

Barnier Calls for Renewed NATO Relationship

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

The News from France team wishes you all an excellent holiday season! After helping Santa deliver his gifts, we'll be publishing our next issue on February 9!

IN A SPEECH during a ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels on December 9, French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier addressed the question of NATO's transformation and of the state of the transatlantic relationship. He emphasized that "we must continue our efforts to transform the Alliance," and that this requires regenerating the transatlantic dialogue. "The commitment to the transatlantic relationship that we all share does not, on its own, offer a guarantee against differences of view when our Alliance has to confront new challenges," declared the French minister.

In order to maintain the effectiveness of this "essential relationship," Barnier made two observations. First of all, the dialogue must be regenerated, made more diverse and take place on a more regular schedule, because today's challenges are new and the Alliance cannot just respond to them on an emergency basis, as is now often the case. "We need to talk politics among ourselves more often," argued Barnier. Fortunately, Barnier noted that the dialogue between North America and Europe no longer takes place solely within the NATO framework. The U.S. and Canada now deal directly with the E.U. on a variety of different issues, which helps to create a more stable relationship.

Secondly, it needs to be better recognized, in NATO, that Europe has changed and will continue to change. The reunification of the European continent, the enlargement of the European Union—and of NATO itself—are clear manifestations of this change. "But politically, too, the European Union has transformed itself," insisted Barnier. It has become a fully-fledged partner of NATO in crisis management. Only five years ago, it would have been unthinkable for the European Union to take over from NATO in Bosnia, but that is exactly what happened on December 2.

The transformation of the transatlantic relationship requires that NATO's member countries review the way they work together. Barnier firmly believes that the transatlantic relationship will only emerge stronger from such a review. "Our organization has everything to gain from this revamped approach," he asserted.

Barnier began his speech with a personal note addressed to Secretary of State Colin Powell, as this was Powell's last NATO Council meeting (he will be replaced by Condoleeza Rice in January). "I would naturally like to thank [Powell] for his remarks and convey to him our feelings of respect and gratitude," said Barnier. At a difficult moment, the U.S. secretary of state "displayed an understanding of situations and of men." Powell has contributed much to the Alliance, and Barnier was particularly thankful for Powell's role in the recent enlargement of the Alliance and in the modernization process decided upon at the Prague Summit, both of which "have gone smoothly." ■ ■



French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier (right) came to Washington, D.C., on December 15 to meet with Secretary of State Colin Powell at the State Department and Secretary of State select Dr. Condoleeza Rice (left) at the French Ambassador's residence.

Chirac Inaugurates World's Tallest Bridge

The new 343-meter high Millau viaduct represents a "tour de force" of French engineering.

FRENCH PRESIDENT Jacques Chirac visited the site of the new Millau viaduct on December 14 and delivered a rousing speech to mark the opening of what is now the tallest bridge in the world. Calling the viaduct one of France's "most shining works of civil engineering," he declared that "it brilliantly embodies the verve of our research and technology" and the new France, "a modern France; an enterprising, successful France; a France that invests in its future."

British architect Norman Foster designed the exceptional edifice, which carried its first traffic on December 16—a vertigo-inducing 270 meters (885 feet) off the ground! In addition to being the world's tallest bridge (23 meters taller than the Eiffel tower), the Millau viaduct is also, at 1.6 miles, the world's longest multi-span cable-stayed bridge. The

\$524-million construction project, completed ahead of schedule in only three years, was financed completely by the privately owned Eiffage group, which received the right to collect tolls for the next 75 years in exchange.



Beyond the highly innovative construction techniques employed in its construction, and its aesthetic appeal, the Millau viaduct will likely receive its highest praise for shaving considerable time off the drive along the north-south A75 highway. Indeed, Côte d'Azur summer vacationers will certainly be more than happy to pay the 6.5 euro toll in order to drive directly from Clermont-Ferrand to Béziers, thereby bypassing the notoriously abysmal traffic around the city of Millau.

For more information, please visit www.leviaducdemillau.com. ■ ■

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"FARM" TO AID THIRD WORLD AGRICULTURE

A new organization aiming to help poor countries develop their agricultural production was launched by President Jacques Chirac on December 6. The Foundation for Agriculture and Rural areas in the World (FARM being its French acronym) will first focus on Africa and will initially receive 1 million euros from the government and 7-10 million from participating French companies. FARM will sponsor projects such as hydraulics for irrigation, electrification, and the education of women in rural areas.

59 RAFALE FIGHTERS ORDERED

France announced on December 6 a \$3-billion order of 59 nuclear-capable Rafale fighter jets from Dassault Aviation. The Rafale is one of the most advanced and versatile jets in the world, capable of carrying out air superiority, reconnaissance, precision bombardment and nuclear strike missions. Forty-seven of the jets will join the airforce, and 12 the navy, bringing the total of Rafales ordered to 120. The French military hopes to order a total of 294 Rafales by 2008 (including 60 for the navy).

FRANCE LAUNCHES NUCLEAR SUB



"The 26th of November 2004, the nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, *The Vigilant*, of the Triumphant line, is officially admitted to active military service," announced French Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-

Marie late last month. This submarine is France's third addition to its fleet of new generation nuclear submarines. It will replace the *Indomitable*, which will be retired in 2005. The vessel is 138 meters long, weighs 14,300 tons, and can hold 16 land-sea ballistic missiles.

FRANCE, GERMANY BOOST COOPERATION

France and Germany have launched five pilot projects that will better coordinate their foreign policies. The projects include having one single building for their foreign representations in certain countries, and may eventually result in the joint nomination of ambassadors that would represent both nations. The two already share their diplomatic facilities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Malawi and Montenegro.

