French detachment of the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC), commanded by Lt. Col. Gerard Brunel, plays an important role in coordinating France's air-power contribution and ultimately ensures the effectiveness of their support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The military actions of the French Navy Carrier Air Wing have been welcomed by the United States, which has expressed its appreciation for the return of its ally to the CAOC. U.S. Air Force major general Allen Peck, deputy



French Mirage Fighter Jet
© Ministry of Defense

Combined Force Air Component commander, observed that "with continuing rotations of airpower by our allies around the world, the effort to support our troops is truly a coalition operation." Military cooperation between the two countries has been, and is still exceptionally strong. Thus far, the French Air Force has produced six successful air strikes against the enemy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Brunel asserted that French and Americans have been strong partners in the fight against international terrorism in the past, and he is proud that France continues to support the coalition efforts in Afghanistan.

Franco-Israeli Relations Celebrated

FRENCH Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, along with Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister, Tzipi Livni, and hundreds of thousands of Israelis, watched as a spectacular fireworks display over the Tel-Aviv Bay kicked off a summer-long celebration of French culture.

The May 16 extravaganza, which featured a Christian Lacroix fashion show and the opening of an exhibit of white tents emblazoned with the word "peace," marked the beginning of "Voilà !" a three-month long celebration of French culture in Israel. The festival, organized by l'Association Française d'Action Artistique and the embassies of both countries, in cooperation with several Israeli partners including the cities of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa, will feature events that celebrate France and Israel's cultural ties. The celebration will include work from contemporary French artists, filmmakers, musicians, intellectuals and writers.

The event also served as a kickoff for Douste-Blazy's two-day diplomatic trip to Israel, where he met with new Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Livni on May 17. "The discussions we've just had naturally focused on the situation created by the Hamas-led government in the Palestinian Territories. We want to create the conditions for a dialogue with the Palestinian government. It's clearly up to the Hamas leaders to shift their stance and give clear signals that they're ready to renounce violence, recog-

nize Israel and her right quite simply to exist. Nevertheless, we think that Hamas' victory mustn't make us give up the goal of two states living side by side in peace and security. Also, every effort must be made to avert a humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian Territories," Douste-Blazy stated.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert made an official visit to France on June 14 and 15, 2006 where he met with President



Minister Olmert and President Chirac

© MAEF/Photo: F. de la Muire

Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy and Speakers of the French Parliament Christian Poncelet and Jean-Louis Debré. Mr. Olmert participated in the inauguration of the Alley of the Righteous Gentiles at the Memorial de la Shoah with the prime minister and mayor of Paris.

Mr. Olmert's first official visit to France since his election comes in the context of the high-

level meetings that have been a feature of relations between France and Israel since the state visit to Paris by President Katsav in February 2004, the visit by former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in July 2005 and the inauguration of the French "cultural season" in Tel Aviv by Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy. It reaffirms the deep friendship between France and Israel and the French and Israeli peoples. The visit also reflects the wish of both countries to pursue dialogue on questions of common interest, whether in regard to bilateral relations, developments in the Middle East or the large issues of peace and international security. ■ ■

Second Annual National Humanitarian Fair

BRIGITTE Girardin, the Delegate Minister for Cooperation, Development, and French-Speaking Countries kicked off the Second Annual National Humanitarian Fair on May 18 in St. Martin de Cergy-Pontoise, just outside of Paris. In her opening remarks, Girardin emphasized the necessity for international collaboration. "Together we must attract the attention of the public, political and economic decision-makers and private donors to the necessity of international solidarity to combat poverty more efficiently in the world ... it is as much in our interest as it is our moral duty to assist the poorest countries."

The fair aimed to promote interaction and cohesion between individuals, humanitarian associations, government groups and commercial entities. The fair provided a forum for discussion, idea-sharing, and fostering international cooperation. Those interested in international humanitarian aid

careers had the unique opportunity to network with potential future employers.

The fair featured a rich program. Each day, ten round tables and panel discussions focused on areas of the world in need of help as well as strategies for building and strengthening humanitarian organizations. Topics of these discussions included the roots of famine in Africa, how to minimize effects of natural disasters, the impact of communications on small nongovernmental organizations, and how to make a career of humanitarian work. The fair also featured a four-hour symposium about HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Nearly 10,000 visitors and 200 presenters attended the fair. While last year's fair was open to humanitarian organizations throughout France, the 2006 festival included international francophone organizations from Belgium and Switzerland. ■ ■

Transatlantic Soccer Cup Held In Washington, D.C.

