



News From France

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New Foreign Affairs Priority: “Economic Diplomacy”



Foreign minister Laurent Fabius has set forth a new policy calling on France's diplomatic network to ramp up pro-growth efforts conducive to economic benefit at home.

Following a busy summer that included national elections, chairmanship of the U.N. Security Council and continued support of the Syrian people, France has now named a new top priority: “economic diplomacy.”

Targeting French economic growth, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has three objectives in marking economic policy as a primary diplomatic concern: supporting French enterprises in external markets, striving to adopt greater financial regulations both in Europe and abroad, and encouraging foreign investment in France.

“Our diplomatic service must considerably strengthen its ‘economic reflex,’” wrote the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Laurent Fabius, in an August 23 article appearing in French financial journal *Les Echos*. He called on France and the rest of Europe to “make it standard practice to apply the principle of reciprocity in international negotiations.”

The French diplomatic network in its entirety will now prioritize economic considerations, and every French ambassador will act as the chief of his or her own local “team France.”

French diplomats will begin by increasing their engagement with businesses and trade negotiations, coordinating French “instruments of influence”—such as educational and cultural networks abroad, scientific cooperation and scholarships—with the nation’s economic objectives.

Young diplomats will be provided with more extensive training in developing economic skills.

“The challenge is as much one of attaining influence as achieving growth,” wrote Mr. Fabius, underlining the importance of France’s foreign trade balance in enhancing international credibility.

Boosting the country’s exports, implementing financial regulations and encouraging investment from abroad are all seen as key to creating a stronger and more stable climate for economic growth in France.

From the Ambassador’s Desk: A Message From François Delattre

With summer ended and fall in full swing, I wanted to say a brief word to my American friends.

Here in Washington, indeed throughout the country, this season’s calendar promised a busy program—and it certainly has been so far. Claude Bartolone, President of France’s National Assembly, made a three-day trip through the nation’s capital from September 7 through 9. He met with U.S. House Speaker John Boehner as part of the G8 Presiding Officers Meeting, in efforts to restore growth to recession-hit economies worldwide.

On the anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the embassy expressed France’s sincerest solidarity with the American people. We admire the resilient spirit of all Americans impacted by the events of that tragic day.

France’s President François Hollande traveled to New York City September 24 through 26, participating in the opening activities of the United Nations General Assembly.

We’ve also been following the U.S. Presidential elections with great interest. Whatever the outcome in November, the embassy is excited about observing American democracy in action. We’ll be celebrating the electoral process with our American friends. With all that our countries share—from values of freedom and democracy, to joint peace efforts—I look forward to continuing this season of good relations.

Ambassador François Delattre



“From the Ambassador’s Desk” will be appearing each month. Your comments are welcome (see p. 8).

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French Diplomatic Visits Make for Busy Month in D.C.

As France's government began to outline its agenda, political leaders came to Washington in September echoing President Hollande's goals for international and domestic policy. Claude Bartolone, President of France's National Assembly, met with his counterparts in Washington from September 7 through 9. Speaking at the French embassy, Mr. Bartolone emphasized the importance of the longstanding bilateral relationship between the two countries, as well as France's domestic economic agenda. He noted that Europe and the United States need each other to ensure growth and prosperity. He also participated in the G8 Presiding Officers Meeting and met with U.S. House Speaker John Boehner over the weekend to convey France's interests to international decision-makers.

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Hubert Védrine arrived in Washington on September 9 to meet military and security officials in order to carry out an assessment of France's 2009 return to NATO's integrated command, as well as the progress of EU defense. Mr. Védrine also met with Zbigniew Brzezinski, Former National Security Advisor and influential American foreign policymaker, and Madeleine Albright, former U.S. Secretary of State.

Corrine Nassiguin, a Deputy in the National Assembly who represents French citizens living in North America, began touring the continent on September 9 after being elected to parliament in June. She spoke with constituents on September 17 and 18 about issues affecting France's expatriate community.

Philippe Lalliot Named Foreign Ministry Spokesman

As France prepared to head back to school and to work for *la Rentrée*, France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed one of its seasoned diplomats back to Paris to take on the role of spokesman at the department's Paris headquarters, also called the "Quai d'Orsay." Philippe Lalliot, formerly France's Consul General in New York City, was named to the post on August 27. Mr. Lalliot assumes the new role after having served extensively in the United States, where he lived in Washington, D.C., for four years before being named the New York Consul General in September 2009. Mr. Lalliot has been succeeded by Bertrand Lortholary as Consul General in New York.