NEWS FROM FRANCE / December 21, 2004

Gaymard Named New Finance Minister

Former finance minister Nicolas Sarkozy is elected head of the main conservative party

HERVÉ GAYMARD, formerly France's minister of agriculture, was named minister of finance on November 29. He will take over from Nicolas Sarkozy, who was elected president of the conservative Union for a Popular Movement (known as the UMP) the previous day. Sarkozy resigned from government in order to focus on his new role and prepare the ruling party for the next parliamentary and presidential elections in 2007.

Sarkozy's departure resulted in a veritable game of musical chairs. Dominique Bussereau vacated his position as the secretary of state for the budget and replaced Gaymard as minister for agriculture and rural affairs. Shedding his duties as minister delegate for the interior but preserving his position as the government's

spokesperson, Jean-Francois Copé assumed Bussereau's budgetary responsibilities and was himself replaced by Marie-Josée Roig, formerly the minister for family affairs (her portfolio was incorporated into Health Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy's).

The primary focus of the French public now falls on Gaymard's ability to rejuvenate the French economy. Upon taking up his new responsibilities, Gaymard declared that this year's goal of 2.5 percent economic growth remains credible. His optimism spilled over into the question of France's deficit, which he assured would not exceed the eurozone limit of 3 percent. Giving credence to his optimism, the OECD painted a bright picture of France's economic prospects by forecasting growth rates of 2.8 and 3.1 for 2005 and 2006, respectively, as well as a reduction in its unemployment rate.



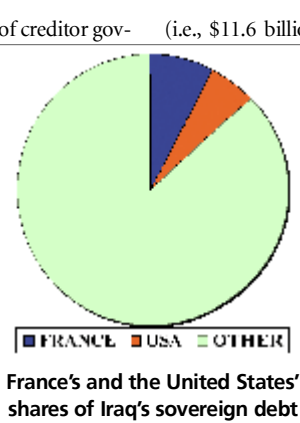
Photo by: François Frenay

Paris Club Relieves Iraqi Debt

The world's richest creditor nations will pardon 80 percent of Iraq's debt in three stages

THE PARIS CLUB, an informal group of creditor governments from the world's major industrialized countries (including France and the United States), decided November 21 to relieve Iraq of 80 percent of its public external debt. Iraq owes a total of \$2.994 billion to France and \$2.192 billion to the United States.

After noting Iraq's commitment to the implementation of IMF-approved economic policies, the Paris Club recommended reducing the country's debt from \$38.9 billion to \$7.8 billion by 2008. There will be an immediate cancellation of 30 percent of the total



France's and the United States' shares of Iraq's sovereign debt

(i.e., \$11.6 billion), with another 30 percent to be forgiven upon the approval of an IMF standard program. The third phase will be to reduce the remaining debt by 20 percent once the IMF Board has reviewed, after a three-year period, Iraq's implementation of its standard program.

Jean-Pierre Jouyet, chairman of the Paris Club, emphasized Iraq's exceptional situation and its limited repayment capacity as reasons for this special agreement and called on non-member countries to join in the effort to help Iraq.

Please visit www.clubdeparis.org.

Library of Congress Awards French Philosopher Kluge Prize

Paul Ricoeur shares the honor with U.S. historian Jaroslav Pelikan

FRENCH PHILOSOPHER Paul Ricoeur, 91, and U.S. historian Jaroslav Pelikan, 80, were awarded this year's John W. Kluge Prize for Lifetime Achievement in



Humanities and Social Sciences. The recipients of the prestigious American honor were announced November 29 by Librarian of Congress James H. Billington, and the award ceremony took place December 8 at the Library of

Congress in Washington, D.C. In addition to the prestige that comes with the award, the two men also divided a one-million dollar prize. The Kluge Prize, named after American media mogul John Kluge, recognizes outstanding scholars who endeavor in fields for which there are no Nobel Prizes.

Paul Ricoeur was born in Valence, France, in 1913. He earned degrees in philosophy from the University of Rennes

(1932) and the Sorbonne (1935 and 1950). His prestigious academic career has taken him to five different universities throughout France and the United States, including La Sorbonne and Yale University. Ricoeur has also authored a number of philosophical books, most notably *The Living Metaphor* (1975), *Oneself as Another* (1990), *What Makes Us Think?* (1998) and *Memory, History and Forgetting* (2000). In a statement, Billington wrote that Ricoeur "draws on the entire tradition of western philosophy to explore and explain common problems... He is a constant questioner—always pressing to understand the nature and limits of what constitutes our humanity."

Pelikan is best known for his works on the life of Martin Luther and for his five-volume series, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (1971 to 1989).

For more information, please visit the Library of Congress's Web site, www.loc.gov/loc/kluge/.



New Pasteur Foundation Exchange Program

THE PASTEUR FOUNDATION, a non profit U.S. organization, raises funds for biomedical research conducted at the Institut Pasteur in Paris and fosters exchanges between the Institute and the U.S. scientific community. *News from France* interviewed Caitlin Hawke, the Foundation's executive director, regarding the creation of two scientific exchange programs for Americans.

● How many students participate in the two exchange programs?

Since the inception of our post-doctoral fellowship program in 2002, we have created 15 three-year positions for young American scientists to carry out research at the Institut Pasteur. This year, we created a summer internship program for undergraduate students contemplating careers in science. For an initial three years, the program will bring a total of 10 undergraduates to our labs.

● What do they think about their experience in France?

Both of these programs draw on the sense that I got from our older American alumni who have been back in the States for some time. Over the years, they have told me that their time at the Institut Pasteur and in France was life-transform-

ing. I believe our interns and fellows are enjoying similar experiences. The perspective to be gained from both these programs is not quantifiable.

