

Former French President Travels to D.C. to Discuss Europe

Former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing visited Washington, D.C., June 30-July 3 to discuss European affairs and challenges facing the European Union (E.U.) as France assumes the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the E.U. Speaking to a distinguished audience of government officials, ambassadors, and members of the press and think tank community at the Residence of France on July 2, Mr. Giscard d'Estaing discussed the state of the E.U. institutions, the role of the president of the Council, and France's priorities for its term.

In presenting the priorities of France's presidency, the former French president stressed the importance of a common European policy on energy, on immigration, defense, as well as the necessity for a Union for the Mediterranean. On the topic of defense, he noted France is "trying to enhance European deployment and planning capacities, which are at this moment mostly national." Mr. Giscard d'Estaing also expressed the need for the E.U. and



© Thomas Rottcher

Former French president Giscard d'Estaing discusses in D.C. challenges facing the E.U.

and Madeleine Albright, and former national security advisors Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft.

Mediterranean states to "work jointly to solve certain problems of common interest," citing pollution and traffic as examples. He also emphasized the obstacles facing the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.

The French presidency will "help to advance certain essential issues in a spirit of mutual understanding and with a democratic approach," he declared, adding that the process will be "open to the public and media to be debated in an easy and clear way."

The former president was the first speaker in a series of "Lectures on Europe," others of which will include a former French prime minister and other ministers, who will explore the objectives of a unified Europe within the context of France's presidency.

During his time in the nation's capital, Mr. Giscard d'Estaing met with high-level government and former government officials, including Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Steven Hadley, former secretaries of state Colin Powell

French-Colombian National and American Contractors Held Hostage Safely Rescued



© F. de la Mure / M.A.E.

Ingrid Betancourt is received by Pres. Sarkozy and Min. Kouchner upon her arrival in France.

Fifteen hostages, including French-Colombian national Ingrid Betancourt as well as three Americans, were rescued July 2 by Colombian special forces after being held captive by the FARC terrorist group in the eastern jungles of Colombia for more than six years. Betancourt was kidnapped by FARC in 2002 while campaigning for the Colombian presidency on an anti-drug trafficking and anti-corruption platform. While in captivity, Betancourt became an international symbol of courage and endurance, especially for France, where she spent the majority of her childhood and attended Paris's Institute of Political Studies. As her health deteriorated in recent months, French President Nicolas Sarkozy made her release a priority of his new government. Surrounded by Betancourt's grown children and sister the evening after her release, President Sarkozy thanked the Colombian authorities as well as Israelis, Americans, Spanish among others for their contributions to the successful operation.

France Assumes the Rotating EU Presidency

On June 30, the eve of France assuming the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union (E.U.), the Eiffel Tower donned the colors of the E.U., illuminated in a blue hue adorned with the twelve-starred flag of the E.U., kicking off a light spectacle that will occur every night through August to celebrate a united Europe. A European Cultural Season featuring cultural events that will take place in the same spirit across Europe during the French presidency will ensue (see p. 7).

With the sparkling Eiffel Tower in the background, French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Bernard Kouchner was handed the "baton" of the Presidency of the Council of the E.U. from his Slovenian counterpart Dimitrij Rupel on the esplanade of Trocadéro (photo on above)—a symbolic ceremony that marks the beginning of France's EU presidency.



© F. de la Mure / M.A.E.

Slovenia's Dimitrij Rupel hands off the "baton" of the EU Presidency to France's Bernard Kouchner.

France intends to demonstrate its commitment to the principles, priorities, and challenges of the presidency through a series of events during the first weeks of July. On July 1, the official start date of the term, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and French Prime Minister François Fillon held a work session in Paris with members of the French government and Commissioners of the E.U. to review the agenda for the next six months. French officials will also hold dialogues with the European Parliament and other European leaders in coming weeks, highlighting the principles of collective action and continuity and the importance of finding solutions to global challenges on a European level. France's priorities, which are energy, immigration, security and defense, and common agricultural policy, have been presented and discussed in an effort to take swift action towards achieving common goals (see NFF 08.05).

To address relations with neighboring regions, France will hold a Summit for the Mediterranean on July 13 in Paris, with the aim of reinvigorating the Barcelona Process, as well as E.U.-Ukraine and E.U.-Russia summits within the next few months.

INSIDE

2 Current Events

US President Visits France

3 France & America

DERBI

4 Profile

National Defense and Security

5 Business & Tech

Study on the Cause of Napoleon's Death

6 Society

Social Reforms in Favor of the Handicapped

7 Culture

Line Dancing in France

8 France in America

Bastille Day Celebrations



FRENCH FILM FESTIVALS IN JULY

From heart-wrenching romances to knee-slapping comedies, French cinematography is among the most famous in the world. This July, both Boston and New Orleans will be hosting French film festivals with varied selections to appeal to audiences both young and old. The 13th annual Boston French Film Festival, co-presented by the French Embassy's Cultural Services and The Alliance Française of Boston, will be held July 10-27. "Shall We Kiss?," a romantic comedy from director Emmanuel Mouret, premiered July 10, followed by a reception. Other featured films include Jean Becker's "Conversations with my Gardener," "Michou d'Auber," starring famed French actor Gérard Depardieu, and the César Award-winning "Hunting and Gathering," with Audrey Tatou. For a full list of screenings, please visit: www.mfa.org. In New Orleans, the French Film Festival took place from July 11-13 at the Prytania Theater (www.neworleansfilmfest.com). Classic film aficionados were able to enjoy "Le Ballon rouge" (1956) and "Crin blanc" (1953). For younger audiences, the festival screened "Two Shorts" (45 minutes each), by Albert Lamorisse. The event also featured "Le Voyage du ballon rouge," by Hsiao-Hsien Hou and François Margolin, "Roman de gare," by Claude Lelouche, "La Duchesse de Langeais," by Jacques Rivet, as well as Arnaud Desplechin's famous "Un conte de Noël."