Amid Turmoil, France Stands With Europe

▲ In a series of bilateral talks with prominent leaders of the eurozone in early September, President François Hollande and Minister of Foreign Affairs Laurent Fabius assured France's dedication to finding a solution to the euro currency turmoil.

President Hollande began the month with a meeting with Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti on September 4, during which both leaders demonstrated commitment to sustain the currency bloc. Mr. Hollande outlined three steps to respond to the situation in the eurozone.

First, the conclusions reached by the European Council in late June need to be implemented. Second, it reaffirmed France's desire that Greece stay in the eurozone, and that more financial help should be extended to Spain to help recapitalize its banks. The final step of the response is to create a banking union among the 17 European countries that use the euro. Mr. Monti also expressed his concerns about speculations against the euro and stressed the importance of stabilizing markets and fulfilling sovereign obligations to the single-currency zone.

Minister Fabius discussed major European issues with German Minister of Foreign Affairs Guido Westerwelle in Bonn, Germany on September 5. The meeting took place in the context of the "Franco-German Year," celebrating the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Elysée Treaty, one of



President Hollande visited Italian prime minister Mario Monti on September 4 to discuss eurozone solutions.

the European Union's formative documents.

Similar themes were discussed in a meeting between President Hollande and Herman van Rompuy, President of the European Council, also on September 5. Mr. Hollande said an agreement on a banking system needs to be reached soon in order to rebuild confidence in the union. He believes the decisions made at the next European Council meeting will bring solutions to overcome the zone's current difficulties.



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interview with the expert

Dr. Emilienne Baneth-Nouailhetas, Attaché for University Cooperation

▲ As students headed back to school this September, *News From France* sat down with **Dr. Emilienne Baneth-Nouailhetas**, Attaché for University Cooperation and Director of CampusFrance. A literature professor by training who has lectured both in France and in the U.S., she encouraged American students to consider studying abroad.

What are the main higher education programs carried out by the French embassy?

The Partner University Fund is a very important program. We also have a program called the Chateaubriand program for scholarships for PhD students. It is really targeted toward American students or students in American universities who have some reason for wanting to do their research in France. It is on par with the Fulbright program, with better odds. We receive around 120 applications and this year we're able to send 15 or 16 Chateaubriand Fellows to France.

We also have the Network of Centers of Excellence. This is a big network—we have 18 or 19, including New York University, Columbia University, Georgetown University, the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M and UCLA.

How would you describe the current state of French-American partnership in higher education?

It's a very good partnership. When asked, most French students will say they would like to go to the United States. Coming to the United States requires greater means, but many schools are now establishing strong partnerships with American universities. University cooperation is really expanding right now with many new initiatives. For example, Sciences-Po has a very strong exchange program with Columbia University and many double degrees are being developed.

International rankings vary widely on the quality of French higher education. Why the variation?

This is really a sore point—the rankings. You could

say that the ranking methods are imperfect, as many of them rely on the number of professors who have won a Nobel Prize or another prominent, internationally recognized award.

Forbes magazine came out recently with its yearly list of best colleges in the world, whose criteria would be better reflect the quality of the French system. The *Forbes* list ranked according to student satisfaction, student placement, student evaluations of their professors. French universities and French professional schools also have excellent job prospects for their students. And that is something that should really be measured, as well.

What are the advantages of higher education in France?

International mobility in general is very important. Even a brief stay abroad is very important for any student. Not that many American students get to study abroad—less than 3.5 percent. They are sometimes held back by the cost of studying—the cost of studying here [means] they don't want to waste any time, and the cost of studying abroad can seem prohibitive. Then there is Europe, of course. Europe is one of the biggest partners of the United States. There is a wealth of culture you find in Europe, and in France in particular. It's all there: you walk in the streets in Paris, you have the experience immediately—you don't even need to enter a museum to start imbibing that culture. So for all these reasons, I think that France is a wonderful place to go and study.