● Why is it important to promote scientific cooperation between France and the U.S.?

The scientific world is inherently a collaborative one so it just is intuitive. But when people relocate for scientific opportunities, the trend was to move to the United States. Our goal was to reverse this and open our laboratories to Americans. And the result has been tremendous. We seek to raise additional funds from donors living in the United States so that these programs will continue. But donors are also helping bridge our two cultures on a person-to-person basis. For Americans who love France, this is currently a very important preoccupation and, I am afraid, a necessary one.

Please visit www.pasteurfoundation.org.



On December 1, **Foreign Minister Michel Barnier** met with a **U.S. congressional delegation** in Paris which included Senator Robert Bennet (R-UT) and Representatives John Boehner (R-OH), Dennis Cardoza (D-CA), Philip English (R-PA), Jay Inslee (D-WA), Ron Kind (D-WI), Mike Oxley (R-OH) and Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI).

exterior views) and gardens located throughout the United States. Indeed, in order to study and photograph these properties, Ron Katz and Arielle de La Tour d'Auvergne visited over 150 historical sites in some 20 states. Many of these historically significant landmarks were restored thanks to funding provided by the French Heritage Society.

French America is available in French and English. Please visit www.frenchheritagesociety.org for more information. ■

U.S. AGENCY LAUNCHES FRENCH PR CAMPAIGN

The American PR agency, Ogilvy & Mather, has been selected by the French Agency for International Investment to create a campaign promoting international investment in France. This 10 million-euro project, which will last until 2006, will target CEOs, bankers and other business leaders in Japan, China, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. The campaign will feature factual language intended to correct misperceptions about the French business environment and improve the country's image abroad. For more information, please visit www.thenewfrance.com.

COUSTEAU'S SHIP GETS NEW LEASE ON LIFE



The *Calypso*, the ship Jacques Cousteau used to conduct his famous marine expeditions, was bought by U.S.-based Carnival Corporation on November 30. The vessel, a converted U.S. minesweeper, was sold for a symbolic one euro by a member of the Guinness brewing family. Carnival plans to spend 1.3 million dollars to restore the boat, which has been rusting in the harbor of La Rochelle, France, since 1998. It was towed there after sinking in a Singapore harbor in 1996. The *Calypso* will be exhibited in the Bahamas once repairs are completed in 2005. France's Cousteau, an undersea explorer, photographer and inventor of diving devices, achieved international fame with his television series, *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau*. He died in 1997 at the age of 87.

LOUVRE TO OPEN U.S. BRANCH IN ATLANTA

The Louvre Museum announced November 18 plans to open a temporary annex in Atlanta as part of a partnership with that city's High Museum. A series of long-term exhibits will open in September 2006 for three years. The loaned works will be displayed for three to ten months in a new wing of the museum that will open in December 2005. This partnership will help the Louvre raise funds to renovate several rooms of 18th-century French furniture and to foster cultural exchanges with the United States. Two or three expositions will also be organized each year for the Seattle Art Museum and the Denver Art Museum.

"French America"

A new book illustrates the influence of French culture in the United States.

THE FRENCH HERITAGE SOCIETY recently announced the publication of a book entitled *French America*, which showcases the long cultural legacy of France in the United States. With commentary from the American journalist Ron Katz and photographs by Arielle de La Tour d'Auvergne, the book explores France's influence on the United States by focusing on building techniques and architecture. Edifices ranging from the Cathedral of Saint Louis in New Orleans to Fort de Chartres in Illinois serve as powerful reminders of France's past presence and continued cultural influence in the United States.

French America, the publication of which coincided with the celebration of the Louisiana Purchase's bicentennial, features over 200 photographs illustrating French-styled chateaux, churches, public buildings (with both interior and

Statue of Liberty Photo Exhibit in Paris

A NEW EXHIBIT recently unveiled in France showcases the construction and assembly of the Statue of Liberty. The exhibit, entitled

"Bartholdi, Building the Statue of Liberty," is being housed at the Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris. It commemorates the centennial anniversary of the death of Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, who designed the statue.

Bartholdi's statue was originally meant to symbolize the cooperation between France and the United States during the Revolutionary War, but later became a gift from France to celebrate one hundred years of American independence. The statue, completed over a ten-year period and inaugurated in 1886,



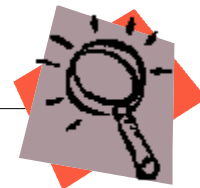
Auguste Bartholdi watches as the Statue's left hand is plaster cast.

was very much a joint collaboration between the two countries, both in terms of design and funding (see NFF 04.09 for more information).

The exposition in Paris recounts the project's entire inception, from the statue's development and construction in France to its assembly and dedication in New York. Highlights of the display include models of the workshops where the Statue of Liberty was built, around 50 photographs bequeathed by Bartholdi's wife a century ago, and copper and plaster models of the statue's finger and ear. For more information on the exhibit, which runs through March 6, 2005, please visit www.bartholdi.arts-et-metiers.net/GB.

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The Belleville Nuclear Plant
(© Torsten Stein)



NUCLEAR ENERGY IN FRANCE

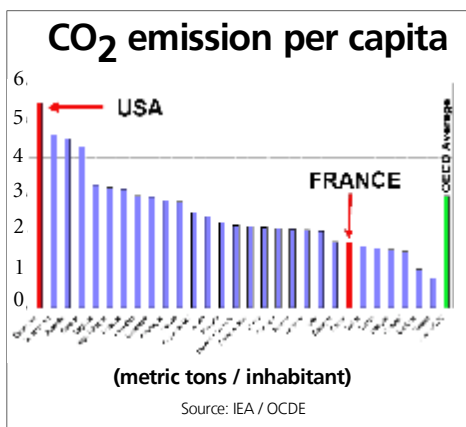
The Rise of Nuclear Power Generation in France.