JUST in time for World Cup 2006, the Royal Netherlands Embassy organized a Transatlantic Soccer Cup between teams of diplomats and staffers from Congress and the U.S. State Department. In a three game match-up, the E.U. Embassies undiplomatically defeated staffers from Congress, 6-0. In the second game between E.U. Embassies and the U.S. State Department, the E.U. won the match, 3-0. The final game of the Transatlantic Soccer Cup saw staffers from Congress take the State Department, 2-1.

The Transatlantic Soccer Cup, played June 10th at St. Albans school, was co-organized with Austria, the current holder of the European Union Presidency. The E.U. member team consisted of

players from several Member States including Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Romania, the United Kingdom and the European Commission. Staffers from the offices of Representatives Tom Lantos, Grace Napolitano and Senator Arlen Specter made up the Congressional team, while the State Department team came from various bureaus.

All the teams were awarded trophies at the Royal Netherlands Embassy and invited to watch the World Cup match that afternoon. The Transatlantic Soccer Cup, sponsored by Peapod (owned by Giant), is the second soccer match to be organized by the Europeans. Last year, the E.U. played staffers from the State Department. See page 8 for photo. ■ ■



Jim Hoagland Awarded Legion of Honor

TWO-TIME Pulitzer Prize winner Jim Hoagland, an American journalist and columnist from the *Washington Post*, was awarded the insignia of *Chevalier* of the French Legion of Honor on June 9. The award was presented by Catherine Colonna, Minister Delegate for European Affairs, during a ceremony in Paris. The Legion of Honor is France's highest honorary distinction.

Mr. Hoagland was in his early twenties when he spent a year studying in Aix-en-Provence from 1961 to 1962. It was his formation in France that greatly contributed to his interest in the country and his ability to write about France and European affairs with the clarity and insight for which he is renowned.

Hoagland's eminent career at the *Washington Post* spans 40 years and several continents. He began in 1966 as a reporter covering local affairs. In 1972 a call for new horizons led him to

report from Nairobi, Beirut and France, before eventually returning to Washington in 1979 as foreign editor. He held this position for seven years, after which he returned to Paris. It was at this point that Hoagland began his twice-weekly column, which continues to this day, and in which he chronicled, from Europe, the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, the rise of China and issues in the Middle East and the First Gulf War. He returned to Washington in 1990.

In 1971 Hoagland received his first Pulitzer Prize for his 10-part series on South Africa under apartheid. His second Pulitzer in 1991 honored his qualities as commentator for alerting public opinion to the expansionist designs of Saddam Hussein and seeking to explain the collapse of the Soviet Union.

When writing about France, he has observed with a keen, sometimes critical eye, but consistently demonstrated a deep understanding of the country. ■ ■



Minister Delegate Colonna awards Hoagland

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French Scientist Wins Waterman Award

A FRENCH mathematician's revolutionary work in harmonic analysis won him the top prize for young scientific researchers.

Emmanuel Candès, a 35-year-old professor and researcher at the California Institute of Technology, received the National Science Foundation's prestigious Alan T. Waterman Award in April. The award specifically targets young researchers—candidates may not be more than 35 years old or seven years beyond having received a doctorate—and encourages recipients to further their research by awarding them a \$500,000 grant that is dis-

tributed over a period of three years.

Candès is an innovator in the field of harmonic analysis, a branch of mathematics that teases signal waves apart for reading and processing. His development of a new set of mathematical tools, which allows a more efficient digital representation of wave signals, promises to improve the digital processing of signals in our modern technologies.

Candès studied in his native France before receiving a doctorate in mathematics and computer science at Stanford University. ■ ■

CNRS Creates Youth Science Club in U.S.

THE *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (CNRS) created a new youth group in the U.S. that aims to create dialogue between students and the scientific community. The group was created through an agreement signed on May 20 between CNRS and Lycée Rochambeau French International School, in Washington, D.C. It is the first club of its kind in the U.S. Sofia Nadir, Communications Director for CNRS, and Jean-Luc Clément, CNRS Director of European and International Relations, were both present at the signing that took place during the official inauguration ceremony of the new school building.

The CNRS youth groups, known as "CNRS Jeunes Sciences & Citoyens," create a unique format for interaction between young people and scientists. Their main focus is tackling the large questions related to scientific research in terms of its fundamental approach as well as its economic implica-

tions. 53 CNRS Jeunes groups already exist in France.

CNRS's mission is to create, exchange, and disseminate knowledge that is essential to society in all fields of learning. The youth groups contribute to this goal by fostering dialogue and reflection among young people and scientists. Each youth group organizes two or three workshops a year where students meet directly with guest scientists as well as planning visits to laboratories and participating in regional forums with other CNRS Jeunes groups.