In U.S. and Abroad, France Pushes for Peace in Syria

▲ France demonstrated steadfast support of the Syrian opposition when French representation, led by Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, chaired a ministerial meeting at the U.N. Security Council on August 30. Wishing to voice its support for the Syrian people, express growing concern over regional stability, and call for a democratic and pluralistic system in the war-torn Arab nation, France made a strong affirmation of its foreign policy priorities and commitments.

As many as 4,000 casualties were reported for the month of August, making it the bloodiest month on record since anti-regime protests against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad began in March 2011. Opposition forces estimate that over 23,000 Syrians have been killed in the past 17 months.

Foreign governments, wary after a decade of international conflicts in the Middle East, are reluctant to intervene directly without a mandate from the Security Council. Despite three votes to date, repeated vetoes from Security Council member states Russia and China prevent authorized international intervention. The United States has indicated it would intervene militarily following any use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime.

In late August, France pledged an additional 5 million euros (\$6.25 million) to aid Syrian civilians, distributing aid and financial resources to

local authorities in eastern and northwestern provinces.

Officials in Paris have increased dialogue with members of the opposition forces in an effort to strengthen ties among the anti-regime political movement, defectors and rebel fighters.

Strongly opposed to the continuing violence in Syria, French President François Hollande recently called on Syrian opposition to organize and form a provisional government. Mr. Hollande pledged France's full recognition of an opposition-led government as soon one can be formed.



Minister Fabius speaks next to Hillary Clinton on September 30; Mr. Fabius welcomes a leader of Syria's religious minorities; Mr. Hollande listens to Syrian opposition leadership.

Supporting French Heritage, Amb. Delattre Visits Louisiana

▲ As celebrations of the 200th anniversary of Louisiana's statehood go into full swing, Ambassador François Delattre traveled to Cajun Country and gave a speech in Lafayette, LA, the home of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL). Speaking to members of the organization, the ambassador promised support from the French government to CODOFIL in light of recent budget cuts that may reduce the organization's efforts in sustaining French language and culture in the state.

"Last year, France expressed its readiness to support CODOFIL and the renewed mandate it had received from the Louisiana lawmakers. [...] Today I'm here to stand with you in support of the Louisiana Foundation and CODOFIL in the implementation of these objectives, programs and projects," Ambassador Delattre said.

In addition to addressing attendees, the Amba-

sador toured the region, visited local museums, and met with political figures.

At a ceremony on June 28, he decorated local World War II veteran Lorcey Sonnier with the prestigious Knight of the Legion of Honor.

CODOFIL was established in 1968 by the Louisiana state government with the task of regenerating interest in the French language and Cajun culture.

The organization has typically received widespread support from legislators, especially those who represent Acadiana, the southwest region of the state where most Francophones reside.

CODOFIL's endeavors include funding for study abroad trips, foreign teacher exchanges, and scholarships for students interested in French language studies. Partnering with the French government allows the agency to fulfill its goals appropriately and effectively.

U.S. Duo Writes the Book (Again) on Paris Markets

Lovers of the Parisian marchés en plein air will experience fresh delight over the release of the new edition of *Markets in Paris*. American authors Marjorie Williams and Dixon Long have written a concise guide to over 120 great places to shop in the City of Light. The pocket-sized book includes everything from food, flea and antique markets to those that sell books, crafts and flowers. For food alone, the guide cites 68 outdoor and 10 covered food marketplaces in addition to 12 pedestrian market streets.

Organized by arrondissement and by product, the shopping centers are conveniently arranged. The reader is also provided with more subtle tips, such as "dos" and "don'ts" and specialties to look for at each location. The guide contains every market's hours, address and nearest metro stop, and websites. The book further includes a list of marketplaces that are open only on Sunday, as well as an index of restaurants and smaller places to grab a bite to eat in surrounding areas. For marché connoisseurs and travelers alike, the book is a useful resource for exploring the Parisian markets both on and off the beaten path.

Paris Tour Explores City's African-American History

Paris's sights are beautiful and its history is rich, but for the informed tourist, the classic "checklist" of sights—including the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral, and the Louvre art museum—may not be quite enough. Black Paris Tours, created in 1997 by California native Ricki Stevenson, offers an alternative to the traditional tourist experience, and instead highlights the city's past as a longtime "home away from home" for African-American expatriates.