THE HISTORY of nuclear science in France goes back over one hundred years. It began in 1896 when Antoine Henri Becquerel first discovered natural radioactivity. Since that time, a long line of French scientists (including Pierre and Marie Curie) have developed the technology for creating artificial radioactivity and for harnessing the power of nuclear fission. In 1945, under the leadership of General de Gaulle, the French government founded the French Atomic Energy Commission, or the CEA (Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique). In 1956, a joint project between the CEA and state-owned Electricité de France was launched to develop the first all-French commercial nuclear reactor, based on natural uranium gas-graphite technology. Less than 10 years later, in 1964, the first power reactor, EDF1, was operational at Chinon (on the Loire river).

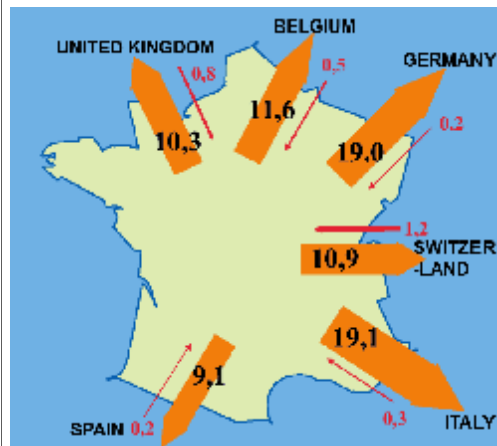
Possibly the most important event in the rapid development of France's nuclear energy industry was the oil crisis of 1973, in which oil prices sky-rocketed, causing the world economy to slump. This crisis made it crystal clear that reliance on fossil fuels was too risky for France's economy, and so alternative energy sources, particularly nuclear power, were explored. In 1974, the French government launched an aggressive nuclear power program, based on the promising pressurized-water reactor technology, that led to the standardization of the French nuclear reactor fleet. Such standardization made it much easier to replicate and operate power plants, thereby reducing costs and safety risks. Nuclear power has now essentially replaced all fossil fuel plants in France, and is substantially dampening the ill effects of recurrent oil price instabilities on the French economy.

Contributing to Sustainable Development

NUCLEAR POWER has, counterintuitively, helped contribute to sustainable development. When used with proper care and responsibility, nuclear plants have a minimal direct impact on the environment. Indeed, France now has one of the lowest levels of CO₂ emissions per capita in the world. While the U.S. produces over five metric tons (carbon equivalent) of CO₂ per inhabitant, France produces less than two. There has also been a 75-percent decrease in sulfur dioxide, which is responsible for acid rain, and had France not converted to nuclear energy, the emissions of smog-creating nitrous oxide would be 20 percent higher. The Ministry of Industry states



Electricity Export and Import



In 2002, France generated 416 TWh-worth of nuclear electricity (out of a total of 533 TWh), and it exported 81 TWh to neighboring countries.

that French nuclear energy prevents the emission of 1.7 tons of sulfur dioxide and 890 tons of nitrous oxide every year. Finally, nuclear power plants typically have a much larger capacity than similarly sized fossil-fuel plants (the last four nuclear reactors built in France have a capacity of 1,450 MWe) making it possible to serve more territory with fewer intrusive facilities.



Scientific Successes in the Nuclear Industry

HAVING INVESTED more than \$160 billion in its nuclear program over the last 20 years, France has become a world leader in nuclear energy. Its production has steadily increased since 1973, going from about 20 TWh (billion kilowatt hours) to 425 TWh in 2003. Today, 59 nuclear plants produce 78 percent of the entire country's electricity, and France is the largest

exporter of nuclear electricity in the European Union (with total exports of 115.2 TWh in 2003). France is second in the world

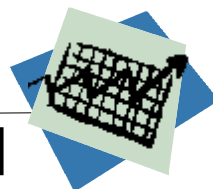
FRENCH NUCLEAR FIRMS MOVE TOWARD PRIVATIZATION

Electricité de France (EDF), a leader in nuclear production and electricity distribution in Europe, became a standard corporation under French law (société anonyme) on November 18. Its former status, that of a state-owned specialized entity, restricted the services it could offer to customers, hindering its competitiveness. The new legal status is also a first step toward the partial privatization of the state-controlled company. With 41.5 million customers worldwide, EDF had 44.9 billion euros (\$57.9 billion) in sales in 2003. It generated 592 billion kWh of electricity, nuclear energy representing 75 percent of that total.

On November 10, the French government also announced plans to sell a third of its share in the global energy group, Areva, in early 2005. The partial privatization of this state-controlled company could raise more than 3.5 billion euros (\$4.51 billion). A world leader in nuclear power generation and electricity transmission and distribution, Areva has been a long-time key player in the American nuclear energy business community. The U.S. companies of this global corporation already employ more than 7,000 Americans, mainly located in Virginia, North Carolina, Washington and Connecticut.

(behind the United States) in terms of total nuclear power generation, contributing 15.9 percent of the world's nuclear electricity.

This rapid growth was possible due to the development of new technologies that ensured the increasing safety and efficiency of nuclear plants. After the first generation (built in the 1950s) and the second generation (in place today), engineers and researchers are currently hard at work on the third and fourth generations of nuclear plants. In 2007, the construction of France's first third-generation reactor (EPR), which was designed with heightened safety measures in mind, will begin in Flamanville, Normandy. In response to concerns over fossil fuel reserves and energy independence, France joined nine countries in 2001 and launched the "Generation IV International Forum" to lay the groundwork for new, safer, cheaper and more environmentally friendly fourth-generation reactors that could be in place by 2040. At the forefront of the nuclear industry, France is well poised to help address global concerns over power resources, the environment, and nuclear safety.