Lycée Rochambeau in Washington, D.C. is an international school offering French programs for youth from pre-elementary through high school.

The inauguration ceremony, which was held in its new auditorium, also served to commemorate the school's 50th anniversary. The ceremony was followed by a gala at the Embassy of France. ■ ■



CNRS Science Club at Lycée Rochambeau

© Mr. Patrick Bernier, CNRS

BOOK ON FRANKLIN IN FRANCE WINS AWARD

A book on Benjamin Franklin's years in France won the George Washington Prize, an award established last year to reward the best books on early American history. *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France and the Birth of America*, by Stacy Schiff, is an account of the years between the Declaration of Independence and the end of the Revolutionary War. During those years, Franklin represented the fledgling American republic in Paris and helped convince the French government to offer critical military support during the American Revolutionary War.

IMMERSION PROGRAM FOR FRENCH TEACHERS

The French Embassy will host an immersion program for American French teachers in Washington, D.C., on June 27 and 28. The program will be presented jointly with the National Capital Language Resource Center, and will provide French teachers with an opportunity to continue their education about the French language and culture while speaking only in French. Immersion housing is available at George Washington University where participants will converse only in French and will have access to French periodicals. They will receive up-to-date information on French youth culture and resources on fashion, film, popular music, and the slang that will be of interest to their students. This year's central topic is "French's Polyglot Nature" with two presentations on how words have traveled before being adopted into the French Language: "The Gaulois," by Mr. Jean-Marie Lebon and "Did you know that lots of French words came from abroad?" by Ms. Jocelyne Lemoine, both from the Cultural Services in Washington.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

International education in the United States received a boost this spring, when two Midwestern professors were named *Chevalier* in the Order de Palmes Académiques and when the Wisconsin Department of Education signed an agreement to further teacher and student exchanges with France. Michael Loriaux, a political science professor at Northwestern University, and Catherine Perry, a French literature professor at the University of Notre Dame, received the awards during receptions at their respective universities. The award has been given for work in the advancement of French culture and education since 1808. Wisconsin also reaffirmed its commitment to expand international education opportunities. On April 19, State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster and two French educators, Recteur William Marois from l'Académie de Bordeaux and Recteur Jean-Paul de Gaudemar from l'Académie d'Aix-Marseille, formalized an agreement for teacher-student exchanges and other educational opportunities.



Saint Louis Cathedral, New Orleans



The Acadian Diaspora and French Cultural Heritage in the U.S.

French cultural influence flourished and matured throughout the shaping of America. Many of the first settlers were French or French-speaking, leaving a legacy, customs, traditions and cultural heritage that continue to thrive today.

The strong Francophone communities that exist throughout New England and Louisiana today can trace their cultural heritage back to a territory known as Acadia, located on the northeastern region of the North American continent. Acadia encompasses parts of present-day Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island in Canada, as well as New England. Founded several years before Québec, Acadia is geographically and culturally distinct.

Acadia's location on the border of French and British territories caused control of the region to pass between the two powers until the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht ceded part of present-day Nova Scotia to England. The Acadian residents had always maintained a stance of neutrality with respect to either power and refused to swear allegiance to the British monarch.

England grew increasingly concerned about the possibility of disloyalty amongst their new subjects. In 1755, in what is known as the *Grand Dérangement*, thousands of Acadians were evicted from the territory. Their homes were burned and their land was seized. Some of the displaced individuals returned to France, but many were dispersed throughout the British territories.

Many displaced Acadians settled in Spanish-controlled Louisiana. The territory of Louisiana passed between the French and the Spanish for over one hundred years and was finally annexed by the United States in 1803. Today's Cajuns of southern Louisiana are the descendants of the Acadian immigrants of the 1700s.

Years later, New England received another wave of immigrants from French-speaking Canada who sought work in the construction, logging, and textile industries. The greatest influx of immigrants from Canada to the United States occurred between 1871 and 1901. Today a significant French-American population still resides in New England.

French Cultural Heritage in U.S. Today

FRENCH patrimonial heritage is particularly strong in Louisiana. Acadian descendants residing in Louisiana, known as Cajuns, have developed a unique cultural identity through their architectural influences, spicy cuisine, acoustic music, and unique dialect.

In Louisiana's French-inspired cities such as New Orleans and Baton Rouge, many buildings exhibit neo-classic elegance reminiscent of 19th-century Paris. The historic French architecture in Acadiana, the southern region of Louisiana, serves as a portal into French-American cultural heritage.