Ms. Stevenson's tour includes visits to the famed Avenue des Champs-Élysées, where members of the 369th Regiment "Harlem Hellfighters" were welcomed as heroes after World War I, and stops at performance venues which once featured such greats as Josephine Baker, Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet. The tour concludes in the Goutte d'Or neighborhood in Paris's 18th arrondissement, which was known as the "Harlem of Paris" in the 1920s.

The tour serves as a reminder of the rich history of African-Americans in Paris, one that continues today with part-time Paris residents such as tennis star Serena Williams and rock musician Lenny Kravitz. In 2011, Black Paris Tours was recognized by the U.S. Embassy in Paris in honor of Black History Month.

Deauville American Film Fest Lights Up Normandy

Chalk it up to the region's shared history with the United States.

When Americans and other Allied troops stormed the beaches at Normandy in 1944, they couldn't have known they were setting precedent for another American wave: the movies.

Four Decades of Deauville

Now in its 38th year, the Deauville American Film Festival showed new and classic films from the stateside cinema industry from August 31 through September 9. Themes include "Uncle Sam's Docs," a documentary series selected to shed light on American life and culture, and "American Nights," a 24-hour screening of famous flicks—including, naturally, "The French Connection."

This year's guest of honor was U.S. actor and Academy Award nominee Harvey Keitel, whose memorable lead roles include "Bugsy" (1991), "Reservoir Dogs" (1992) and "The Piano" (1993).

Inaugurated in 1975, U.S. movie enthusiasts André Halimi and Lionel Chouchan planned their first modest festival in Deauville to enliven the city beyond the traditional summer and horseracing seasons. After major American stars such as Gregory Peck attended in 1977, the festival took on signal event status in the seaside town's cultural calendar. Around the same time, Anne d'Ornano, the city's mayor and longtime festival supporter, said that

"Hollywood has found itself a home in Normandy."

An Ever-Expanding Program

Progressive improvements to the series have drawn increasing public attention. A film competition became a permanent feature in 1995. Organizers launched a 24-hour marathon of classic movies in 2007, celebrating the rich legacy of Hollywood's "Golden Age" and other periods. The 2010 event screened television series and hosted a conference devoted to screenwriting. The new platforms assured representation of U.S. films of all stripes, from independent pictures and documentaries to blockbusters and a special "New Hollywood" project to support young U.S. talent.

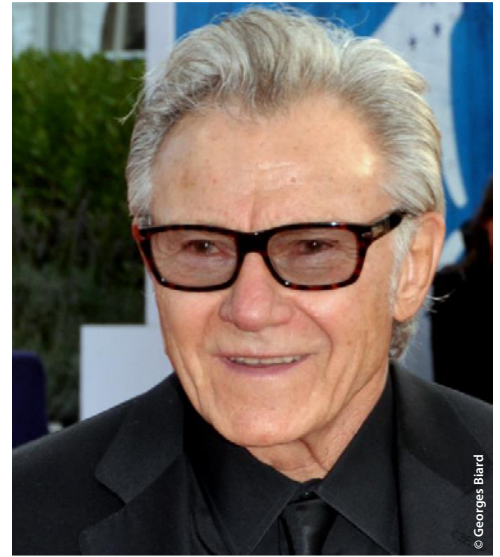
The event has taken on premier status for the American film industry abroad. U.S. visitors making the trip to Deauville could comprise a who's-who of their country's film scene, with Michael Douglas, Sydney Pollack, Paula Wagner and Rachel Weisz having each taken a turn on Deauville's red carpet.

Continuing the Tradition

As part of the festival, the Radio France Philharmonic Orchestra played a special tribute concert on September 13 for John Williams, the American composer who scored the "Indiana Jones" and "Star Wars" series.

Winning the Grand Jury Prize this year was "Beasts of the Southern Wild," directed by Benh Zeitlin. The fantasy drama tells the survival tale of a six-year-old orphan after a devastating flood.

From the "Golden Age" to "New Hollywood," Deauville keeps the flame of U.S. film burning bright.



Top left to top right: Jeremy Renner, of "The Bourne Legacy," takes questions; U.S. ambassador to France, Charles Rivkin, opens with Philippe Augier, Deauville's mayor; Benh Zeitlin, director of Grand Prize-winning "Beasts of the Southern Wild," addresses a crowd; Mr. Renner's co-star, Rachel Weisz; Deauville 2012's guest of honor, Harvey Keitel.

