



A free monthly review of French news & trends

Bastille Day Celebrated Throughout United States



Clockwise from top left: Baguettes and smiles on hand in Chicago; a Miami girl and her brother do the Bastille Bop; friends savor the moment in Boston; IMF director Christine Lagarde with Amb. François Delattre in Washington; a couple shows off their tee-shirts in Chicago; and a DJ spins tunes at the Maison Française.

▲ On July 14, Francophiles from around the world celebrated Bastille Day, known in France simply as “*Le Quatorze Juillet*,” commemorating the 1789 popular uprising that sparked the French Revolution and would usher in the country’s modern period.

The United States hosted a number of Bastille Day celebrations. French organizations throughout the country such as the Alliance Française played key roles in organizing events ranging from lively parties to low-key picnics and sports competitions.

Ambassador François Delattre hosted a reception for 450 guests at his Washington, D.C., residence, which was followed by a “Flowers and Fragrance” themed reception at the Embassy, attended by over 2,000 guests. Elsewhere, the Alliance Française of Dallas hosted a mussel-cooking competition featuring some of the city’s best chefs, while café waiters in Sacramento, CA, and Cambridge, MA, ran races while balancing glasses and bottles on trays. Tulsa, OK, hosted a popular French wine-tasting, while Fortville, IN, delighted crowds with an open-air picnic, featuring live French music and a *pétanque* tournament (a form of lawn bowling).

The festivities throughout the country served to highlight the lasting relationship between France and the United States in a spirit of joint celebration. “We are celebrating the values that our two countries share [...] from the French and American revolutions, which are at the core of our identity,” said Amb. Delattre.

A History of the Bastille

▲ The Bastille prison occupies a singular place in the minds of the French and Francophiles. A centuries-old prison before being famously stormed in 1789, the site had become, in the upheaval of 18th-century France, a symbol for royal despotism. Many of its prisoners were held there for political reasons, as suggested by the notorious *lettres de cachet*, royal warrants issued by the crown that could not be appealed.

As the Estates-General met through the late spring and summer of 1789, crowds of common Parisians, fearful of a violent suppression by royal guards, flocked to the Bastille site, where a stockpile of arms and ammunition was known to be kept. The fact that the prison held political prisoners only spurred the popular movement to overtake it. After a fight to enter the prison’s gates, the mob was quite surprised to find only seven prisoners there, none of whom bore much political importance.

Irony aside, the storming of the Bastille prison helped lay the groundwork for a long and tumultuous march toward democracy in France’s modern era. When the event was commemorated a year later—by King Louis XVI, who established a short-lived constitutional monarchy—celebrations were planned for July 14. That date would see greater longevity than the king or the feudal system of rule, and that’s why the French still celebrate the Bastille’s legacy every *Quatorze Juillet*.

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New Representative for French Citizens Abroad

On June 17, the French National Assembly (equivalent to the United States House of Representatives) welcomed 11 new members to represent citizens abroad. Corinne Narassiguin, a French national and 13-year resident of New York City, was elected by French expatriates in North America to be their first-ever representative to the National Assembly. A member of President François Hollande's party, she will serve the more than 186,000 French citizens living in the U.S. and Canada.

Ms. Narassiguin first successfully campaigned in 2009 for a seat in the Assembly of French Citizens Abroad, later serving as the organization's vice-president of the Laws and Regulations Committee. After her electoral victory, she said she was "very excited about everything that's happening."

Ms. Narassiguin will conduct her first tour of the U.S. in her new role from September 9 through 17.

In Pyrénées Tourism, A Shepherding Holiday

Forget bustling cafés and glitzy shops—French tourism is thinking outside the Paris, and promoting "transhumance" tourism—which is centered on livestock driving—in the country's southwestern region, deep in the Pyrénées Mountains.

In an effort to diversify their income, farmers are now promoting a new way to see the striking French *paysage*, allowing tourists the experience of taking care of livestock and herding sheep. Excursions can last anywhere from a few hours to a few days. Short mountain walks are under \$20 and include basic instruction on keeping livestock, a chance to practice shepherding and a lakeside picnic, complete with local produce and a sheepdog show.