Cajun culture thrives in modern-day Louisiana through its unique linguistic diversity and celebrated musical variety. Historically, spoken French in the bayou region was divided into linguistic groups: "colonial" French, Acadian French and Creole French. Over time these three languages have melded together into one Cajun dialect which is still spoken in Louisiana. Reminiscent of antiquated French, Cajun French has maintained pronunciation and syntax long abandoned by standard French-speakers. Citizens of Louisiana are taking many steps to protect their distinctive dialect. The Action Cadienne, a non-profit organization founded in 1996, is one example of a volunteer association that promotes and preserves the French-Cajun culture and vernacular.

Regional folk music also invites enthusiasm for Cajun culture. Grammy-winning popular sensation BeauSoleil is a prime example of Cajun music's increasing popularity. Michael Doucet, founder of the BeauSoleil music group, describes the band's style as a mélange of New Orleans jazz, blues, country, and traditional Cajun music. Traditional instruments such as the fiddle and accordion blend with

In fact, the five American states with the highest percentages of ethnic French or French-Canadian residents are all part of New England: New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. Over a quarter of New Hampshire residents claim French or French Canadian ancestry.

Over the years, native French-speakers have encountered many obstacles when assimilating into the predominantly English-speaking American culture. French study and use diminished greatly during the 1950s and 1960s; however, American descendants of Acadia are becoming increasingly interested in reconnecting with their cultural heritage.

While many Americans are familiar with Pierre Charles l'Enfant's principle role designing Washington, D.C., few are aware of the broader French influences on American architecture. French Creole, one of the very first American architectural movements, originated in New France, present-day Louisiana and surrounding area. Creole architecture draws influence from European, African and Native American building traditions. Frenchman Adrien de Pauger is credited with designing the layout of New Orleans and designating the location of the St. Louis Cathedral. Today, the area he designed is known as the *vieux carré* or the French Quarter.

Styles of Creole homes include the "Creole Plantation Home," like the St. Joseph Plantation pictured to the right, "the Shotgun," and the "Southern Colonial." The Creole homes were specially adapted to life in a warm, humid environment of the deep south. They almost always included large covered porches, called galleries.



St. Joseph Plantation in Vacherie, LA

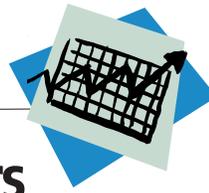
With few interior hallways, residents often used the outer galleries to pass from one room to another. In one common style called "Tidewater," the roof extended without interruption to cover the large gallery. In urban Creole homes of New Orleans, the gallery was often absent and the building stood flush with the sidewalk. These also lacked interior hallways and were known as "Shotgun" homes because one could theoretically fire a shotgun through it when all doors were open.

More recent French influence on American architecture came across the Atlantic with soldiers returning from World War I. American G.I.'s were intrigued by the French homes they had seen while serving in France and began buying homes with French accents. Today's home often includes such French accents as hipped roofs, flared eaves, dormers and multi-paned windows and doors.

modern sounds to create a unique and breathtaking resonance.

A French cultural renaissance is also taking hold in New England. Maine, which borders the francophone province of Québec, is experiencing a revival of its French dialect and culture. French-Americans, a distinctive part of mainstream society in Maine and throughout New England, are collaborating to revitalize French language exposure. "Reacquisition classes" have been introduced for Maine's francophone citizens longing to reconnect to their unique dialect, and more students than ever are learning French in schools. Recently, the Maine legislature hosted its fifth annual Franco-American Day (see NFF 06.04) during which congressional proceedings were held in French and the American National Anthem was performed in French by 10-year-old Melanie Dorice Saucier.

The story of Acadian Diaspora in the United States is something much more than a movement that impacted the country with its traditions, language, architecture and customs. It is a living history that carries with it a heritage that has engrained itself in society, bringing with it a cultural splendor that has evolved into a unique social consciousness that continues to define the richness of American culture today.



France Introduces Eco-Labels for Cars

ECO-LABELS became compulsory for all new automobiles sold in France as of May 10. The series of seven color-coded labels indicates the amount of CO₂ each vehicle emits per kilometer in hopes of better informing consumers about the automobile's environmental impact. This requirement aims to increase consumer awareness in hopes of encouraging car manufacturers to cut carbon emissions and improve their performance akin to the results that a similar scheme for refrigerator and washing machines has successfully yielded.



Cars for sale that will carry the new eco-label

Also, the car labeling program should eventually lead to reduced fuel costs and help combat global climate change.

According to environment minister Nelly Olin, the French government previously implemented the eco-labeling system on refrigerator and washing machine sales. In fact, manufacturers adapted their products to conform to consumer needs and environmental regulations, ultimately eliminating most highly polluting machines.