Promising AIDS Vaccine Developed

French researchers believe their treatment may help those who are already HIV-positive

SCIENTISTS AT THE FRENCH Institute of Research for Vaccines and Immunotherapy for Cancer and AIDS (IRVICA) have announced promising results in their preliminary experiments involving a therapeutic vaccine designed to suppress the HIV virus in the human bloodstream. Though referred to as a vaccine (which prevents infections), this treatment actually aims to cure, or at least control, existing infections.

The trial consisted in injecting 18 infected volunteers with their own dendritic cells and chemically disabled strains of the HIV virus to prime their immune systems. Dendritic cells, the body's first line of defense, tag intruders so that lymphocytes (the body's heavy artillery) can destroy them. The researchers hoped that their technique would help the dendritic cells recognize the HIV virus (which usually escapes detection).

Four months after the injection, the subjects showed a reduction in the presence of the virus by an average of 80 percent, and a year after the treatment, eight out of the 18 subjects showed a reduction of more than 90 percent. Four of the subjects even showed a viral load below what is considered infectious. Researchers found the results very encouraging and see this vaccine as a possible replacement for the current anti-viral cocktails, which are time-consuming and very costly.

At present, producing the vaccine is still expensive and slow, but researchers at IRVICA believe that dendritic cell therapy could eventually involve only one injection a year with almost no side effects. They are already planning to expand their trials to a larger population sample, which will provide more detailed information on the treatment's viability. ■

SMELLY COMPUTERS?!

No nation has explored the world of fragrances more than the French, who are justifiably famous for their perfumes and mouth-watering culinary arts. France Telecom engineer Yvan Réagard has now taken this *savoir-faire* to a new, digital level by developing software that allows computers to emit fragrances. The scents are actually emitted by special odor-diffusers that look a lot like speakers and cost 400 euros each (Réagard hopes to bring their cost down to 150 euros soon). These diffusers are hooked to the computer, and contain about a dozen fragrances, stored in capsules, that can be released on demand.

Though seemingly preposterous, this technology has actually whetted the interest of several companies, ranging from perfume companies to food distributors. Indeed, imagine clicking on a restaurant's Web site and being able to smell their specials before you even book a reservation! Réagard was inspired by the Madeleine de Proust effect, named for French writer Marcel Proust's assertion that he could clearly remember episodes from his childhood after merely smelling or tasting Madeleine cookies. Réagard is convinced that companies can capitalize on the fact that people's emotions and memories are stimulated by their sense of smell.

With seed money from France Telecom, and his own savings, Réagard has founded Exhalia in order to commercialize the technology. Having already signed a contract with a Japanese hotel school, he is now looking for investors. If he succeeds, perhaps one day we will all wake up and smell the computer! For more information, please visit www.exhalia.com.



European Probe Proves Promise of Electric Propulsion

AFTER A 13-MONTH JOURNEY, Europe's SMART-1 probe reached the moon on November 16 using French-made ion engines, a new and extremely promising form of propulsion (first used by NASA's Deep Space 1 probe in 1998). It seems absurd to be all agog over the slowest journey ever to the moon (Apollo 11 did it in five days in 1969), but as it covered the 52-million mile distance, SMART-1 consumed only 130 pounds of xenon fuel, which works out to a spectacular 5 million miles per gallon!

SMART-1's ion engine, designed by Snecma, works by charging xenon gas with electricity, causing the gas to accelerate away from the spacecraft at 10 miles a second, which in turn propels the probe forward. This process is 5 to 20 times more efficient than conventional chemical rockets, making space missions much less expensive by limiting the need for heavy fuel supplies. Moreover, over long periods, ion

engines can achieve much faster speeds than chemical rockets: they can run for months at a time, and since there is no resistance in space to slow the probe down, its speed continually builds up.



Computer-generated image of SMART-1 traveling to the moon

of a new era in deep space exploration.

Having reached the moon, SMART-1 will conduct a detailed photographic, x-ray and infrared survey of the moon's surface over the next six months. For more information, please visit www.esa.int. ■

AIRBUS A350 TO CHALLENGE BOEING 7E7

Airbus announced December 12 that the company will develop a new plane, named the A350, to compete with Boeing's recently unveiled 7E7. The design of the A350 will be derived from another one of Airbus's planes, the A330. The new plane will be quite large, with a capacity for around 245 people and the ability to travel long distances (about 8,600 miles). The development and creation of the A350 is expected to be expensive, totaling as much as 4 billion euros, and is set to be completed by 2010.

ALCATEL SPACE AND BOEING JOIN FORCES

The French firm Alcatel Space penned a deal with Boeing Space Systems (BSS) through which Alcatel will assume the role of primary supplier of satellite electronic payloads to BSS. In their first joint venture, BSS will integrate Alcatel-built subsystems in the three direct-broadcast television satellites that it is building for the DirectTV group. The two firms have already cooperated in the past, most notably in the construction of the XM Satellite Radio spacecraft.

HELIOS IIA LAUNCHED

An Ariane 5 launcher carried six satellites into orbit on December 18. Among them was Helios IIA, a second generation military probe developed by France in conjunction with Belgium and Spain. The Helios II upgrade affords the French a higher resolution (tens of centimeters), more imaging capacity and faster access to imagery (to help guide cruise missiles in flight). Helios IIA will also be capable of nighttime photography—with a sophisticated infrared sensor—and its coverage will extend to the entire planet, which it will orbit 14 times a day.