While the trips are charming for tourists, the day-to-day work of a shepherd is far from leisurely.

"Everybody thinks of shepherds wandering through wildflowers, playing the pan pipes, but life really isn't like that," said Jean-Pierre Pommies, a seasoned shepherd and mountain guide.



Even in London, French Is Mandatory at the Olympics

▲ If you watched the official ceremonies at this year's Olympic Games in London, some of the announcements might have surprised you.

"Why are they speaking French?," you may have wondered. "The Games are in London, not Paris!"

You would not be alone. Few people know that French is, along with English, an official language of the Olympic Games. As Rule 24 of the Olympic Charter stipulates, "The official languages of the International Olympic Committee are French and English." Theoretically, every sign, announcement and official document of the Olympics should be available both in English and French.

At the origin of this rule is Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a Frenchman considered the founder of the modern Olympic Games. Born in 1863, Coubertin believed that "organized sport can create moral and social strength." He was deeply inspired by ancient Greece and the importance of physical education in Greek civilization, and advocated creating an international forum for sports, which would promote peace between peoples.

Coubertin founded the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Switzerland on June 23, 1894. The first Summer Olympic Games took place two years

later in Athens, Greece, with French as one of the official languages of the event. To Coubertin, this was a way to promote openness and dialogue, notably by guaranteeing linguistic and cultural diversity.

Since then, however, the equal use of French and English during the Olympics has not always been strictly observed. In order to ensure that Rule 24 is respected, the Secretary General of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, the pre-eminent body of the French-speaking world which includes 75 states and governments, appoints a special representative during each edition of the Olympics to ensure that French is effectively used.

For this year's games in London, the *grand témoin de la Francophonie*, or the Francophone world's "Grand Witness," was Michaëlle Jean, UNESCO Special Envoy for Haiti and former Governor General of Canada.

"We are not here as policemen, we're here in a spirit of partnership," she told French radio station RTL.

Seventy-two delegations represented French-speaking countries at the Olympic Games this year, and many journalists were on the ground, updating the world's 220 million French speakers on the Olympic tradition that Baron Coubertin first began.



Clockwise from lower left: Baron Coubertin, Muriel Hurtis, fencer Astrid Guyart (L), kayaker Tony Estanguet, Teddy Riner (judo), canoers Marie Delattre-Demory, Sarah Guyot, Joanne Mayer and Gabrielle Tuleu, and a "Club France" organizer.

French Finance Minister Makes July Visit to Washington

▲ The French Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, Pierre Moscovici, visited Washington, D.C., on July 18 and 19. The visit, his second since assuming office in May, included meetings with Christine Lagarde, International Monetary Fund chief and former French Finance Minister, and World Bank President, Jim Yong Kim. Mr. Moscovici also met his American counterpart, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, Timothy Geithner, and Ben Bernanke, Chairman of the Federal Reserve.

The Minister's visit centered on the future of the euro zone. He stressed his view of the pressing need of a single European bank supervisor.

"We want the banking supervision to happen fast in order to help us recapitalize the banks directly, which is clearly necessary," said the minister. The quick establishment of such an institution would relieve the panic surrounding European markets and provide for the direct stabilization of national banks, some experts argue.

The minister also addressed the role of the Franco-German partnership in restoring growth in the eurozone. While Mr. Moscovici believes that France can adopt some of the fiscal reforms implemented in Germany, he reminded listeners that

France will have to take its own course to recovery.

Mr. Moscovici highlighted the importance of a pan-European effort to remedy the current economic troubles. "It's a collective job that we've got to do together in order to push Europe forward," he said. The Minister's emphasis on international cooperation reflects French President François Hollande's focus on furthering France's integration into the European Union. Mr. Hollande's plan to stabilize the French financial system includes reducing the deficit and encouraging economic growth.



Finance minister Pierre Moscovici met with U.S. Treasury secretary Timothy Geithner, left, IMF director Christine Lagarde and U.S. Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke.