French Food Industry: Top Location for Foreign Investment

FRANCE is the top location for foreign investment in the food sector, according to a new Ernst & Young report. The French city of Poitiers, in western France, was ranked as the most economical location in Europe and third cheapest place worldwide for food processing. Two other French cities—Mulhouse, in eastern France, and Montpellier in southern France—also ranked as highly appealing locations for foreign investors in the food-processing industry. Montpellier was classed as the fifth most affordable European location for establishing a food plant.

According to the Ernst & Young study, France attracted 26 foreign food-related projects in the past year versus

Great Britain's 18 projects. Since the food sector is a significant investment magnet, France's position as top foreign investment location in the food sector shows the country's growing importance as a leading place for venture capitalists.

Having earned Britain's former title as most appealing spot for foreign financiers, France is showing the world its potential as a competitive alternative to other European nations in the food-processing industry.

France and Britain continued to reassert their economic significance in Europe and claimed 35.7 percent of foreign direct investment, according to the report.



France's Nexvision Presents IP Security Camera

Nexvision, a French company specializing in Internet-based video security solutions, recently announced its prototype for the world's first IP video security camera. The Nexdome® Dragonfly, based on Texas Instruments' DaVinci technology, offers highly customizable surveillance suited to large areas such as public transportation, utility plants, and medical centers.

Its design and range of applications can be tailored to meet the specific demands of various customers. The Dragonfly's advanced features such as object detection and tracking, traffic surveillance, and automatic license plate recognition revolutionize monitoring centers' capability to review voluminous footage from surveillance cameras. Its unique 360 degree lens provides up to 30 high-resolution frames per minute, and multiple security personnel can simultaneously view images both in real time and forensically. The camera's reduced size (13 cm x 13 cm) allows

for a fast and simple installation.

Nexvision designed the Dragonfly using Texas Instruments' DaVinci technology-based processor, the only chip which combines image processing power, high-end video analysis capabilities, and real-time compression for streaming video over the internet. The DaVinci technology-based processor allowed Nexvision to design the Dragonfly in a "record design cycle time" of 6 months, said Nexvision's business development manager Cyril Clocher.

The Nexdome Dragonfly has already been successfully adopted by a London-based company, which installed the product in Sweden's Stockholm Underground. The company plans to continue the collaboration with Nexvision on other infrastructure projects in the United Kingdom.

Based in Marseille, France, Nexvision innovates and designs hardware and software platforms to provide solutions in the field of Video-Over-IP for the security industry.

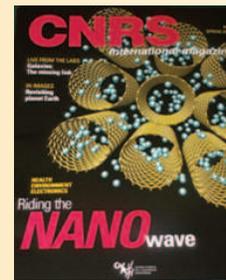


FRENCH ASSISTANCE TO VIETNAMESE COTTON INDUSTRY

France's Development Agency (AFD) is providing a grant consisting of 330,000 euros to help Vietnam conduct a study on the potential development of its cotton industry. The program aims to promote and develop the Vietnamese cotton industry through 2010 and towards 2020. It will focus on farming domestic cotton and exploring opportunities to create new farming jobs to replace imported cotton materials in order to help reduce poverty.

CNRS LAUNCHES FREE SCIENTIFIC MAGAZINE

The French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) recently launched *CNRS International Magazine*, a free quarterly in English showcasing the research conducted by CNRS in France and around the world. By demonstrating the dynamic international policy of CNRS, this magazine aims to encourage foreign scientists and students to join CNRS, to reinforce its existing partnerships and to create new



ones. Scientific articles appear with institutional and practical information from international partners. Over 20,000 issues

of *CNRS International Magazine* are currently sent to readers in more than 50 countries and it is available online at www2.cnrs.fr/en/385.htm.

AMERICAN STARTUP TEAMS UP WITH FRENCH RETAILER

Ruckus Wireless, an American startup from Mountain View, California, announced in May that the French electronics dealer, Darty, will start selling its wireless Internet system to IPTV (Internet Protocol Television) subscribers to replace the non-aesthetically appealing traditional television cables in homes. Unlike in the United States, where Ruckus markets Wi-Fi through phone companies, France has moved quickly to market the technology and is able to sell it at retail outlets. Darty will offer Ruckus's system as an add-on to other IPTV services such as France Telecom, Alice, Dutch Telecom and America Online (AOL). France leads the world in IPTV adoption according to the Gartner Group. They predict that by the end of 2006, half of Western Europe's IPTV subscribers will be based in France. By 2010, Gartner expects the number of IPTV subscribers to reach 5 million and generate \$875 million in sales.