A Brioche Grows Near Brooklyn: Bread Brand Rising in NYC

▲ The well-known French bakery Maison Kayser opened a branch on New York City's Upper East Side late this summer, generating excitement among Big Apple enthusiasts of the noted boulangerie. The opening of this store marks the 79th bakery for the chain. With the addition of bakers Yann LeDoux and Stéphane Jimenez, the new storefront spares no expense to provide its patrons with quality pastries.

Originally from Alsace, the store's proprietor, Eric Kayser, opened his first bakery in the 5th arrondissement of Paris in 1996. Recognized for his unique baking style, which employs artisan-brand yeast and longer baking times, Mr. Kayser and his chain quickly got noticed. Becoming one of France's most prominent bakeries, Maison Kayser spread to other countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. The Manhattan location currently stands as the chain's first store in the Western Hemisphere, but not for long: recent success has prompted plans to open two more stores in the city.

The bakery offers traditional French classics such as croissants, *pains au chocolat*, and *pains de mie* as well as several new bread recipes. The "Épi East Side," for example, is an American twist on the French baguette. The "Curcuma" is a fusion of Indian spices and French wheat. The bakery also offers classic American-style bread for the less daring customer.

Maison Kayser joins the Upper East Side's long history of popular bakeries. Long-time chain Eli's Bread is a neighborhood favorite and a New York institution. The new store also happens to be just blocks away

from the Ladurée pastry shop, a Paris favorite, which opened its New York location last year.



With nearly 80 stores around the world, the Maison Kayser has set up in Manhattan to immediate success.

For Startups, NETVA Conference Means Business in the U.S.

▲ The French general consulate in Boston sponsored a week-long workshop from September 10 through 15 for French startups, joining French technological innovation with American business expertise. The New England Technology Venture Accelerator (NETVA), launched in 2009, coordinated the event with the support of several American firms and private enterprises.

During the conference, NETVA provided not only critical resources and advice for French startups but also a pairing with an American business partner, which acts as a mentor to its French counterpart. This system allows young companies to better understand the challenges they may face, with the specific focus on establishing business strategies, acquiring financing for various endeavors and advertising effectively.

The program didn't shy away from discussing the potential fate of many fledgling businesses—failure. "If the business does not see concrete results after one year, it doesn't mean that the business is failing. Rather, every business has different needs. You've got to work at it," said David Boucard-Planel, Deputy Science Attaché for the Office of Science and Technology at the Boston consulate, explaining the process of integration into the American market.

Before being tapped for participation, businesses must undergo an extensive application process. A panel of both French and American entrepreneurs and businesspeople then selects five to 10 startups to advance to the conference, where they receive individualized attention. Before arriving in the United States, the entrepreneurs congregate in Paris to prepare for the experience. The conference opens the attendees to a vast network of American-based

consultants and sponsors.

"The training, the contacts and the exposure offered through NETVA are already bearing fruits and definitely fast-tracked our technical and commercial development in the U.S.," said Bruno Tilliers, a 2011 NETVA attendee.

With growing popularity and participation, the promising program is expected to continue enhancing the future of French-American cooperation for startup technology companies.



A mentor gives a thumbs-up to one of the many pitches delivered during the 2012 startup incubator in Boston.

French Business Leader Appointed CEO of Best Buy

The global electronics retailer Best Buy announced on August 20 that it has named Hubert Joly, a globally recognized French business leader, as its next president and CEO.

Mr. Joly will serve as head of the company in the latest of his many prestigious jobs with the world's leading names in the media, service and technology sectors, all of which make up his deep experience with the U.S. business community.

Having previously worked for such American firms such as Electronic Data Systems (EDS), management consulting firm McKinsey & Company, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, and the latter's parent company, Carlson, Mr. Joly said he felt "honored and excited" to take up the challenge of Best Buy's top position.

The French entrepreneur was tapped in part because of his strong record in boosting the performance of struggling and healthy companies alike. While at EDS he helped increase revenue nearly 62 percent in four years. Mr. Joly was elected a Global Leader for Tomorrow by the World Economic Forum and is a Knight in the French National Order of Merit. He assumed his new role on September 4.

