

The French Review

From the Editor's Desk

Ever since the wave of Francophobia that hit the United States in the spring of 2003 we have individually, and as a profession, tried to find positive ways to counteract the damage done to enrollments and the standing of France and the French in this country. Many have remarked on the fact that there are not enough people of French or French-Canadian descent or Francophones living in the United States to react publicly or bring political pressure to bear when outbreaks of French-bashing occur. Though there is a congressional caucus of Francophiles, we hear little from it at critical moments. Italian-Americans, on the other hand, are well organized and react quickly to negative stereotyping.

One way to rally others to reason and bring more weight to our own views is to make common cause with other groups and associations of Francophiles. In the last few years, and as a reaction to the French-bashing and a sharpened sense of identity as someone of French origin, I have become more active in my local Alliance Française. I have also participated in two national meetings of the Federation of Alliances Françaises USA, Inc. In 2005 I was elected to the Board of Directors and am now working with the rejuvenated National Speakers' Bureau under the direction of Diana Regan and with the committee which oversees the "One Book—One Federation" national book club. It seems to me that though many members of the AATF may already belong to the some 120 chapters of the FAF USA nationwide, it is important that more of us join in order to share common concerns and interests, not least of which is advocacy. By the same token I encouraged Alliance members in attendance at the 2005 national meeting in San Francisco to join the AATF and to profit from our *National Bulletin* and the *French Review*, or even attend our annual national meetings. We can in turn benefit from the activities of the FAF and their new glossy publication *Le Magazine*, its short features on French life and culture, as well as topical pieces. In fact, there is much that each association can learn from the other, and that is why I encourage you to join the FAF USA. The French ambassador, Jean-David Levitte, is a regular attendee at the annual national meeting and gives incisive presentations on the current state of Franco-American relations. He is always ready and willing to field tough questions and in San Francisco gave a fascinating answer to a question concerning the state of French wine sales in the United States as well as an update on joint efforts of the United States and France around the world. Last year's featured book for "One Book—One Federation" was Philippe Claudel's award-winning *Les Ames grises*. Claudel gave a compelling presentation on the book and its genesis in Lorraine at the meeting in San Francisco and showed that writers can be down to earth yet sophisticated and straightforward in discussing their works and ideas. A study guide and questions are produced to accompany each year's book when it is discussed.

I also want to invite those of you who are interested to submit proposals for talks you could give at individual Alliances Françaises in the United States. If you are interested, please go to afusa.org where you will find the nomination form. The National Speakers' Bureau is looking for exciting new talks of interest to individual chapters. This is your chance to bring your specialized knowledge to Francophiles in a congenial setting. The individual chapter would cover your travel expenses and offer a modest honorarium should you be selected.

As you know, the *bande dessinée* has long held an important place in French society and popular culture. Yet we receive few submissions on this critically important social and literary phenomenon. I invite those of you who follow the *bande dessinée* in its various manifestations to submit articles to me at your earliest convenience so that we can fill this gap in our offerings.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Jane Moss, whose specialty is Quebec literature and francophone literature of North America, for her eight years of service as Assistant Editor for Literature. Jane also served as a reader for the 2005 special issue entitled "Le Québec et le Canada Francophone." We wish her all the best in her many scholarly endeavors.

As of 1 May 2006 authors will have to enclose with their manuscripts a check or stamps in the amount of \$7.80. This increase reflects that of the United States Postal Service (\$.39 for a first-class stamp). In May you will receive our blockbuster issue devoted to French and Francophone cinema. I believe that you are in for a treat.

Christopher P. Pinet