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently launched *la diplomatie culturelle*, a new program for increasing French cultural visibility internationally. The new cultural policy has several goals: to increase awareness of French culture and to reinforce French ties with important global companies. French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy describes "cultural diplomacy" as a means of modernizing French presence in various domains such as education, culture, and foreign aid. Not only will this program promote education à la française by constructing and renovating French high schools internationally, but it will also encourage foreign students to enroll in French universities. Other aspects of the program include international art and theatrical exhibitions that highlight French cultural exports.

STRONG FRENCH PRESENCE AT ELECTRONIC EXPOSITION

French presence was strong at last month's Electronic Entertainment Expo, E3. Seventeen French video game companies and agencies attended the meeting which is considered to be one of the most important electronic entertainment industry conferences in North America. The



Participants of E3 sample games

Expo was held at the Los Angeles Convention Center from May 10 to May 12. E3 is one of the major meeting spots for the important players in the multi-million dollar electronic entertainment industry.

ALLONS EN FRANCE UNITES FRANCOPHILES

The annual meeting of francophone students, *Allons en France*, will take place between July 7 and July 16 at Ile-de-France. *Allons en France* is a program organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that brings students together every year in France to promote French culture and the French language. This year's reunion will include 202 participants representing 52 countries. Culture and sports are some of the focuses of the program. This year, attendees will participate in activities such as visits to picturesque Parisian *quartiers* like Montmartre, museum tours and sporting activities.



Da Vinci Code's Impact on Tourism in France

EVERY summer, crowds flock to cinemas to enjoy the season's blockbuster films. This year, *The Da Vinci Code* undeniably earns the title of summer epic adventure. The controversial novel and film have exposed audiences to the story's deep-rooted cultural focus on France by exploring its geography and history. As a result, French tourism is expected to benefit from the film's constant media attention as well as encourage viewers' insatiable fascination for art, culture, and intrigue. According to statistics provided by *la Maison de la France*, approximately 92 percent of individuals surveyed in an April 2006 poll expressed interest in traveling to France to follow the footsteps of the *Da Vinci Code* story. This number clearly dominates over the 44.5 percent of individuals wishing to



The Louvre Museum, featured in *The Da Vinci Code*

retrace the story's plot by visiting Italy, another country evoked in the plotline. Audiences revealed a specific interest in such tourist attractions as Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa and the celebrated Saint Sulpice Church. Yet these tourist sites are not the only attractions that stand to profit from *The Da Vinci Code*'s strong cultural impact.

An exciting option for tourists visiting Paris is the "Cracking the Da Vinci Code Tour" of the Louvre Museum. Visitors can retrace the mystery behind the symbols in Dan Brown's thriller with their own personal tour guide and unearth the meaning of Da Vinci's timeless work. For more information, please visit: www.parismuse.com. Happy hunting!

French Lawmakers Move to Fight Obesity

A SUGAR tax on high-calorie drinks appears to be directly correlated to a decrease in sales of unhealthy food and drinks, according to the Vice President of France's Parliament, Yves Bur. There was a 40 percent drop in sales of "alcopop" beverages-sugary, alcoholic drinks popular among young people in 2005. The decrease occurred only one year after France introduced a tax on the drinks in an effort to combat obesity.

Currently, Parliament's health select committee is conducting an inquiry into the problem of obesity in France. In addition to the sugar tax on alcopop, France has recently moved to ban snack vending machines in schools. Another

initiative currently under consideration would require food companies to include health warnings on television advertisements for unhealthy products if the ads are aired during peak viewing hours for children.

"We must say to these industries that marketing has its limits specifically when children are concerned and we need to have very clear information," stated Vice-President of France's Parliament, Yves Bur. A long term campaign aimed at changing attitudes seems to be the goal in combating obesity. Bur also added that immediate action was necessary if France wants to prevent what is currently a modest problem from turning into one almost too big to tackle.

New Government Agency for Adoption

FRENCH families wishing to adopt internationally now have a new government agency to help them with the process. The *Agence française de l'adoption* (AFA), created by the July 4, 2005 adoption reform law, has replaced la Mission de l'adoption internationale. Approximately eight out of every 10 children adopted in France are from another country.

The AFA was inaugurated on May 18 by Minister of the Family Philippe Bas in the presence of Minister of Foreign Affairs Philippe Douste-Blazy and Minister of Justice Pascal Clément. The agency is a public interest group that provides all services free of charge and without prejudice. Among other things, AFA

guides families through the adoption process and helps them plan their trip to the child's country of origin. They also provide some post-adoption services.



© MAE/Photo - F. de la Mure

international adoption is on the rise in France. In 1980 the government recorded 935 international adoptions. That number rose to 4,136 in 2005. In addition, adopted children are coming from a wider range of countries than ever before. In light of these trends, the AFA will serve to simplify and centralize what can be a complicated process.