© Ministère de l'Économie

Tourism Grows Despite Stagnant Global Economy

Somber economic trends and news reports may conjure images of "stay-cations" and domestic travel destinations, but tourism to France is far from slowing. Some 80 million tourists visited the country last year—over nine times the population of New York City. The country has maintained its role as the most visited country in the world, drawing people to its bustling capital, breathtaking Riviera and rustic countryside.

The country saw a 4.85 percent rise in tourism between 2010 and 2011. Nearly 66 million tourists come from Europe alone, many from countries that border France. About 30 percent of tourists stay between four and seven nights in France, a number that is increasing each year. As testament to the strength of the industry, tourist spending increased by 8.4 percent from the previous year.

From Biarritz to Strasbourg, France Celebrates July 4th

France joined in commemorating American independence the week of July 4, with celebrations in numerous cities across the country. In an opportunity to honor French-American friendship, many French officials offered remarks and appeared at events sponsored by American associations in different parts of France.

The France-United States Association of Biarritz celebrated with two separate events: a dinner, at the elegant Hôtel du Palais on Sunday, July 1, followed by a morning cocktail at Biarritz's City Hall on the Fourth.

Elsewhere, the Franco-American Institute of Rennes held their annual Independence Day family picnic which proposed "traditional American" activities, like baseball and country line dancing. In Strasbourg, the Association Alsace-États-Unis hosted a members-only musical program at the Residence of the Consul General of the United States.

In Paris, meanwhile, the American Chamber of Commerce held their annual Summer Garden Party on July 3, inviting numerous American university alumni associations to attend.

On July 4, Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault attended official celebrations at the Embassy of the United States. During a speech, the French official elaborated his view of the French-American relationship, calling it "irreplaceable" and characterized by an "extreme modernity" and relevance.

New Museum Fêtes French Role in U.S. Revolutionary War

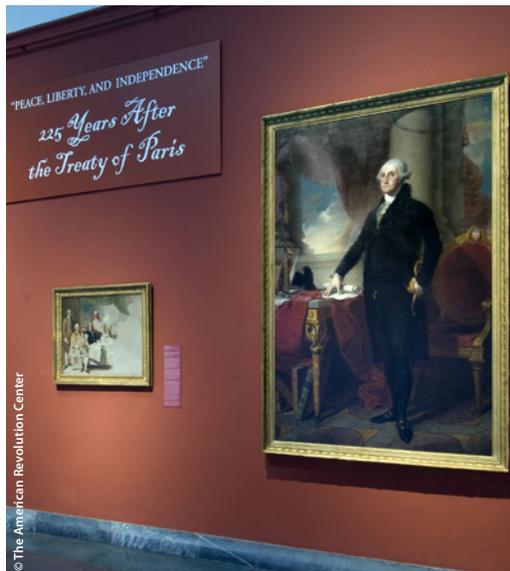
▲ Every American knows who George Washington is, but how many can tell you about the Marquis de La Fayette? Many people don't realize that both men were instrumental in defeating British forces in the American War of Independence. Soon, visitors to Philadelphia's new Museum of the American Revolution will be able to discover the long history of French-American friendship.

Commissioned by the American Revolution Center, an educational nonprofit, the museum is set to open in 2015 just steps away from the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. The American Revolution Center says such a museum is needed to educate the American public about this early chapter of U.S. history, highlighting events that they may not have previously studied.

The museum will prominently feature exhibits detailing French involvement in the war and the efforts of Maj. Gen. La Fayette and other Frenchmen for the American cause. Some highlights of the museum's collection include Washington's camp tent, a French dragoon pistol (shipped to the U.S. from France during the war), and an original 1776 version of Thomas Paine's "Common Sense," a hugely influential pamphlet that argued the case for U.S. independence.

The American Revolution Center has previously partnered with La Maison Française at the Embassy of France in Washington to present *Seminaires*, a

series of lectures by experts on the history of French-American cooperation.



© The American Revolution Center

The Treaty of Paris, signed in 1783 between U.S. and British officials, put an end to the U.S. Revolutionary War.