INSTITUTE FOR CEREBRAL AND MEDULLARY DISORDERS

Construction began in June on the Institute for Cerebral and Medullary Disorders (ICM), a research center in Paris that will examine the mechanisms of neurological disorders and brain and spinal cord trauma, bringing together specialists from all over the world. When construction is completed in 2010, the ICM will be one of the world's leading research centers, aiming to develop innovative treatments for such disorders as multiple sclerosis (MS), Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, and major psychiatric illnesses. The institute, designed by French architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte, is located within the precincts of the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital, where neurology first came into being. The hospital complex itself is located on a university site, Université Paris VI, with strong potential for teaching and researching activities. The project's originality lies in its ability to bring together top-level doctors and researchers from France and abroad, from the public and private sector, working both in the field of basic research and in clinical research, and to provide them with ultra-sophisticated technical platforms.

US President Visits France on Tour of Europe

United States President George W. Bush visited Paris June 13-15 for a two-day stay that took place on the margins of a week-long tour of Europe that began at the U.S.-European Union Summit in Slovenia. His time in France emphasized French-American friendship and solidarity, as well as the importance of economic and political cooperation between the two nations.

President Bush was French President Nicolas Sarkozy's guest of honor during a dinner held at the Elysée Palace on June 13. The following day, the two presidents held a joint press conference at the Elysée Palace to address transatlantic relations and foreign policy issues. President Sarkozy explained that he and President Bush had engaged in deep discussion about the international situation, particularly the Middle East, as well as economic and commercial questions. "This is above all an opportunity to foster a dialogue between France and the United States," the French president exclaimed, "a trusting dialogue, a steady dialogue on all subjects of common interest, and there are many."

Elaborating on French-American friendship, President



President Sarkozy welcomes President Bush at the Elysée Palace on June 13.

Bush declared that "America's first friend was France. And frankly, we wouldn't be where we are today without the French support early in our revolution."

The American president's tour also commemorated the 60th anniversary of the Marshall Plan and the Berlin Airlift, two historic events that symbolize America's role in supporting a free and peaceful Europe. Speaking at the headquarters of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris on June 13, President Bush encour-

aged cooperation on issues such as energy security, climate change, international development, and combating terrorism.

Amid the working meetings and speeches, the American president found time to visit the Suresnes American Cemetery and Memorial, and honored the memory of the French and American soldiers who perished in World Wars I and II by visiting the Mont Valerian Memorial. In addition to France, President Bush's tour of Europe also included visits to Germany, Italy, the Vatican, and Great Britain.

Paris of the Future: Exploring Plans to Reduce Environmental Impact



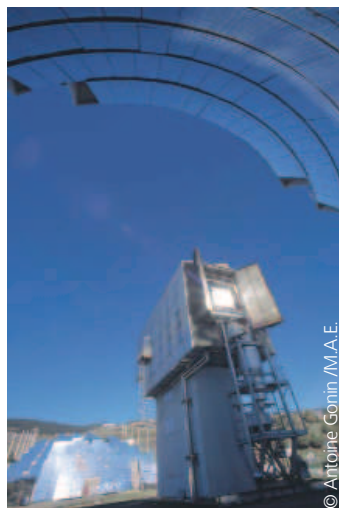
View of Paris, at dusk, from the Maine-Montparnasse tower — President Sarkozy called on architects to modernize the city's transportation system and to reduce its ecological footprint.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy called on ten architects, with teams of urban planners, engineers, sociologists, and even philosophers, to create proposals to modernize Paris's transportation systems and to further advance the city's commitment to sustainable environmentally-friendly development and to lowering its ecological footprint. At the Elysée Palace in early June, President Sarkozy gave each team six months to create "strong, original, and real" proposals that would accommodate the expansion of the metropolis and address global concerns about energy resources and climate change, making Paris a model of sus-

tainable development for other cities. Among the selected designers were Frenchman Jean Nouvel and British architect Richard Rogers, both recipients of the Pritzker Prize—one of most prestigious awards in architecture.

The new design will supplement sustainable practices already in place thanks to Paris's mayor, Bertrand Delanoë, who created pedestrian zones, integrated energy-efficient trains in the city's metro (see page 5), and instituted "Vélib"—a successful bicycle sharing program that is currently being launched in several US cities including Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia (see NFF 07.10).

DERBI: Moving Towards a Brighter and Cleaner Future



© Antoine Gonin / M.A.E.

Built in 1969 in Cerdagne, France, this solar furnace is still the largest in the world and was a topic of discussion at this year's DERBI Conference.

The third annual Development of Renewable Energies in Building and Industry (DERBI) International Conference brought together over 1,000 high-level specialists and researchers, as well as 300 international businesses, from June 5-7 to discuss the future of renewable energies in Europe. Taking place in Perpignan, in France's sunny Cerdagne region near the Spanish border and the Mediterranean

coast, an area that is home to several solar furnaces, the conference showcased genuine prospects for renewable energy. "The aim of the DERBI competitiveness cluster is to foster innovation, research training, development and business creation on a regional, national, and international level, and so contribute to achieving the objective of 20 percent of the energy produced in Europe being derived from renewable sources by 2020," said Chairman of the DERBI competitiveness cluster, André Joffre.