The top five countries of origin for internationally adopted children in France in 2005 were: Vietnam, Haiti, China, Ethiopia and Russia.



The Bikini Celebrates its 60th Anniversary

SIXTY years ago, just as nuclear bombs made an entry into the realm of military weaponry, an anomalous new swimming suit was also making a splash introduction.

The bikini burst into the fashion scene on July 6, 1946. The designer, a French engineer named Louis Réard, thought that the swimsuit's explosive impact would reflect that of the atomic bomb. In homage to the nuclear age, he named it the "bikini," after the atoll in the Pacific Ocean where the U.S. Army was testing nuclear bombs.

Réard's design was so scandalous—consisting of only four strategically placed triangles—that the only person he could find willing to model it was a nudist dancer from the Casino de Paris. In 1951 bikinis were banned from the Miss World Contest. The Vatican even banned them in certain Catholic countries. It took several years and a series of cinematic bikini-wearing bombshells—Brigitte Bardot, Marilyn Monroe, Ursula Andress, Raquel Welch and other events that sensationalized the suit, such as Brian Hyland's hit "Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini"—to popularize

the bikini and cement its place in popular culture.

Numerous tributes to the bikini are planned worldwide for the 60th anniversary this summer. In France, les Galeries Lafayette is organizing a retrospective exhibit in stores. Lycra, which was not invented until the late 1950s, organized a multi-designer tribute to the swimming suit, and convinced labels such as La Perla, Manuel Canovas and Triumph to design an anniversary model of the bikini. And, in a literary tribute, Kelly Bensimon, an *Elle Magazine* editor at large, has written the definitive history of the bikini in her work titled: *The Bikini Book*.



Micheline Bernardini, first to model the bikini

© Bikini Science

Cross-Cultural Appreciation for Wine

In a spirited yet light-hearted contest on May 24, judges in Napa Valley and London simultaneously sipped and scored 34 vintage and current-released French and California wines.

The event marked the 30th anniversary of the Judgment of Paris, when nine blind-folded judges sampled both French and Californian Cabernet Sauvignons and a separate panel also evaluated California Chardonnays and French Chardonnay-based white burgundies during the May 24, 1976, competition.

This year's competition was more of a celebration for the cross-cultural appreciation for wine. Apart from the reenactment

tasting, where 18 judges from the United States, France and England sampled wines used in the original competition—without the Chardonnays—judges also tasted current-released Cabernets and Chardonnays from California and France. Organizers Steven Spurrier and Patricia Gastaud-Gallagher made it clear where the wines were from, so French wine was scored against French, American against American.

And the wine?

Although the garnet color of the California reds had faded to ruby with some slight browning around the edges, eight of the 10 wines showed well and impressed the judges.

An Unusual Road Trip from Paris to Kabul

TWO adventurous French journalists, Sophie Malibeaux and Manu Pochez, have completed the journey of a lifetime traveling from Paris to Kabul.

This long and arduous expedition entailed a particular-

ly interesting challenge: Malibeaux and Pochez had to drive a French classic 2CV, a two horsepower vehicle manufactured by Citroën that has a top speed of approximately 80 kilometers per hours (approximately 50 miles per hour), across a rough and rugged terrain. Despite the lack of power and speed, the car successfully navigated difficult landscapes. Even more importantly, the vehicle that is capable of traveling 100 kilometers with only three liters of gas allowed the journalists to absorb each local culture en route to Kabul.

On their journey, Malibeaux and Pochez made brief pauses in Italy, Greece, and Turkey. The journalists visited monuments, met local citizens, and even attempted to learn Ottoman calligraphy. Throughout the trip they recorded their memories to share with readers. Upon arrival in Afghanistan, sand and poor road conditions forced the journalists to abandon their car and complete the remainder of their journey by bus just three days before they were scheduled to arrive in Kabul.

To learn more about the journalists' expedition or to read their journey log, please visit www.k2cv.net.



Malibeaux and Pochez during their journey to Kabul

© Manu Pochez

NEW TECHNIQUE FOR PERFECTING WINE

In the quaint Breton city of Saint-Malo, wine experts experimented with a new technique to perfect wine taste: tidal submersion. Six hundred wine bottles were submerged underwater for one year to test the tide's rippling effects on wine flavor and complexity. On June 12, 600 bottles of Haut-Médoc were removed from 15 meters below the surface in the Saint-Malo bay, which has some of the most intense tides in Europe. According to Yannick Heude, president of the Wine Immersion Association, a clear distinction exists between the bottles that were submerged with their dry-land counterparts. Not only do the submerged bottles have a more refined taste thanks to underwater tidal friction, but they also sell at a superior price. Bottles which cost 11.50 euros are typically worth 20 euros after a year underwater. Wining and dining underwater style has never been so rewarding!