Sampling the Surface, Curiosity Explores Mars

Nine months after its launch, the Curiosity rover landed on Martian soil. In September, the vehicle traveled over a football field's length, making use of its field instruments for the first time. Ten days were allotted for these instrumental and functional "checkouts," after which the one-ton rover headed to Glenelg, an area of Mars where three types of terrain intersect. The location was chosen as an optimal place for the Curiosity to find its first rock target for drilling analysis. Following Glenelg, Curiosity will venture to its principal destination, Mount Sharp, where it is expected to arrive in mid-October. The mountain is layered with an extensive series of deposits that were created by the impact that hollowed Gale Crater over 3 billion years ago. Using the 10 instruments with which the rover is equipped—two of which were developed in collaboration with French scientists—the Curiosity will analyze the sedimentary deposits in the layers. It is hoped the tests will offer a view into the historical environmental conditions of Mars and can, therefore, be used to conclude whether the planet ever offered conditions favorable for microbial life.

Louboutin, Disney Team Up to Find the Real Cinderella

Girls around the globe held their breath when renowned French footwear designer Christian Louboutin was asked by Disney to create his interpretation of the iconic Cinderella glass slipper. Yet few expected the outcome to be as extraordinary as the pair of mini-platform, red-soled, white lace, five-inch heels adorned with butterfly appliqués and Swarovski crystals that he came up with. In honor of the fall 2013 release of *Cinderella* on Blu-Ray, only 20 pairs of these Cinderella shoes have been produced. The limited edition shoes could be acquired by participating in an online contest organized through Facebook. To win, contestants were required to be between the ages of 18 and 25 and had to complete a questionnaire between August 7 and September 9. The contest involved answering six questions revolving around the subjects of princesses, fashion and dreams. Contestants were also asked to complete a range of tasks from matching photos of Disney princes to their corresponding Disney princess to choosing what color dress one would wear to a ball. On September 25, selected finalists were asked to pass a new series of tests at a ceremony in Paris. Having proven themselves, the winners each received one of the original 20 pairs of Louboutin's inspired glass slippers—and were left hoping the shoes fit.

In Rouen, a Baseball Powerhouse With American Help

In Europe, U.S. sports are often met with curiosity and do not generate much interest, but in France, America's pastime has hit it out of the park. The Rouen Huskies, member team of the French Federation of Baseball and Softball (FFBS), advanced to the European Champion Cup Final Four, which took place on August 29. The team finished in fourth place.

The Rouen Huskies have been a dominant force on the growing French baseball scene, having won nine of the last 10 national championships. Part of the team's success is a result of three Americans: Saad Anouar of Washington, D.C.; Chris Mezger of Boulder, CO; and Ethan Paquette of Cooperstown, NY. Though these three players were unable to land contracts with Major League Baseball (MLB), they continued to play the sport they love while simultaneously promoting it abroad. Since its inception, the MLB has signed nine French natives. For the current season, the Seattle Mariners acquired Alexandre Roy, who hails from—where else?—Rouen.

Boise + Basque? A Cultural Enclave Lives On in Idaho

▲ Forget Idaho's typical association with potatoes and Napoleon Dynamite—the “Gem State” can also count a cultural connection to France among its many merits. One has only to venture to the state capital, Boise, to find one of the largest Basque communities outside continental Europe, and which continues there a cultural tradition stemming from thousands of years of history in France.

The Basque people, known as “Euskaldunak” in their language, originate from an isolated region spanning much of the Pyrénées Mountains in southwestern France and northern Spain. Basque immigration to the western United States peaked during the early 20th century, when Basques from the Spanish region of Bizkaia left behind the difficult farming conditions of their homeland in favor of the chance at prosperity offered by North American sheepherding.

Today, roughly 6,000 individuals of Basque heritage reside in Idaho. A recent profile by the *New York Times* revealed that despite the importance of sheepherding in Basque-Americans' history, this laborious, lonely line of work is no longer appealing to members of the Basque community.

“Us old Basques are just about finished,” remarked Henry Etcheverry, one of the last Basque sheep ranchers. “The younger generation doesn't want to [herd sheep]. I understand. It's a lot of work. Kids want to get educated.”

Even as some traditions fade, others, like celebrating the religious feast day of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and the annual Boise “Shepherd's Ball,” continue to delight



Descendants of Basque farmers, who immigrated to the western U.S. in the early 20th century, parade in Idaho.

young generations of Idahoan Basques. The Basque Center of Boise, a social club built in 1949, offers traditional dancing and music lessons for children, while the local Basque Museum and Cultural Center (the only such museum in the U.S.) offers courses in language and culture.