Consisting of 16 workshops, including round table discussions and information sessions that explored solar, photovoltaic, wind, wood, and geothermal energy, DERBI has become an invaluable forum for promoting sustainable technology efforts since its creation barely three years ago. According to figures published by Ernst & Young, global investment in renewable energies could reach 750 billion dollars by 2016. "The demand for renewable energies is growing at an unprecedented rate," emphasized one of the firm's analysts.

This year's conference paid special tribute to the state of California for its active pursuit of renewable energy options. In January 2008, a delegation from the DERBI cluster visited 11 companies in Silicon Valley, including the solar-powered offices of Google, to assess the progress of emerging technologies in the photovoltaic sector. This trip was part of a larger French commitment to combating global warming and promoting sustainable development (See NFF 07.11), as well as to establishing partnerships outside of France. DERBI has already visited Spain, Portugal, and India, along with "other countries that are at the cutting edge in producing and using renewable energies," Joffre stated.

France is also eager to share its own solar power achievements with its international partners and welcomes "every prospect of [...] foreign companies that would like to establish a base" in the Cerdagne region, Joffre explained. The solar furnace in the village of Mont-Louis was the first of its kind when it was installed in 1953 and was particularly valuable during the 1973 oil crisis, when it was used as a power generation plant. This station consists of 860 mirrors assembled in a parabola that reflect the sun's rays onto a focal point where temperatures can surpass 5,400 degrees Fahrenheit. Mont-Louis was the forerunner for other larger models built in the same region in 1969 and 1983 by the French National Scientific Research Center (CNES).

Santa Monica Basks in the Artistic Glow

On July 19, residents and visitors to Santa Monica, California will spend the hours from dusk until dawn on the city's historic pier and beach and in their surrounding parks and galleries enjoying contemporary art installations and the natural splendor of the area. The event, called Glow, draws its inspiration from Paris's *Nuit blanche*, an annual October event that keeps the City of Light's museums, cafés, and movie theaters open all night and features concerts, art, and light displays throughout the city.



Courtesy of the Glow Festival

New York artist Shih Chieh Huang's proposal for Glow will turn the bike path beneath the pier into a magical undersea paradise.

In addition to the natural charms of the famed Santa Monica Beach and pier, visitors will be able to admire art from renowned artists like Usman Haque, Shih Chieh Huang, and Anne Deleporte, presented in a variety of unexpected sites and ways. Boat sails, storefronts, and even the ocean will provide projection backgrounds for multi-media art; boardwalks, and palisades will be a stage for artistic performances, and even a multi-level parking garage will be converted into an artist's gallery.

The all-night festival's name was inspired by the silvery grunion fish that live in local waters and come ashore in waves a few times a year to spawn in the sand, producing a momentary iridescence. For more information, please visit: www.glowsantamonica.org.



American teenagers partake in the French Heritage Language Program in New York City.

Some American teenagers will be spending a few weeks of their summer experiencing French culture. New York City's French Heritage Language Program summer camp will immerse 13- to 19-year-olds in activities exploring the arts, dance, writing, and film, as well giving them the opportunity to visit museums and political institutions—all of which will be conducted in French. The first two weeks of this summer immersion program will take place in New York City, and the last week will be in Québec, Canada. The camp, which lasts from July 7- 26, is organized by the French Heritage Language Program in partnership with the French Embassy and the French-speaking communities of New York. The program's primary objective is to celebrate cross-cultural appreciation and help students develop proficiency in French while honoring their own cultures and identities. For more information, please visit: <http://facecouncil.org>.

VIRGINIA GOES FRENCH

A week-long celebration of France started on July 13 with a 25-hour piano marathon at the 2008 Wintergreen Summer Music Festival, called "Old World, New World," in Wintergreen, Virginia. "France Week" is just one component of the four-week festival that consists of daily events such as cooking classes, music concerts, wine tastings, seminars, and children's activities that explore various aspects of French heritage. Events have been scheduled from dusk until dawn, allowing Francophiles to pick and choose a full day's worth of events. Every year, Wintergreen Performing Arts, Inc. produces summer music festivals featuring symphonic and chamber music concerts. This year's summer festival has taken on a global flavor, as each week celebrates and explores the cultures of Europe and the Americas. In addition to the week-long tribute to French culture, the festival includes weeks devoted to Spain, Italy, and North and South America. About 4,000 people attended last year's event, and even more are expected to revel in this summer's festivities, that began on July 7. For more information, please visit: www.wintergreenperformingarts.org.



France Publishes its White Paper on Defense and National Security



Addressing over 3,000 military personnel on June 17, French President Nicolas Sarkozy presented the conclusions of the French White Paper on defense and national security. Commissioned in July 2007, the White Paper will be submitted to Parliament in autumn of 2008, and if approved, will serve as the foundation for multi-year planning and spending, and decisions to modernize and create compact and reactive security and defense forces.

The 2008 White Paper substantially redefines French strategy in a 15-year forward-looking perspective, embracing both defense and national security, to address the needs of an evolving international paradigm. The scope of the national security includes foreign and domestic security, military means and civilian tools to respond to risks emanating from states or non-state actors, and deals with active, deliberate threats, as well as the security implications of major disasters and catastrophes of a non-intentional nature.

"The nature of the threats has changed; they are diverse and evolving," the French president stated. "They seem distant to us, but, let's make no mistake, our country, like the rest of Europe, could be struck tomorrow. France and the French must be prepared for these threats."