Ballet at the Paris Opéra, from *Élève* to *Étoile*

At the Paris Opéra Ballet, *étoiles*, or stars, are not born, nor are they made—they must muster through the ranks during years of rigorous competition, where, in a two-minute performance, they must prove themselves worthy of the company's headline roles. Experts from the outside are brought in to judge the dancers, despite the fact they may have never seen them in class or on stage.

Ninety percent of the Paris Opéra Ballet dancers rise through the ranks of the adjoining Paris Opéra Ballet School, where they enter as children, and then vie for a spot in the almost 200-member company upon graduating. Few will ever clinch a soloist role through the *concours*, the yearly promotion competition. The road to principal is paved with sacrifice, sweat and an imposing legacy of ballet perfection.

A Daunting Audition Process

Between the ages of 8 and 10, young boys and girls prepare to audition for the Paris Opéra Ballet School, the oldest ballet institution of its kind. Founded in 1713 by Louis XIV to train court dancers in ballet technique, the school maintains a historic legacy, and will be celebrating its 300th anniversary in 2013.

The audition process begins before the pupils even enter the theater. Prior to auditioning for the school, they must meet height and weight requirements. If their initial paper application is accepted, the students appear at the school for an audition, competing against hundreds of other dancers from around the country. If they are accepted into the initial program (ranging from six months to a year, depending on the child's age) they face an examination at the end of the semester, determining whether they will be accepted as a full-time student.

Life as a *Petit Rat*

For *les petits rats* (the "little rats" of the Opéra, as they are affectionately called), life at the school is rigorous. There is no recess or extracurricular activities. Some children are days away from their homes, and only see their parents during holidays.

While the main focus of the school is ballet, students are still required to study a variety of subjects and maintain good grades. The day begins at 8:00 a.m., with academic subjects taught until noon. Students then eat lunch, and attend ballet classes until 5:00 p.m. Extra rehearsals may run until the evening, and following a strict code of discipline, everyone must be in bed by 9:00 p.m.

If the students succeed in their end-of-year examinations and make it to the



The Palais Garnier serves as home to the Paris Opéra. The Paris Opéra Ballet School, founded in 1713 under the reign of Louis XIV to provide standardized training to court dancers, will celebrate its 300th anniversary next year.

school's "First Division," they may compete for a spot in the company. If not, they may leave the school with a diploma and seek work in another company.

Five Ranks in the Company

If a dancer is lucky enough to be offered a contract with the company, he or she can rest easy for only a moment. There are five ranks at the company: *quadrilles*, *coryphées*, *sujets*, *premier danseurs* and *étoiles*. To receive a promotion, a dancer must enter the *concours*, the yearly competition. Each dancer performs one set variation and one variation of their choice in the presence of 11 judges, with one of those being brought from an outside company such as the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow.

Such a grueling competition may sound unusual, yet Ariane Dollfus, a writer for *Danser* magazine, believes it's all a part of what makes the French company so phenomenal. "We are a nation of competitions. The idea that excellence is recognized through an exam or competition is prevalent in every walk of French life," she said.

For the promising young dancers that enter the French ballet system each year, they are given glimpses of glory, but never promised a journey *sans rigueur*.



Left, Paris Opera Ballet hopefuls train from a very young age for a shot at joining the company. Center, Teenage dancers warm up before a performance at the Palais Garnier (above), in Paris's ninth *arrondissement*. Right, Mathieu Ganio plays the role of Duke Albrecht of Silesia in the classic ballet production, *Giselle*, first presented in Paris in 1841.

After 30 Years, It's "Au Revoir" to Internet Pioneer Minitel

▲ On June 30, France said farewell to Minitel, a national online network that predated the Internet. Launched in 1982, Minitel, a beige plastic machine with a keyboard, black-and-white screen and dial-up connection, allowed users to access a national phone-



Though obsolete and with a look reminiscent of the 1980s, the Minitel counted 500,000 users at shut-down.

book, buy train tickets, make restaurant reservations, and send email—a decade before the Internet was introduced to a global market.

At its peak in the mid-1990s, Minitel had over 25 million users, roughly half the French population. The machine was distributed to French citizens free of charge, who then paid to access the network through telephone lines. Minitel was a great source of pride for the French people, as they were the only nation at the forefront of such revolutionary technology. In 1997, President Jacques Chirac touted Minitel's usefulness at all levels of society: "Today a baker in Aubervilliers knows how to check his bank account on the Minitel."