KEN LOACH WINS PALME D'OR

British filmmaker Ken Loach captured the coveted *Palme d'Or* (see N.F.F. 06.06) at the 2006 International Film Festival in Cannes. His film *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*, addresses the Irish war of independence of the 1920s. According to the president of the jury, Wong Kar-wai, "We were all very moved by this film and our decision on the Palm was unanimous." Loach has won two *Prix du jury* in the past: one in 1993 for *Raining Stones* and the other in 1990 for *Hidden Agenda*.

31ST ANNUAL MUSIQUES MÉTISES FESTIVAL

The 31st annual *Musiques Métisses* festival took place in Angoulême from May 24 through May 28. This year's festival focused on the francophone areas of the Indian Ocean, including La Réunion, l'île Maurice, Mayotte, and Madagascar. Many big names such as Lee "Scratch" Perry and Max Romeo were among the numerous performers at this year's event. The music showcased at this year's event included the valiha, a harp-like instrument made of bamboo that is native to Madagascar. Danyel Waro, considered to be one of the best singers in his field, treated audiences to *maloya*, a type of music known in La Réunion for its chants and base percussion. His counterpart from l'île Maurice, Menwar, makes his own instruments for his performances. The festival took place on the banks of the Charente River.



Niki de Saint Phalle Exhibition in Atlanta Botanical Gardens

MYTHICAL animals and buxom women covered with mirrors, glass and gleaming semi-precious stones frolic throughout the Atlanta Botanical Gardens as part of an exhibit featuring French artist Niki de Saint Phalle, "Niki in the Garden." The exhibit runs through October 31.

Assembled from public and private collections worldwide, the exhibit is the largest showing ever of Saint Phalle's monumental outdoor sculptures—some are 18 feet high and weigh as much as 6,000 pounds. Saint Phalle's "Nanas," her most famous sculptures, depict large, boldly colored and overtly feminine women and are well-represented in the exhibit. The exhibit's curators encourage visitors to interact physically with the sculptures and invite them to climb, crawl, sit and touch.

Saint Phalle was born in 1930 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France, and was raised in New York. Saint Phalle was the only female involved in the *Nouveau Réalisme* movement, where she met artists such as Christo, Yves Klein and Arman. She first reached international prominence with her "Shooting" paintings. She plastered cans of paint to a

wooden board and shot them using a rifle. She began exhibiting her "Nanas" sculptures, the uninhibited sculptures which personify her views on female empowerment, in 1965. The botanical gardens are a natural fit for Saint Phalle's works. Her two sculpture gardens, the Tarot Garden in Tuscany, Italy, and Queen Califia's Magical Circle in Escondido, California, emphasize the relationship between her art and nature. Saint Phalle died in 2002. For more information, please visit: www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org.



Nana on a Dolphin, Niki de Saint Phalle, 1998

©NIKI DE SAINT-PHALLE ART FOUNDATION
Photo: Justin Larose ©2006 Turner



Members who participated in the Transatlantic Soccer Cup
Courtesy: Carla Bundy

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Houston's Buffalo Bayou: An Illuminating Experience

NIGHTTIME along Houston's major waterway just got a little bit brighter, thanks to some illuminating designs from L'Observatoire International.

The lighting design firm, founded in New York in 1993 by Hervé Descottes, worked in tandem with architect Stephen Korns to develop a series of glowing LED orbs that will light the new pedestrian bridge, bike and walking trails along Houston's Sabine-to-Bagby Promenade. The lighting installation was a major feature of the \$15 million development project for the 23-acre park in downtown Houston and was the centerpiece of the park's grand opening on June 10. The lights will change from white to blue, following the moon's cycle. On each full moon, the lights will be white and then slowly transform to blue for each new moon.



© Jim Olive

The Buffalo Bayou illuminated at night

Descottes established L'Observatoire International after eight years of lighting design in Paris. The developers chose Descottes because of his reputation and strong sense of urban awareness. His firm's projects include collaborations with Frank Gehry on the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles; Jean Nouvel on the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis; and Stephen Hall on the chapel of St. Ignatius in Seattle.

The new park transformed a weed-choked strip of land down Houston's main waterway, the Buffalo Bayou, into one with native landscaping, public artwork and more than two miles of bike and hiking trails. Those involved in the project hope that the unique lighting eventually will be extended to the entire Buffalo Bayou area and perhaps even to the rooftops of downtown Houston skyscrapers.

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