The Commission was given full latitude in crafting this White Paper, and comprised representatives from the relevant government agencies and armed forces, parliamentarians, members of academia and the think tank communities, and independent experts.

Several new initiatives are proposed to address the challenging nature of internal and external security. "The Prime Minister and I have decided to set up a new Defense and National Security Council, which I shall chair, that will be the government forum for debate where decisions will be taken on implementing this strategy," the French president stated. "It will be able to draw on the analyses of a highly qualified Consultative Defense and National Security Council." In addition, President Sarkozy announced his decision to create the position of intelligence coordinator to be posted at the Elysée Palace, which will direct the services and ensure the consistency of their actions.

The White Paper also foresees restructuring elements of the armed forces to maintain their operational capabilities, including: 1) An operational ground force of 88,000, enabling a force-projection capability of 30,000 soldiers with six-month notice, 5,000 soldiers on permanent operational alert, and the capability to mobilize 10,000 on the national territory to support civilian authorities in the case of a major crisis. 2) An aircraft-carrier group including combat, surveillance, rescue aircraft and helicopters, 18 frigates, six SSNs, and the capability to deploy one or two naval groups. 3) A joint fleet of 300 combat aircraft, regrouping the combat aircraft of both the air force and the navy (Rafale and modernized Mirage 2000-D) to allow for the permanent deployment of five squadrons on France's national territory and a force projection capability outside of the national territory of 70 combat aircraft with an additional capability of ten aircraft on permanent alert.

In addition, "Parliament will be systematically informed of the deployment of troops in operations," President Sarkozy stated. "Parliament will systematically have a vote on such a deployment whenever it exceeds four months."

The White Paper defines a consistent defense effort to improve the availability and modernization of the most frequently used equipment, and to launch programs related to intelligence and preparation for the future. It advocates the reinforcement of the protection of land, sea, and air combat forces (individual soldier protection, armored vehicles, equipment maintenance, and anti-air and anti-cruise missile protection of navy ships). The White Paper also calls for the launching of new programs during the same timeframe, in particular, in the field of knowledge and anticipation (knowledge-based security, observation, electronic intelligence, early warning) on land, at sea, and in the air with the development of surveillance and armed drones, as well as both offensive and defensive cyber-war capabilities.

Additionally, the new strategy emphasizes the highest degree of professional development in all sectors, both civilian and military. As much as possible, joint training and shared recruitment policies of various ministries will be implemented. A special educa-



© Photo Service Elysée: L. Blevenec
President Sarkozy announces the conclusions of the White Paper.

tional program to train external and internal intelligence personnel will be established.

From a budgetary perspective, defense spending will not decrease—France shall devote a major financial effort to its defense. In the initial phase, annual resources (excluding pension charges) will be consistent in volume and increasing at the same rate as inflation. During a second phase, starting in 2012, the budget will increase at one percent above the rate of inflation. Between now and 2020, the aggregate effort devoted to defense (excluding pensions) will amount to 377 billion euros. Concomitantly, restructuring will lead to considerable decrease in manpower over six or seven years and operating cost reductions in the ministry and the armed forces. The resulting savings will be totally reinvested in the procurement budget, as well as in the improvement of defense personnel training and living conditions. "The truth is that we must stop thinking that our armed forces are judged only by their manpower strengths. We must have equipped, trained and modernized armed forces," President Sarkozy asserted.

Five Strategic Functions for Defense & Security

The White Paper outlines five strategic functions: knowledge and anticipation, prevention, deterrence, protection, and intervention.

Priority is given to **knowledge** and **anticipation**, and **protection** of both the French population and territory with intelligence gained both conventionally and through the use of new technology to facilitate decision-making and to enable the preservation of strategic initiative. Coordination and communication between civilian and military departments and agencies is one of the fundamental principals of the crisis management and preparedness system.

The White Paper provides for **conflict prevention** and **intervention capabilities** by placing priority on a geographic axis from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, the Arab-Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. It also takes into account the growing importance of Asia for national security and favors both presence and cooperation in the Indian Ocean. Simultaneously, France will radically change the existing system of defense and military cooperation agreements to evolve toward a partnership between Europe and Africa, and cooperation in defense and security that will favor the development and strengthening of African peace-keeping capabilities.

Nuclear deterrence remains an essential concept of national security. This requires the modernization of the sea-based ballistic missile submarine force and the airborne missiles carried by nuclear-capable combat aircraft. France has also taken initiative in the area of **nuclear disarmament** and is particularly active in the fight against the proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as delivery missiles.

A European Ambition

Making the European Union (E.U.) a major player in crisis management and international security is one of the central tenets of France's security policy. The White Paper proposes several concrete goals for European defense, including: an overall intervention capability of 60,000 soldiers, and the ability to deploy for a significant duration two or three peace-keeping or peace-enforcement operations and several civilian operations of lesser scope in separate theaters.

In addition, the new strategy emphasizes four priority areas for the protection of European citizens: the reinforcement of cooperation in the fight against terrorism and organized crime; the development of European civil protection capabilities; the coordination of the defense against cyber-attack; and the securing of the supply of energy and strategic raw materials. Lastly, the White Paper advocates the drafting of a European White Paper on defense and security.

The White Paper underscores the complementarity between the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance, and advocates the full participation of France in the NATO structures. This will go hand in hand with the reinforcement of the E.U. in the area of crisis management. With regard to France's position, the White Paper recalls the three main principles in direct continuity with those defined by General de Gaulle: complete independence of nuclear forces; French authorities must retain full freedom of assessment, which implies the absence of automatic military commitment and the availability of assets allowing for strategic autonomy by increasing intelligence capabilities; and lastly, permanent freedom of decision, which means that no French forces shall be permanently placed under NATO command in peace time.