As the sizable Basque population of Boise suggests, these people continue to honor their history, culture, and unique identity; whether “at home” in France and Spain, or in communities scattered across the world.

French Researchers Inching Closer to a Cure for AIDS

▲ French researchers are inching closer to a cure for the HIV/AIDS virus, as demonstrated by research presented at this July's International AIDS Conference in Washington, D.C. Ever since teams of scientists led by French researchers Luc Montagnier and Françoise Barré-Sinoussi identified the condition thirty years ago, France has been at the forefront of efforts to eradicate HIV/AIDS.

This year French researchers from Paris's Institut Pasteur presented promising new evidence that the scientific community is discovering new ways of treating the virus, which compromises patients' immune systems and

leaves them vulnerable to rare and dangerous diseases.

Results stemming from a study of the “Visconti Cohort,” a group of 14 French HIV patients at the center of a decade-long study at the Institut Pasteur, confirm the effectiveness of early antiretroviral drug therapy in fighting off the development of AIDS. These patients began antiretroviral drug treatment shortly after becoming infected with HIV, an action uncommon among HIV positive individuals.

After undergoing three years of early treatment, the Visconti patients ceased taking the drug altogether and show little signs of the virus even seven years later. Rather than their conditions worsening and developing into AIDS, these patients' health remains relatively stable, a promising development for what researchers are calling a “functional cure” of the disease.

While treatments and vaccines aimed at completely eradicating the virus still remain to be developed, the international community is advancing in the global fight against HIV/AIDS, one which French scientific efforts are helping with their important discoveries and promising results.



Since Nobel laureates Françoise Barré-Sinoussi and Luc Montagnier first identified the HIV/AIDS virus in the 1980s, France has acted among the disease's leading global experts.

With Europe, France Fêtes Treasures of “Hidden Heritage”



Clockwise from top left: A gargoyle grimaces at crowds below; Breton maidens don traditional dress; a patchwork of street signs shows a corner of Parisian history; a tunnel leads up from the Pommery champagne caves in Reims.

▲ “Hidden Heritage” was the theme for this year’s “European Heritage Days,” observed in France on September 15 and 16. The annual two-day event was an opportunity to explore French cultural heritage, notably through visits to some of the nation’s most valued sites.

The series of events is put on every September in each of the 50 signatory States to the European Cultural Convention of the European Union. Described by the Council of Europe as an opportunity to “bring citizens together in

harmony [despite] differences in cultures and languages,” Heritage Days around Europe strive to raise awareness of the richness and cultural diversity of the continent.

“The theme chosen for the 29th European Heritage Days is destined to awaken an insatiable curiosity that animates us,” wrote Aurélie Filippetti, French Minister of Culture and Communication. “Since its creation, [this event] has drawn its modernity from the continual and convivial sharing of the greatest of riches: our heritage.”

“Ephemeral” Artist Jimmy Robert Exhibits in Chicago

▲ On August 25, the American art scene welcomed French artist Jimmy Robert at the Museum of Contem-



Focusing on “ephemeral materials” like paper, tape and performance, artist Jimmy Robert showed in Chicago.

porary Art (MCA) in Chicago, where he opened his first exhibit in the United States, entitled *Jimmy Robert Vis-à-Vis*. His experience as a minority growing up in Paris greatly influenced his artistic identity and helped contribute to his mélange of avant-garde and contemporary artwork. Not only has Mr. Robert painted portraits, but he has also created videos and choreographed dance numbers that reflect his personal story.

With the help of MCA curator Naomi Beckwith, Mr. Robert seeks to blend his works with “a concern for the body and a guiding interest in the poetic potential of ephemeral materials, such as paper, tape, and performance,” according to the museum’s website. An exhibition featuring another set of Mr. Robert’s work, *Jimmy Robert: Langue Matérielle*, ended a two-month stint on April 29 at Paris’s Jeu de Paume, a contemporary art museum located near the Tuileries Gardens.

Mr. Robert was born on the island of Guadeloupe, a French overseas department, in 1975 and moved to Metropolitan France as a young boy. He attended university at Goldsmiths College in the United Kingdom with a degree in Fine Art and Critical Theory. After moving to Brussels, Belgium, he burst on to Europe’s art scene.