In fact, Minitel's simplicity and intuitive interface inspired none other than Apple's founder, Steve Jobs. Early in his career, Mr. Jobs bought a Minitel to take it apart and learn how it functioned. Today, Apple's app store (which facilitates the paid download of additional operations for an Apple device) closely resembles Minitel's system of payment for specific functions, or "applications."

Minitel has mostly fallen out of use in recent years, but still maintained some 500,000 loyal users at the time of the shut-down. Minitel has notably remained widely used among farmers in Brittany who used the practical system to track meat prices or read milk quality reports. The system's profitability has been steadily dropping, leading its parent company, France Télécom-Orange, to pull the plug on the network.

Thirty years to the day after it was turned on, Minitel was switched off. The remaining Minitel terminals will be recycled for their metal and plastic components at a center in Portet-sur-Garonne in southwestern France.

France Leads the Way in High-Speed International Trains

▲ Alstom, a leading French transportation firm and manufacturer of the high-speed TGV and Eurostar trains, is once again leading the way in locomotive innovation. Its newest project has been christened by the media as the AGVII or "AGV Deux" train. First announced last year, the AGVII stands for *Automotrice à Grande Vitesse* (Self-Propelled High-Speed Train) and expands on the technological advances of the original AGV, which was launched in 2008.

AGVII trains will be capable of reaching speeds of 400 kilometers (249 miles) per hour for substantial distances, and will come in one-story, two-story (duplex) and freight models. The cabins will be able to carry more passengers than previous installations, while maintaining an emphasis on comfort.

Perhaps most impressive is the AGVII's interoperability, allowing it to transition from one country's railway system to another without stopping. This technological feature allows for high-speed border crossing while accounting for differences in power supply and signaling systems. System interoperability may prove to be a major shift in international transport, simplifying and streamlining travel. Jérôme Wallut, Managing Director of Alstom Transport, explained, "In this sector, if you're not moving forward, you're going backward. Since we want to carry on being a flag-bearer for exports, innovation is the only viable option."

Alstom's products have benefited France as well as the rest of the world. The firm has already sold several



Alstom's "AGV Deux" train has interoperable wheels, crossing borders with different rail gauges without stopping.

AGV trains to Italian operator NTV and has contributed to regional train systems throughout Europe and Australia. Not relegating itself to long-distance travel, Alstom has also provided trams and urban transportation systems from Singapore to São Paulo. It is no wonder, then, that the AGVII is currently drawing interest from Russia and the United States, calling attention to France's leading role in modern train technology.

Amazon.com to Open Logistical Base in Burgundy

E-commerce and online retail giant, Amazon.com, announced plans this summer to open its third logistical base in France in September 2013.

A staff of 1,000 will be based in Chalon-sur-Saône, in the Burgundy region of France. "Our centers should be close to our customers, who are everywhere," said Frédéric Duval, director of logistics at Amazon.fr.

The building will be stationed at the former headquarters of the Kodak photography company, which closed in 2007. The center will be a vast 430,000-square-foot space.

Projections for job creation in the short-term number between 300 and 400, with long-term projections at 1,000 new jobs. The site will be used to store its thousands of catalogue items, which will then be distributed throughout France.

Marc Benner, President of the Burgundy Development Agency, explained the choice of locale.

"We accepted the challenge of attracting business. Amazon opted for Burgundy although it was in competition with several regions of France.

"We owe this achievement to our expertise" in retail logistics, he told the press.

French Embassy Celebrates Telstar at the Smithsonian

The Embassy of France in Washington, D.C., in collaboration with the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, celebrated the 50th anniversary of the launch of the Telstar satellite with a global communication symposium on July 12.

The Telstar made history when it enabled the first-ever transatlantic television signal, a live image of the American flag from an earth station in Maine, to its counterpart facility in the Pleumeur-Bodou village of France. The French station reciprocated with a broadcast of Yves Montand's "La Chansonnette."