Hair Analysis Reveals Napoleon Was Not Poisoned

For years, many scholars and scientists have believed that Napoleon Bonaparte died from arsenic poisoning, either accidental or intentional. Proponents of the theory claimed that either his British guards purposely poisoned the exiled emperor, or that the dye used on his bedroom's wallpaper was arsenic-based and vaporized into poisonous fumes when it came into contact with mold. This idea, which replaced previous speculation that Napoleon died of stomach cancer, stemmed from researchers' discovery of high arsenic levels in hair samples from his head.

New evidence from Italy's National Institute of Nuclear Physics (INFN), however, has called the poisoning theory into question. Researchers used a small nuclear reactor at the University of Pavia to



"Napoleon on his imperial throne," Ingres, Jean Auguste Dominique.

Research by the INFN reveals new data surrounding the cause of Napoleon's death.

analyze hair samples taken at four different periods of Napoleon's life, as well as the hair of his wife and son. Using "neutron activation"—a technique that does not destroy the sample and yields very precise results—the physicists were able to test for arsenic in the hairs provided by the Malmaison Museum in Paris, the Glauco-Lombardi Museum in Parma, Italy, and the Napoleonic Museum in Rome.

Comparison of hairs from Napoleon's childhood in Corsica, his exile on Elba, the day of his death on Saint Helena in 1821, and the day after he died revealed no significant difference in the level of arsenic concentration. Hair samples from Empress Josephine and Napoleon II also had comparable levels of arsenic. Researchers were also surprised to find that the arsenic concentration in the historical samples was about 100 times that of the ten hairs taken for comparison from living persons. Although poisonous, arsenic was used during the 18th and 19th centuries in art, food preservation, and even in fashionable medicine, which may account for this difference.

International Laboratory to Explore the Applications of Plasma



© CNRS Photothèque CHEZIERE Alexis

A sample is prepared at LITAP's new facility for a plasma analysis designed to detect the presence of metal.

The new International Laboratory of Technology and Application of Plasmas (LITAP), committed to discovering practical and theoretical applications of plasma technology, was inaugurated on June 3 in Grenoble. The laboratory is a pioneer in this field, combining the skills of both French and Québécois scientists.

Plasma, one of the four states of matter, is made up of charged particles of ions and electrons often found in neutral gas-like clouds, such as stars. The material is becoming more and more integrated into everyday life both directly, through certain types of lighting, UV lamps, and plasma screens, and indirectly, through computer chip fabrication and different types of surface treatments.

LITAP, which is a collaboration between institutions in both France and Québec, aims to research applications of plasma in the areas of micro-nanotechnology, sterilization, development of new materials, and accelerators.

The Paris Metro Goes Green

The five million daily passengers who use the Parisian metro system will soon be riding in train cars that are not only more attractive, quiet, and comfortable, but also consume 30 percent less energy. Last month, the *Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens* (RATP) or the city's public transit operator, began replacing trains on three lines that date back to the 1970s with the new MF 2000 trains.

The new models feature bigger windows, soft lighting, and colorful fabric upholstery. Other amenities to boost comfort include larger automatic doors to facilitate the train-to-platform transfer and an air-cooling system that is more economically- and energy-efficient than traditional air conditioning. One of the most important innovations, however, is the projected 30 percent decrease in energy consumption for the fleet. To reduce energy usage, the trains will have a lower maximum velocity, translating to fewer bursts of speed but more power when leaving each station, a method more suitable for the Parisian metro's network of closely placed stops.



Paris's economically- and energy-efficient MF 2000 will bring new meaning to the term "green" metro.

The introduction of the MF 2000 is one of the RATP's developmental programs that aims to accommodate the growing number of passengers and the metro's expansion to the city's periphery. The update will occur in three stages, with a projected completion date of 2016.

FRANCE MOVES TO BLOCK ONLINE CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

The French government will team up with local Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to create a blacklist of Web sites that contain child pornography. France's unprecedented efforts to strengthen barriers on cyber-pedopornography will begin in September, when the public can report any exploitive images of children to the government. French authorities will create and manage the blacklist and direct ISPs to ban those sites. All ISPs in France, including Free, Orange, Neuf Télécom, and Alice, have agreed to block cyber-pedopornography domains, according to French newspaper "Le Figaro." In addition, ISPs will shut down sites that contain references to terrorism and incite racial hatred.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS FOUND IN ILE-DE-FRANCE



An aerial view of the 40 foot diameter tower dating back to the 13th century.

The French National Institute of Preventive Archaeological Research (INRAP) has unearthed relics from the 13th century Château de Chaland in Essonne, near Paris. The Institute's archaeologists, who have been excavating since January, discovered the remains of a tower (photo above) that was nearly 40 feet in diameter, leading them to believe that the owner had some very powerful, and possibly royal, connections. The site also includes a farm, a fortified structure, a trench, and an expansive dwelling space, as well as a weaving workshop. The discovery of the farm confirms theories that farming did exist as early as the 13th century, according to INRAP—grain collecting and animal husbandry were essential forms of sustenance as early as medieval times. Verifying the assumption that the castle's owner may have been a squire or a knight was the discovery of shards of glazed and decorated dishes and pitchers. These ceramics are believed to have been brought from Parisian workshops and are considered to be a good indicator of wealth and rank. Using the remains, contemporary maps, and aerial pictures from the 1920s, the Institute has been able to not only get an idea of the original layout of the site, but also to trace its development over the centuries.