VOCALIZATION TECH FOR THE BLIND

Bouygues Telecom recently announced that it has developed mobile phone software specially designed for those who are visually handicapped. The software, called "Mobile Accessibility," vocalizes most mobile phone functions, including telephone numbers, caller identifications, battery levels and network coverage. The software will be distributed by HandiCapZéro, an association that provides the visually impaired with the tools they need to lead normal lives. "Mobile Accessibility" can be used with all compatible mobile phones. For more information (in French), please visit www.handicapzero.org.



MANAUDOU BREAKS 1,500-METER RECORD

French Olympic triple-medalist in swimming, Laure Manaudou, broke the record set by Petra Schneider in 1982 in the 1,500-meter freestyle race. After her record-breaking solo swim in La Roches-sur-Yon, the athlete stated that she was "a little surprised by the time, especially since I didn't have a precise goal," and that the new record shows that she can swim fast even after a less than stellar week of training. Manaudou also said that the next record she will attempt to break will be in the 400-meter race.

RECORD FUND-RAISING TO FIGHT GENETIC ILLNESSES

France's annual "Téléthon" broke the record set in 2003, grossing over 98 million euros in donations in just over 30 hours of broadcasting on television channel France 2. Now in its 18th year, the Téléthon raises money for research on rare genetic illnesses and has been a major force behind numerous scientific milestones, including the mapping of the human genome and the discovery of the genes responsible for over 750 illnesses. For more information, please visit www.telethon.fr.

ICE-SKATING ON EIFFEL TOWER

In celebration of the winter season, Paris has installed a 2,150 square-foot ice-skating rink on the first-floor of the Eiffel Tower. The rink opened on December 10 after a gigantic crane lifted 10 tons of equipment to the first level of the famous landmark. Up to 80 skaters at a time can enjoy a bird's eye view of the capital from a height of 188 feet above the Seine, and access to both the rink and skate rental are free. The rink will be open daily from 9:30 A.M. to 11:00 P.M. until January 23. For more information, visit www.tour-eiffel.fr.

ORGANIC FOODS ON THE RISE

According to the French organic foods agency, an ever larger number of French citizens are incorporating organic products into their daily diets. The 2004 survey showed that 44 percent of the French consume organic products regularly, compared with 37 percent in 2003. To reinforce this trend, the survey also found that almost a third of these consumers eat only organic foods, compared with 25 percent in 2003. The most popular organic products are fruits and vegetables, followed by eggs, bread, and dairy products. The majority of respondents said that organic products are safer, healthier, and of better quality than non organic foods.

"Right to Die" Draft Legislation Passes

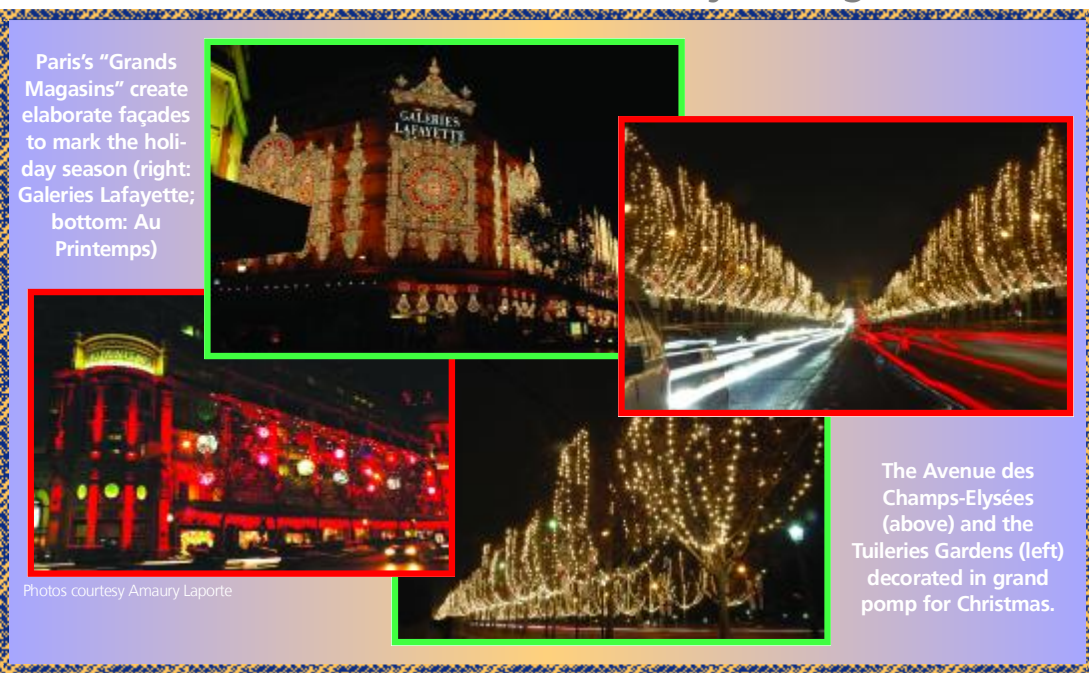
IN A RARE DISPLAY of bipartisanship, French lawmakers unanimously passed the first reading of a proposed law allowing the terminally ill to forgo life-extending treatments. The bill, known in France as the "right to die," breezed through the National Assembly with 548 supporting votes and two abstentions on November 30. The draft will next go to the Senate, where its final adoption is highly likely. French politicians are quick to point out that the proposed legislation in no way legalizes euthanasia but instead promotes a humane choice for people afflicted with terminal illness. French Health Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy declared that, "with this law, the end of life in France will have

another face: it will be a moment of choice and no longer a moment of submission."