The highlight of the event was a commemorative "live via satellite" simulcast between the Washington museum's Moving Beyond Earth Gallery and a French panel at the Pleumeur-Bodou Telecommunications Museum.

Speakers at the Air and Space Museum included French ambassador François Delattre, G. Wayne Clough, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, and Christine Albanel, Executive Director of France Télécom/Orange Group.

French Government Recruits 6,000 New Teachers for Fall

On July 4, the French government announced a new plan to create some 6,000 jobs in secondary schools throughout France. The project, following President Hollande's campaign promises to boost education, has allocated nearly 90 million euros (\$110 million) toward recruiting more teachers in time for the upcoming Fall semester.

The education plan focuses primarily on increasing participation in France's high-level competitive teaching examinations and creating new job positions for those who score well, particularly in English, mathematics and modern literature. It also lessens the workload for new instructors, decreasing their weekly teaching hours from 18 to 15, with the extra time used for on-the-job training.

Not all of the job openings are for teachers, however. The French Minister of Education, Vincent Peillon, also aims to increase the general number of adults in schools by committing funds for new job positions, including 1,500 teaching assistants, tasked with helping handicapped students, and 500 school security deputies. The secondary school plan followed a June announcement by Mr. Peillon that he would also create 1,000 teaching jobs in primary schools.

Three French DJs Ranked Among World's Wealthiest

Three French disc jockeys spun their way near the top of Celebrity Net Worth's list of the world's 30 wealthiest DJs, released on June 12.

Coming in at number 26 with a net worth of \$3 million is Martin Solveig, who was born Martin Laurent Picandet in Paris in 1976. Working under the label Mixture Stereophonic, he earned worldwide recognition with his hit, "Hello," in 2010.

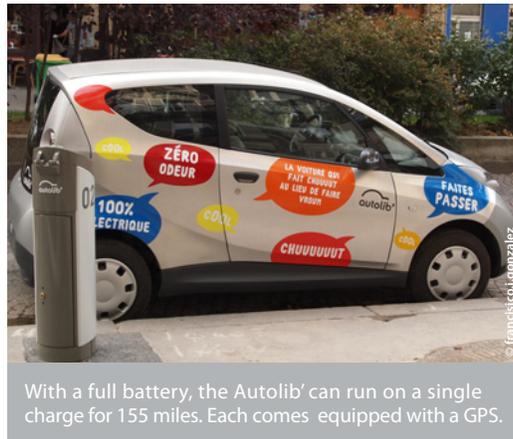
At number 11 is David Guetta with a net worth of \$25 million. Though his name is well-known in the U.S. for his collaborations with the Black Eyed Peas ("I Gotta Feeling"), Kelly Rowland ("When Love Takes Over") and Kid Cudi ("Memories"), few of his American fans know that Mr. Guetta is French, born in Paris in 1967. Breaking the top 10 are Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo and Thomas Bangalter, who together form the DJ duo Daft Punk. The French artists, each with a net worth of \$30 million, come in at number 9. Sampled in American rapper Kanye West's 2007 hit "Stronger," Daft Punk won two Grammy Awards in 2009.

Electric Rental Car System Launches in French Capital

▲ The recently established Autolib' program in Paris poses a technological triple threat: it provides a new form of urban transportation, reduces the total number of cars in the city and lowers urban pollution levels. Autolib', first launched in December 2011, offers its clients electric "Bluecars" to drive throughout the city.

The program is growing steadily and now supplies over 2,000 cars to its subscribers. Similar to the popular Velib' initiative launched in 2007, which provides Paris with returnable bicycles, the program is a "one-way" transport system. This means that drivers can leave the car at any one of Autolib's designated drop-off points instead of having to return it to its original location.

To subscribe to the service, customers need only visit one of the many Autolib' kiosks in Paris with a driver's license (international licenses are also accepted) and a valid form of identification. Once subscribed, custom-



With a full battery, the Autolib' can run on a single charge for 155 miles. Each comes equipped with a GPS.

ers can pick up and drop off their Bluecar at one of over 1,200 Autolib' stations. Each car is equipped with a GPS system and is supported by around-the-clock customer service. Subscribers also have the option of reserving a car or a pick-up point in advance.