WHITE STORK SUCCESSFULLY REINTRODUCED IN ALSACE AREA



"Max," the stork, nesting with his young on the French-German border.

The population of the white stork has increased by 3,000 percent thanks to protection and reintroduction programs in Alsace and Lorraine, saving the iconic bird that makes annual migrations from France's northern Rhine region to Africa's Sahel Belt. The white stork, commonly associated with fertility and good luck, was nearly extinct during the early 1980s due to droughts in Africa that depleted winter food supplies and obstacles during flight such as power lines. In 1983, France's Association for the Protection and Reintroduction of Storks initiated one of the most successful repopulation programs, keeping young storks in enormous aviaries for at least three years and feeding them plentiful meals to discourage instincts to make the yearly journey to Africa. In addition, the national electric company developed special screens to keep birds from nesting near power lines, school children shored up deteriorating nests between breeding seasons, and "stork correspondents" were appointed to every town in the region, recording the movements of the birds and the conditions of their nests.

A TOAST TO YOUR HEALTH: THE BENEFITS OF WINE

Thinking about having another glass of wine with dinner? New studies indicate that wine yields much greater benefits than originally believed and could enhance longevity and physical capabilities. In 2003, scientists at Harvard discovered that resveratrol, an ingredient in wine, activates cellular protein agents called sirtuins that slow the aging process, prevent obesity, and combat type II diabetes, Parkinson's, and Alzheimer's. The Institute of Genetics in France later found that the compound could also significantly enhance athletic abilities in mice. While it was initially assumed that the amount of resveratrol found in wine was negligible, new studies by the University of Wisconsin suggest that merely four five-ounce glasses daily could yield comparable outcomes in humans due to other analogous compounds in red wine. Resveratrol is found primarily in the skin of grapes, and concentration in wine depends on grape type, farming climate, and wine processing. Studies also suggest that eating red or purple grapes, or drinking juice, could be a non-alcoholic means of obtaining the compound.

France Announces Reforms in Favor of the Handicapped

French President Nicolas Sarkozy unveiled a plan to improve employment opportunities, public health initiatives, and accessibility for handicapped persons at the first National Conference on the Handicapped last month. Announcing that the government would allocate nearly three billion euros towards overhauling programs and initiatives in favor of the handicapped, the French president committed to creating 50,000 additional places for disabled persons in specialized schools and establishments for adults over the next five years, and called on employers to step up efforts to integrate handicapped

persons into the workplace. To this end, the French government will systemize cooperation between *La Maison départementale des personnes handicapées* (a unique public institution, created in



France's new social reforms will seek to improve employment opportunities and accessibility for the handicapped.

2005, that safeguards rights for and offers services to the handicapped) and the public employment service to streamline recruitment opportunities for handicapped persons. Sarkozy has also indicated that regional initiatives to increase professional development and training for handicapped workers should be signed by the end of the year.

Similarly, the French Ministry of Work, Social Relations, and Solidarity announced a plan to improve the autonomy and social integration of visually impaired individuals, allotting a budget of 18 million euros between 2008 and 2011 to devise and implement initiatives conducive to their needs. One of the objectives is to add new features, such as vocalization equipment onto existing technology, such as telephones and computers, to improve accessibility. In addition, hopes are to make school textbooks available in Braille by 2010. For more information, please visit: www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr.

Jacques Chirac Launches New Foundation



Former French president Jacques Chirac launched his foundation in June.

Former French president Jacques Chirac launched his foundation dedicated to sustainable development and cultural diversity last month, demonstrating his continued commitment to international development and to the creation of a dialogue between peoples around the world.

Surrounded by prominent figures such as former UN secretary general Kofi Annan and Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, Chirac inaugurated his foundation at the Musée du Quai Branly, a museum in Paris that showcases the arts and civilizations of Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas. Annan and Yunus, along with other world leaders, including former Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, have joined the foundation's honorary committee.

The former French president and his team have already initiated projects to promote access to clean water and medicine in West Africa, fight deforestation in the Congo Basin, and save near-extinct languages (such as Araki, a language that is currently spoken by only eight people) in Polynesia. In the coming months, the 75-year-old Chirac plans to travel to Africa, as well as to China and Japan, to advance his goals. "In the face of major world challenges, I still want to fight," Chirac told the French daily "Le Figaro." "And the foundation is the tool for this. I want to stir and awaken consciences."

Along with developing and implementing projects in areas of need, the foundation will award the Jacques Chirac Prize for Conflict Prevention in recognition of outstanding work for the promotion of peace.



LATEST SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE: FACEBOOK A LA FRANÇAISE?

Antoine and Michel Morcos are the new boys in social networking. In November, the Parisian brothers created weplug.com, an online social network similar to Facebook, but with a few more perks.

In addition to the usual online features, weplug.com integrates geolocation and the micro-blogging service Twitter into its interface. Geolocation is a fairly new, hip application — once users give their permission, the site works in tandem with the iPhone and Google Maps,



Weplug.com can be used in tandem with the iPhone.

allowing members to track their friends' locations around the world.

Twitter allows users to send "Tweets," text-based messages that can be transmitted to everyone in one's online community, making it easy to stay in contact with large groups.

Beginning with only 300 members, weplug.com now boasts around 3,000 users. Available in eight languages, including English, Arabic, French, Japanese, and German, weplug.com is raising the bar for online networkers everywhere.