The unveiling of the bill was largely the result of a debate surrounding euthanasia in France, sparked by the death of a 22-year-old paraplegic named Vincent Humbert. Humbert was the victim of a motor accident that left him deaf, mute and paralyzed. The young man wrote a moving book pleading for the right to die. After allegedly receiving a lethal dose of sedatives from his mother, Vincent was taken off life support by his doctors in 2003. The resulting national controversy spurred parliament to action, and the bill reconsidering France's ban on unplugging life support systems was drafted.



Christmas Postcards From the City of Lights



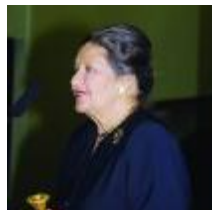
Paris's "Grands Magasins" create elaborate façades to mark the holiday season (right: Galeries Lafayette; bottom: Au Printemps)

The Avenue des Champs-Élysées (above) and the Tuileries Gardens (left) decorated in grand pomp for Christmas.

Photos courtesy Amaury Laporte

30th Anniversary of Abortion Rights

NOVEMBER 19 MARKED the 30th anniversary of France's legalization of abortion. The law, known in France as the "loi Veil," was pushed forward by then minister of health Simone Veil. Veil, a holocaust survivor and no stranger to adversity, was undeterred by acrimonious criticism from the politically conservative over her steadfast appeals to the French parliament for the decriminalization of the "voluntary interruption of pregnancy" (an expression often used to mean abortion in France). Veil can also be credited with legislation that made access to contraceptives easier for the French public.



Simone Veil in 2002

The Veil law represented a monumental victory for the feminist movement of the late 60s and early 70s which bemoaned the disparity of sexual liberties among males and

females. The legislation concerning abortion has evolved slowly in France. In 1982 the "loi Roudy" made abortion reimbursable by French social security and in 2001 then minister of solidarity, Martine Aubry, extended the legal period to abort from 10 to 12 weeks into pregnancy and repealed a clause that made parental permission mandatory for pregnant minors.

According to a study carried out by the National Institute of Demographic Studies (INED), the number of abortions has remained relatively stable since the Veil law took force. But today, no women die in France as a result of an abortion, whereas over 300 a year did before 1974. Though the practice is now widely accepted in France, Veil called for continued vigilance during a recent interview, to ensure that women retain the freedom to choose.






"Louvre II" Brings Hope to Lens

The northern city hopes to attract thousands of tourists with the Louvre's annex

THE CITY OF LENS, located in northern France near the Belgian border, was recently chosen as the future site of a new adjunct to Paris's Louvre museum, popularly tagged the "Louvre II." The 75-million euro museum is set to cover 172,000 square feet and house between 500 and 600 works on loan from the Louvre in Paris, works which will be rotated every two to three years. The project is one of the most visible initiatives the government is taking to decentralize France by spreading centers of culture and administration.

Five other towns in addition to Lens were battling for the museum extension. In contention were Amiens, Arras, Boulogne-sur-Mer, Calais and Valenciennes, all located in the northern,

industrial region of France, which has suffered from the decline of the coal, steel and textile industries. The city of Lens was ultimately chosen because it would provide a great boon to an area that has been particularly neglected both economically and culturally, according to French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin. Indeed, Guy Delcour, the mayor of the city of Lens, said that he was elated the French government selected his city, as "giving us the Louvre is to give us hope again."

The Louvre II is slated to open its doors in 2009. It is expected to attract hundreds of thousands of tourists each year. For more information, please visit www.louvre.fr. 

LOUVRE'S APOLLO GALLERY RESTORED

After three years of renovation, the Louvre reopened its lavish Apollo gallery to the public on November 27. The project cost around \$6.5 million, most of which was covered by French oil company Total. The gallery's make-over required attention from a team of over 60 architects, radiologists, chemists and carpenters charged with restoring its priceless art and artifacts (including paintings by Delacroix and sculptures by François Girardon). The restorations also include a modernized security system for one of the gallery's main attractions: the French crown jewels (in particular the Régent, a 140-carat white diamond). The extraordinary gallery was built in Louis XIV's honor and served as a model for the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles.


Gallic War Treasures Unearthed in Southern France

FRENCH ARCHAEOLOGISTS made a groundbreaking discovery during a dig in a Gallic-Roman temple in southern France after unearthing some 470 objects, including many Gallic war treasures. According to Christophe Maniquet, an archaeologist at France's National Institute for Archaeological Studies, "the exceptional character of this discovery lies mainly in the presence of five almost complete *carnyx*" (*carnyx* are Celtic war trumpets). Before this discovery, these ceremonial bronze instruments had never been found in one piece, and archaeologists had only seen complete ones in drawings.



The *carnyx* discovered in Correze.

swords and spearheads, nine bronze and iron helmets with rearpeaks were found. Two of these helmets are especially notable because of the swans and golden leaves that decorate them. The archaeologists also unearthed bronze boar and horse heads, which are thought to be war signs that were placed on poles to guide soldiers during battle.


The fact that these artifacts were carefully buried leads researchers to believe that they were part of a religious ritual offering. Most of the collection was sent to a laboratory in Toulouse in order for experts to clean, restore, and study the objects, but Maniquet hopes to see the treasures on display in a museum in two or three years. 

