

## AATF Summer 2015 Newsletter

Chers Collègues,

As we look back on spring, we would like to share with you the highlights of our workshops and other chapter activities.

### APRIL

Stephanie Schechner and Anne Bornschein from Widener University presented their enormously engaging *facebook* page that they have set up for students and teachers alike. Their goals are community building and to promote French in the broadest sense, using a wide range of topics. They emphasize working with students and their interests and goals. Students graduating with French majors and minors are nowadays finding jobs in banking, insurance, technology, etc, no longer just the time-tested teaching and translating professions. Therefore the scope of the page includes art, politics, sports, movies, music, French speaking countries outside of France, sexism, racism, etc. They have a correspondent in France who works in the music industry so that the page is always quite up-to-date with the latest news on many fronts.

It is very user friendly, especially for beginners. The initial posts are in English, but with links to French websites/videoclips/etc. One of the attendees says she's already using the link to pop culture events in her classroom.

Stephanie and Anne commented that one of the biggest benefits to their facebook page is that students can interact with French outside of the classroom during their down time. They've noticed that nothing sparks a student's interest more than seeing a post from someone you sat next to in class!

\*Join them at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FrenchatWidener/>

You'll also notice that they have a link to “*On-campus events*” such as the 5 cafés and 5 films that they offer each semester, as well as “*Events and class trips in our region*”. On that page, you'll see that the wildly popular European singer Stromae is performing in Philadelphia in September at the Electric Factory. He was born in Belgium to a Flemish mother and Rwandan father. His sound is one of dance/electronic/hip hop/global.

Check out the video for his song “Papaoutai”. Very popular with fans and American students of French with over 267,000,000 views! [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiKj0Z\\_Xnjc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiKj0Z_Xnjc)

### MAY

We once again celebrated our students' achievements on the National French Exam. Nearly 500 family members and friends came out to Chestnut Hill College for the awards ceremony. A French teacher in attendance commented that it was so wonderful for everyone there to be able to see that there are so many other people studying French. In these current times when schools are sacrificing their French programs to the economic knife, it's heartwarming to know that French is alive and well in many of our greater Philadelphia area public and private schools.

We were also reminded that night that you never know when your French will come in handy. After the terrorist attacks on the satiric magazine offices of Charlie Hebdo in January, Secretary of State John Kerry visited France to offer our country's support. And he did so in French, not via an interpreter but

speaking it himself. Seeing (and hearing!) is believing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcDxT31VEYI>

## JUNE

If you missed the June 25-28 visit to Philadelphia of the 17-years-in-the-making replica of the battleship *HERMIONE*, there's still time to admire this impressive frigate. Here's the official website and schedule: <http://www.hermione2015.com/>

The Marquis de LaFayette set sail from France on 10 March 1780. He was returning to the newly founded United States to offer full French aid to General Washington. Thanks to that aid, including French troops and ships, the British were finally defeated in Yorktown, VA in 1781.

For more information, watch the following story that aired on CBS Sunday Morning to see how one goes about building such a ship using all but lost 18<sup>th</sup> century skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/french-warship-replica-sets-sail-for-america/>



## JULY

We hope to see you in Saguenay/Chicoutimi for the **AATF annual conference**, 8-11 July 2015. Located on the Saguenay fjord off of the St. Lawrence, it is the number one site for viewing whales, dolphins, and more, according to the Philadelphia Inquirer Travel section on Sunday, 3 May 2015.

For more information, visit <http://www.sepaq.com/pq/sag/> and <https://www.saguenaylacsaintjean.ca/en>

Thank you to all you do to continue to encourage our students in their pursuit of all things French. Wishing you a restful and rejuvenating summer!

Chris and Edith