News From France does not endorse the content, views, and opinions of authors expressed in the aforementioned Web sites.

Country Line Dancing Goes into Full Swing in France



Courtesy: Fédération Française de Danse

French country line dancing enthusiasts participate in the 2008 French Championship.

leisurely activity, education and training, and competition of country line dancing. The endeavor will strive to create guidelines for "la section country," not only by harmonizing the rules for competition and standards for instruction but also by introducing a license that will grant members access to certain benefits of organized sports, such as insurance to cover the risk of injury and the right to use copyrighted materials or music. It also will allow clubs associated with the FFD access to public funds or subsidies and to the highest quality of training by formally trained and licensed instructors.

According to British newspaper "The Times," amateur line dancing teachers will have to undergo 200 hours of training, and three times that will be required for professional certification. The publicly funded training courses will include English-language instruction and the teaching of line dancing techniques that explore "the mechanics of the human body," as well as how to teach line dancing to the elderly.

Modern line dancing evolved from the folk-style dances that were popular in New England in the 1800s. The country and western forms as they exist today were not developed until the 1970s, when they began to grow in popularity around the world.

A Season of Celebrating the Unity of Europe

The French-sponsored European Cultural Season is a large-scale pioneering event that celebrates the creative diversity and cultures of the 27 member states of the European Union (E.U.) with several hundred cultural events focusing on cinema, photography, theater, design, and contemporary art. Lasting the duration of France's six-month long EU presidency that began on July 1 (see p.2), the Season reaches both new and veteran audiences thanks to partnerships between institutions, cultural centers, and embassies that allow the events to travel to cities and towns in every member state. The program is not exclusive to European traditions, but instead highlights the universality of all cultures and was launched at the base of American sculptor Richard Serra's monumental work in Paris (see NFF 08.05).

These cultural events will be integrated into the daily lives of Europeans and visitors to the continent. European

dance performances of varying themes will be organized throughout France around July 14, allowing spectators to experience music from all member states and to listen to a waltz specially composed for the occasion by French-Italian accordionist Marc Perrone. In addition, Parisian airports will host "27 Graphic Artists for Europe," an exhibit of top sketch designers from member states.

The event also funds "tandem projects"—collaborations uniting artists of several nationalities around a particular theme. Scheduled projects include Franco-German hip-hop choreography, jazz adaptations of French composer Maurice Duruflé's work for the National Choir of Latvia, and "Course à l'amour," a Franco-Slovenian theater performance organized by French actress Juliette Binoche and choreographed by British-Bangladeshi dancer Akram Khan.

For more information, please visit: www.ue2008.fr.

Tour de France Shifts Gears

As summer rolls into full swing, cycling enthusiasts are gearing up for the 95th Tour de France—one of the sport's most arduous competitions, taking place this year from July 5-27. To ensure that the Tour demands the highest level of endurance, the 21-stage race launches from a different location each year, requiring participants to adapt to ever-changing routes and conditions. This year, the first stage began in Brest, in France's Brittany region, a longtime center of competitive cycling. In addition, the race's route alternates each year from clockwise to counter-clockwise directions across France. For this year's 3,500 kilometer Tour de France, riders will bike down the west of France towards the



© F. de la Mure/ M.A.E.E.

This year's Tour de France introduced new reforms to discourage the use of performance enhancers.

positive for unapproved supplements. To quickly address allegations, the ASO also transferred authority from cycling's universal governing body, "Union Cycliste Internationale," to France's Chamber of Arbitration for Sport, which will forgo confirmation from a second analysis and settle cases in 24 hours.

Pyrénées, race east to the Alps, and pedal the final eight ceremonial laps on the Champs-Élysées in Paris.

The departure point and routes are not the only changes in this year's Tour de France. To discourage the use of unauthorized performance enhancers, the organizer of the Tour, Amaury Sport Organization (ASO), instituted several reforms in this summer's competition. Each team agreed in early June to face fines of up to \$155,000 if a rider tested

positive for unapproved supplements. To quickly address allegations, the ASO also transferred authority from cycling's universal governing body, "Union Cycliste Internationale," to France's Chamber of Arbitration for Sport, which will forgo confirmation from a second analysis and settle cases in 24 hours.

FRENCH FIRST LADY RELEASES NEW ALBUM

French First Lady Carla Sarkozy will release her much anticipated third album, "Comme si de rien n'était" (As if nothing had happened), on July 11 to audiences in both France and the United States. The former model and singer co-wrote 12 of the 14 songs—one of the others was written by Bob Dylan—and plans to donate her share of the royalties to charitable and humanitarian causes, according to a spokeswoman for Carla Sarkozy Records cited in Reuters. Carla Sarkozy's first album, "Quelqu'un m'a dit" (Someone told me) was a success, selling two million copies worldwide after its release in late 2002. Her second album, the 2007 English-language record called "No Promises," increased her popularity among English-speakers. The French daily "Le Figaro" describes Carla Sarkozy's much anticipated third album as being "at the crossroads of folk and French lyricism," adding that her "fragile and heavy voice gives a sense of maturity and originality to her songs."

"PORGY AND BESS" CAPTIVATES PARIS



© Elizabeth Carecchio

Featuring an opera chorus from Atlanta, "Porgy and Bess" opened in Paris to a full house.