Autolib's philosophy emphasizes not only facilitating transportation across the city, but also promoting Paris's ecological well-being. The electric cars are environmentally friendly, producing no noise, fumes or carbon dioxide emissions. Additionally, by expanding the use of Bluecars, Autolib' estimates that the Île-de-France region will be able to reduce the number of privately owned cars by 22,500, thereby lowering gas emissions. Strategy consultant Nicolas Barrier explained that the project aims to enhance the capital's status as a "clean and pleasant place to live."

Although the project is still in its infancy, it has made a strong start, claiming 15,000 members already.

Chicago and Paris: Sixteen Years As Sister Cities

▲ Chicago's 16-year partnership with Paris proves that distance never trumps diplomacy. Since 1996, the Windy City and the City of Light have engaged in a diplomatic and cultural partnership, exchanging ideas and conversations across the Atlantic.

The two cities united under an extensive, global network, called Chicago Sister Cities International (CSCI). Inspired by former U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower's People to People Initiative, CSCI promotes world diplomacy on a city-to-city basis. CSCI creates forums for local residents to exchange ideas and solutions on global issues, such as education and technology. The organization exposes local residents to a mélange of cultures.

A Sister City partnership represents a strong binational commitment to enhancing cultural and political ties around the world. A Sister City agreement includes a contract between the respective cities' mayors and promises support from the local community.

Chicago has entered into almost 30 agreements with other cities worldwide, including Toronto, Moscow and Shanghai. The parent organization, Sister Cities, fosters over 2,000 international partnerships.

Participating sister cities promise to create opportunities for locals to experience an authentic cultural exchange. Most recently, local French organizations hosted a Bastille Day celebration in collaboration with the Consulate General of France in Chicago.



Sister Cities International seeks to "promote peace through people-to-people relationships" and supports a variety of educational programs. L-R: Chicago's skyline and "Cloud Gate" sculpture, and Paris's iconic Sacré Coeur basilica.

International Theater Scene Gathers at Festival d'Avignon

▲ From July 7 through 28, residents and tourists of southern France flocked to the 66th annual Festival d'Avignon. French speakers and art lovers gathered to enjoy a variety of shows during the celebration of culture and art. With sponsors and over 3,000 performers from across the globe, the event is the leading international event of contemporary live theater and performance. Recently, dance has played a strong role alongside the lineup of theatrical shows and exhibitions.

It was renowned actor and director Jean Vilar who founded Festival d'Avignon in 1947, with hopes of providing performers with a free artistic space. The festival also serves as an open-air forum for discussions between the artists and audience. In partnership with the festival, the University of Avignon offered a variety of French theater courses for students and teachers attending from non-French speaking countries. The festival's organizers have already begun planning for next year's activities.



With shows such as "The Master and Margarita," and "My Fair Lady: A Language Lab," this year's Festival d'Avignon, held every year in the courtyard of Avignon's Pope's Palace, was enjoyed by many in this appropriately dramatic setting.

Modern Dance Legend Returns to Paris, Featured in Festival

▲ Versatile, enigmatic and at the pinnacle of modernity, living legend of modern dance, Paul Taylor, has broken his 12-year hiatus of performances in France.

Now back on the stage, Mr. Taylor, at 81 years old, has shown no signs of rust in his prolific choreography. Beginning his career in 1956, his works total 136 pieces. His company performed at Les Étés de la Danse, a French dance festival that began in 2005 to fulfill a lack of summer performing arts festivals in Paris. On the program are some of his older works, including *Auréole*, a breezy work set to the music of George Frideric Handel.

Esplanade, a piece designed to showcase pedestrian movement with a score by Johann Sebastian Bach and others. New pieces include *Gossamer Gallants*, *The Uncommitted* and *Beloved Renegade*.

Mr. Taylor has a long relationship with France, as he was elected to knight-

hood by the French government in 1969. He was awarded the Legion of Honor in 2000 for his contributions to modern dance.

He plans to continue choreographing and working in the studio even further into advanced age. "It's my job to create," he said of his discipline.