His works have been featured in museums in France, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and now the United States.

In New York, a Resurgence of French “Old Wave” Cinema

From August 17 through September 13, New York’s Film Forum, located in the Hudson Square neighborhood of Lower Manhattan, played host to a series of “Old Wave” French films from the 1930s through the 1950s.

“Though the New Wave reinvigorated not only French but world cinema, it has unfairly overshadowed this extraordinarily rich earlier era,” explained festival curator Bruce Goldstein. “At one time, films like *The Baker’s Wife* and *Carnival in Flanders* were staples of American art houses, but are now almost completely forgotten.” Running a total of four weeks with multiple screenings of 53 films, “The French Old Wave” set out to introduce modern audiences to lesser-known early 20th century French film.

Opening with 1952’s *Casque d’Or*, the story of an ill-fated love affair directed by Jacques Becker, “The French Old Wave” festival offered screenings of classics by filmmaker Jean Renoir (son of French painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir), a 1949 adaptation of Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet,” written by André Cayatte and well-known poet Jacques Prévert, and even *Les Enfants du Paradis* (“Children of Paradise”) which was voted “Best Film of All Time” by French critics in 1995.

Impressionism Meets Fashion at the Musée d’Orsay

On September 25 the Musée d’Orsay opened its new exhibition entitled *L’Impressionisme et La Mode*, featuring Impressionist works that examine the fashion of their time. Though perhaps not their original intention—as the Impressionists concentrated on painting their subjects in an everyday environment—they simultaneously captured the fashion attitudes of their era. The exhibition will showcase the renowned works of Gustave Caillebotte, Edgar Degas, Édouard Manet, Claude Monet and their contemporaries, Pierre-Auguste Renoir and James Tissot among others. Working in cooperation with the Paris Fashion Museum, Musée Galliera, the artworks will be displayed alongside clothing from the period. Supported by the American Friends of the Musée d’Orsay, the museum also hosted a private gala and preview of the exhibition on September 29. Exhibition co-curator Gloria Gloom, from the Art Institute of Chicago, called the exhibition “very dramatic in a way that only the Orsay can do.”

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SoHo Boutique Brings Iconic Breton Stripes to U.S.



A teenage Brigitte Bardot sports the Breton stripes for which the brand Armor-Lux, now in New York, is famous.

▲ As the first Armor-Lux store in America approaches its first birthday, the New York City location, known for its iconic French mariner tees, is thriving.

The Breton tee was popularized in 1858 when the French government decreed the blue and white knitted shirt as part of the French navy uniform. The top made its debut in fashion when Coco Chanel used it in her 1917 collection. Originally from Brittany, the stripes were made further synonymous with French chic through New Wave movies. Brigitte Bardot often donned the tee. Fashion leader Jean-Paul Gaultier has borrowed the style as well.

Owners Charles Arnett and Andrea Westeland know what sets their store apart. "Our clients are drawn in by the classic spirit of the Breton sailor and the history that surrounds" the garment, Mr. Arnett said in August to *French Morning*, a French-language online newspaper.

"Dinner in White" a Quirky, Much-Loved French Import

▲ France's "Dîner en Blanc" has crossed the Atlantic and become a phenomenon in twelve U.S. cities, with a total of six events in August and September alone.

The first Dîner came about in 1988 as a homecoming party thrown for François Pasquier. Mr. Pasquier invited friends to a picnic in the Bois de Boulogne, asking them to wear white so as to find each other easily in the large Parisian park. Growing from a gathering of friends into a global event, the Dîner is now enjoyed across five continents.

Today, with thousands of registered guests and many more on waiting lists for eventual invites, the Dinner in White is considerably more sophisticated. Guests receive invitations just 48 hours before an event is to take place. Diners must bring their own meals as well as tables, chairs and silverware—all adhering to Mr. Pasquier's tradition.

An annual event in Paris for over twenty years, Dîner en Blanc is rapidly spreading across the U.S., providing Americans in places like Atlantic City, Cincinnati, Las Vegas and New Mexico a chance to enjoy an evening of conviviality *à la française*.



A diner embraces the quirky spirit of the "Dîner en Blanc," a sensation that swept six U.S. cities this summer.

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