The historic Opéra Comique in Paris welcomed George Gershwin's opera "Porgy and Bess" à la française last month, which opened to a full house and enthusiastic applause. Performed by the all African-American Atlanta Opera Chorus, with musical accompaniment by the New World Symphony from Miami Beach, the performance made a French hit out of an American classic. "Porgy and Bess" is the story of poor African-Americans in Charleston, South Carolina, during the early 1920s. Pushing artistic boundaries when it was first performed in New York in 1935, it mixes blues and jazz music with the traditional conventions of opera. Though it was initially met with skepticism, "Porgy and Bess" is now performed internationally to widespread acclaim. The Opéra Comique's version of the production featured a giant on-stage screen that flashed images of South African township life as the opera was being performed. This high-tech addition intends to show "that this same story could be told somewhere else besides Charleston," said Atlanta Opera Chorus master Walter Huff in the "Atlanta Journal-Constitution."

Bastille Day Events in the U.S.



Accordion music sets the tone for Bastille Day in Minneapolis.

News from FRANCE

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Emmanuel Lenain

EDITOR
Valérie Luebken

MANAGING EDITOR
Thomas Rottcher

SENIOR WRITERS
Thomas Rottcher, Laura Mandel

WRITERS
Monica Dorene Arañez, Luke O'Donnell,
Jenelle Thomas, Katherine Wilson

To change your address, subscribe (for free) or unsubscribe, please contact:

**NEWS FROM FRANCE
FRENCH EMBASSY PRESS &
INFORMATION SERVICE**

4101 Reservoir Road, NW
Washington, DC 20007-2182
Tel: (202) 944-6060
Fax: (202) 944-6072

E-mail:
info@ambafrance-us.org

<http://www.ambafrance-us.org>
<http://www.france.diplomatie.fr>
<http://www.ue2008.fr>

How often are sixty-odd waiters lined up with champagne-laden trays, ready to power walk down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C.? Only during the week of July 14, when cities all over the U.S., from east coast to west, celebrate France's national holiday, "le quatorze juillet."

July 14 commemorates the storming of the Bastille in Paris in 1789, a day that marks the birth of a democratic France. Two hundred years later, Bastille Day is commemorated with festivities all over the world.

In Washington, D.C., Brasserie Les Halles will sponsor the D.C. Waiter's Race on July 14. Waiters and waitresses from surrounding restaurants will compete, balancing a tray of champagne and cheese as they race along Pennsylvania Avenue. The Comité Tricolore is also hosting their annual evening of feasting, music, and dance in honor of the holiday on July 12.

Philadelphia's celebration will take place on Bastille Day on the Moshulu, an historic ship moored on the Delaware River. Guests will enjoy a buffet and desserts, dancing under the stars with the Fred Hall Orchestra, a silent auction, and a raffle for two round-trip tickets to Paris, courtesy of Air France. For more information, please visit: www.afphila.com.

For the tenth year in a row, the French Institute Alliance Française (FIAF) will host Bastille Day on 60th Street in New York City, a street festival with a wide variety of activities, including Cancan dancers, French music performances, face painting, and the chance to win a trip to France. To the 70,000 French people who call New York City home, Bastille Day on 60th Street is a time not only for commemorating the past, but also for fraternizing and sharing cultural values with American friends. François Delattre, Consul General of France in New York, commented on this camaraderie: "These shared values give Bastille Day a universal appeal which is especially mean-



Waiters in Washington, D.C., prepare for the annual race.

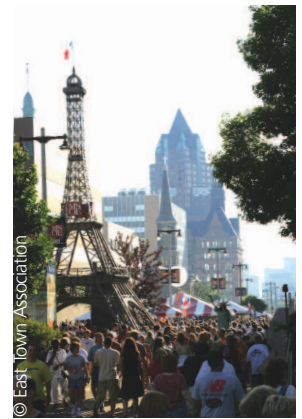
ingful in such a cosmopolitan city as New York." For a schedule of performances, vendors, and other information, please visit: www.bastilledaynyc.com.

Further north, New Englanders will be celebrating the spirit of the holiday with music, food, and general merriment. On July 13, Cambridge will host Bastille Day on Harvard Square, an event featuring a traditional French waiter's race, a French pop singer, and a French DJ. In

Boston on Bastille Day itself, the Consul General of France will host a reception to bestow the Legion of Honor on five New England World War II veterans, and Francophiles will be partying late into the night with singers, performers, and DJs at The Beehive in the South End of the city. For more information, please visit: www.consulfrance-boston.org.

The Midwest will also partake in festivities. Chicago (www.af-chicago.org) will welcome the celebrated French aerial artists "La Compagnie Transe Express," who will perform on Navy Pier on July 12, followed by fireworks over Lake Michigan. Founded by Brigitte Burdin in the 1980s, La Compagnie is inspired by French street theater, which is transposed into elaborate and daring trapeze art 250 feet above ground. In Minneapolis, inside the Théâtre de la Jeune Lune, the Minneapolis Pétanque Club will offer pétanque games, and the Citroën Club will display vintage French cars. For more information, please visit: www.afmisp.org.

Milwaukee will expect a crowd of about 200,000 at the nation's largest Bastille Day celebration (www.afmilwaukee.org). Events will take place July 10-13 and will include dance lessons from the Milwaukee Ballet, a Petit Tour de France tricycle race, and the annual Storm the Bastille 5K run and two-mile walk. *Beignets*, along with *crêpes*, *coq au vin*, and other delicacies, will tickle the palates of those in attendance.



Milwaukee's Eiffel "Tower" over festivities on le 14.

Washington, DC 20007-2182
4101 Reservoir Road, NW

French Embassy Press and Information Service



Permit No. 4620
Washington, DC
PAID
U.S. POSTAGE
FIRST CLASS MAIL
PRESORTED