Tribute to Robert Capa, the Father of Photojournalism

THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE de France has organized an exhibit featuring over 300 pictures by America's Robert Capa, to mark the 50th anniversary of his death. Born

Andrei Friedmann in Hungary in 1913, the famous photographer died in Indochina in 1954 after stepping on a land mine while covering the conflict for the U.S. magazine *Life*. Capa was consid-

(who passed away on August 3—see NFF 04.09).

erably covered the Spanish Civil War in 1936, and World War II from 1941 to 1945, for which he received a Medal of Freedom citation from General Eisenhower. His D-Day landing pictures are famous worldwide and demonstrate Capa's determination to witness firsthand the events that he covered. For more information on the exposition, which runs until December 31, please visit expositions.bnf.fr/capa. 



A Loyalist is killed during the Spanish civil war (Cerro Muriano, September 5, 1936)



A G.I. edging toward Omaha Beach (Omaha Beach, June 6, 1944)

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MISS FRANCE 2005 CROWNED



Miss Normandy, Cindy Fabre, a 19-year-old marketing student, was crowned Miss France 2005 in a ceremony held on December 4 in Tours. She was elected follow-

ing a vote by a panel of celebrity judges and the TV spectators who voted by phone. Runners-up were Miss Lorraine, Miss Maine, Miss Paris and Miss Tahiti. Fabre, who is the 58th Miss France, was crowned by Miss France 2004, Laetitia Bléger of Alsace.

URINAL MOST INFLUENTIAL 20TH-CENTURY ARTWORK

According to a recent survey of 500 distinguished British art experts, the most influential piece of 20th-century art is the white porcelain urinal, hung



upside down in a New York Gallery by French artist Marcel Duchamp in 1917. Titled *Fountain*, the piece was one of the first examples of conceptualism and minimalism. Duchamp argued that an artist could turn an ordinary item into art merely by proclaiming it so. In second place was Pablo Picasso's painting, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, and in third place was Andy Warhol's screenprints of Marilyn Monroe. The poll was financed by Gordon's, the company that is responsible for the Turner Prize, the U.K.'s most prestigious contemporary art award.

SALE OF MANUSCRIPT OF NAPOLEON'S MEMOIRS

The manuscript of Napoleon I's *Mémoires*, written during his exile on the island of Saint Helena, was sold on December 7 for 250,000 euros (\$405,000) at an auction in Paris. Originally published in 1823, the memoirs retrace the events of Napoleon's life with startling accuracy and detail. The 84-page manuscript, of which 40 pages were written by Napoleon himself, was sold to an anonymous bidder. A draft of Napoleon's 1821 testament was also sold at the auction for 132,779 euros (\$215,000) to a private collector.

© Getty Images/Robert Capa

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Open Window, Collioure by Henri Matisse (1905)


Celebrating Fauvism

The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., has brought together a special collection of Fauvist paintings to celebrate the 100th anniversary of this colorful movement in French art. The exhibit features works by Fauvist masters such as Henri Matisse, André Derain, Georges Braque, and Maurice de Vlaminck. All these works are already part of the gallery's permanent collection but are now being specially displayed together to highlight their shared characteristics.

The Fauvist movement, which only lasted a few years (between 1904 and 1907), is typified by its use of bright colors and heavy strokes. It followed up on the Impressionist movement, which also used bright colors but exhibited a lighter touch with small paint strokes and airy light. The term, which comes from "fauve" ("wild



Tugboat on the Seine, Chatou by Maurice de Vlaminck (1906)

beast" in French), was coined by art critic Louis Vauxelles, who sought to capture the untamed essence of the works exhibited in the 1905 Salon d'Automne in Paris by a small group of young artists. Highlights of the exhibit include Braque's "The Port of La Ciotat," Derain's "Charing Cross Bridge, London," and the main attraction: Matisse's "Open Window, Collioure" which is one of the artist's most recognized works. The exhibit will run until May 30, 2005. For more information, please visit www.nga.gov. 

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Tribute to the Duke of Burgundy

The Cleveland Museum of Art honors one of France's greatest dukes


ONE OF THE most powerful rulers of the 14th century, Philip the Bold was the first Valois Duke of Burgundy. Covering most of northeastern France for much of the 14th and 15th centuries, the Dukedom of Burgundy was

one of the wealthiest in the country, and the Duke's power rivaled that of the French king. A patron of the arts and supporter of churches, Philip the Bold and his court are being commemorated in an exhibition at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

"Dukes and Angels: Art from the Court of Burgundy (1364-1419)" marks the 600th anniversary of Philip the Bold's death. A selection of 130

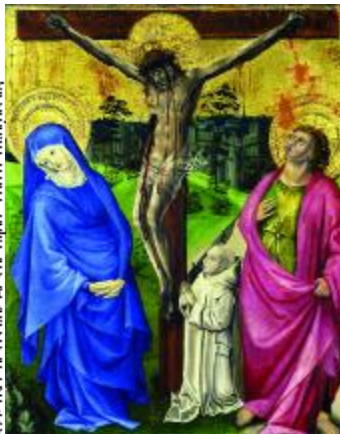
art works from the period of his rule and that of his son, John the Fearless, are on display. Both were patrons of the arts when medieval art was at its peak. The objects on exhibit, contributed by museums all over Europe and America, include sculptures, tapestries, stained glass, gold and silver work, ivories, and jewelry.

The exhibit also includes interactive features, such as recordings of Burgundian music, and a room that shows short videos covering the politics and customs of the court of Burgundy, as well as the biographies of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless. It brilliantly succeeds in showing the extent of the wealth and sophistication of the court of Burgundy, one of the most influential in French history.

For more information on the exhibit, which will run through January 9, 2005, please visit www.clevelandart.org. 



Portrait of Philip the Bold
(17th-century copy after an original by Malouel)



Calvary of the Carthusians (c. 1440)

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