Mr. Taylor's most recent performances took place at the Théâtre National de Chaillot from June 19 through 28.



A recipient of the Legion of Honor for his contributions to arts and letters, Mr. Taylor has cited insects and swimming among the inspirations for his choreography.

TV Show Highlights France's Favorite Villages

A new French television program on France 2 is exploring reality television entertainment outside the usual game show and celebrity realm, capitalizing on France's enthusiasm for *la campagne*, or countryside.

Drawing on the country's own natural beauty and provincial charm, "Le Village Préféré des Français" (France's Favorite Village), takes viewers across the country's more rural and rustic landscapes.

The program, hosted by Stéphane Bern, explores the culture, gastronomy and history of 22 villages. Earlier this year, 70,000 people voted online to determine the 22 villages to be showcased, a record number of voters for France 2.

"This television program is a response to the desire to return to certain values," said Gérard Pont, head of Morgane Production, one of the show's participating companies. "Even the young people are searching for authenticity. The 22 selected villages exude a certain sweetness and simplicity, far removed from the bustle of the big city."

France Culture Plus: Public Radio for College Students

France Culture, a public French talk radio station, will soon launch a new set of programs catering to young people. France Culture Plus will launch just in time for *la Rentrée* ("back to school") this October and will be specifically aimed at French college students. The station is unconventional in that it will be presented in database form, with listeners able to choose content based on their interests, not unlike podcasts.

A quarter of the station's content is dedicated to airing France Culture's regular programming on subjects such as history, philosophy, economics and science. However, the majority of France Culture Plus's programming will be exclusive content created by students, for students. The new station is collaborating with Radio Campus France (an association of French college radio stations) to generate a variety of both music and talk-based shows. Additionally, the station will air academic conferences and seminars from around the country. Thirty-five universities have already agreed to participate in the venture. France Culture Plus hopes to offer something for all of the 2.5 million university students in France.

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Musique Plastique Celebrates Fusion of Visual, Musical Art **Pulp Fashion: Paper Haute Couture on Display in D.C.**



The fashion chain agnès b. has just opened three physical boutiques in the United States, all in New York City.

▲ Cutting-edge French fashion label, agnès b., continues to break artistic boundaries in its new exhibition, *Musique Plastique*. Through July and August, the Galerie Boutique in New York City has been buzzing with hundreds of art lovers. The eccentric exhibit highlights the collaborative relationship between visual and musical arts. The curator, Jean-François Sanz, invited 20 artists, skilled in both areas, to share their interpretation of the artistic evolution. The gallery displays a diverse group of arts, including painting, drawing, video and even multimedia installations. Among the creators is French illustrator, musician, and painter, Etienne Charry. Mr. Charry's extensive background resonates through his art installation of vintage radios on white pedestals.

Over her career, agnès b. has successfully captivated art connoisseurs around the world. The dynamic fashion company now has nearly 300 clothing stores, two art galleries and a film production company.

Musique Plastique ran from January 2011 at the agnès b. Galerie du Jour in Paris. The exhibit in New York City was on display through August 25, 2012.

▲ Without a single stitch, artist Isabelle de Borchgrave creates flawless recreations of haute couture gowns inspired by Augustin de Saint-Aubin's paintings and other period works. And she uses the same supplies one might find in an elementary art class: paper, glue, paint and ink. Her Prêt-à-Papier exhibit opened June 16 at the Hillwood Museum in Washington, D.C.

But Ms. de Borchgrave's works are far from elementary. Using a team of 18 assistants, she crafts stunning gowns and dresses from the ground up, beginning with a wire structure, then arranging paper into a veritable *trompe l'oeil*.

Fascinated by the designs of Yves Saint Laurent and the paintings of Édouard Manet, it did not take long after discovering paper art for Ms. de Borchgrave's studio to be filled with model dresses created or worn by the likes of Coco Chanel and Queen Elizabeth I.

Ms. de Borchgrave's works will show in Washington through December 30.



Inaugurated at San Francisco's Legion of Honor Museum, the exhibit shows numerous kinds of historical dress.

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