



Vol. 15, No. 1 (Fall 1986)

L'Élan

Bulletin de la Société Honoraire de Français

Le Message du Président

Dear Colleagues,

Thirty-nine chapter sponsors and potential sponsors attended the Société Honoraire de Français' annual breakfast at the AATF convention in Montréal this summer. It is always a pleasure to meet so many dedicated, enthusiastic teachers and have the chance to exchange notes on what's happening in our classrooms across the country. I hope that even more of you will plan to attend our meeting next summer in San Francisco.

Counting on the generosity of the French government, we do plan to offer again this year several summer study abroad scholarships to our student members. I suggest that you begin to select your nominees now and perhaps have them prepare their essay in French, "reasons for wanting to study abroad." Dr. Foster will mail the applications to each sponsor probably in early March. When you return the completed applications, please make sure to include all the required information in one envelope, making sure that the required signatures are on the application. Please keep in mind that the selection of recipients is

based not only on their interest in French study, but also on their academic records.

I am no longer working in the Washington area, having accepted a job offer with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system and returning to claim a very small piece of "God's country" in my home state of North Carolina. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should have questions related to the operation of the Société. My work address is:

Mr. Robert V. Smawley
Northeast School
5960 Brickstone Drive
Charlotte, NC 28212

You can reach me by telephone during my planning period, 10:30-11:25 EST at (704) 545-9716.

Best wishes for a successful school year!

R. V. Smawley

R. V. Smawley, President
Société Honoraire de Français

Scholarship Winners Summer 1986

Following is the list of scholarship winners for the summer of 1986. The French Cultural Services in New York provided all nine scholarships, for which the Société Honoraire de Français is deeply grateful. A special thank you needs to go to Ms. Paula Cianci who does so much every year in working with me to send the right student on the right program, and some of this at the last minute. The SHF sponsors were also most helpful in making final selections.

Half the reports will be printed in this issue of L'Elan and the others will follow as space is available. Here are the names, schools, and sponsors of the nine SHF members who went to France this past summer.

Sara Emley, Dayton, Ohio
Centerville HS, Yvonne Rall, sponsor

Alex Gras, Virginia Beach, VA
Kempville HS, Jean Gulick, sponsor

Cindy Jacobs, Smithtown, NY
Smithtown HS East, Yvette Hohler, spon.

Michelle Kinsch, Pendleton, OR
Pendleton HS, Joyce Hoffman, sponsor

John Libby, Pensacola, FL
Woodham HS, Anita Clarke, sponsor

Lucy May, Ft. Mitchell, KY
Scott HS, J. Bott-Van Houten, sponsor

Vu Nguyen, Kenner, LA
Alfred Bonnabel HS, Jean-Marie Cambre

Mark Seielstad, Green Bank, WV
Pocahontas County HS, Denise McNeel

Michelle Wewers, Fort Smith, AR
Northside HS, Madeline Marquette, spon.

Congratulations to these students, to their teachers and parents!

Good luck to those who apply for next summer!

Report from John C. Libby, III

During my stay in France, I had many exciting experiences. I gained a massive amount of knowledge about the people, the customs, and the way of life in a country which, until recently, I had only dreamed of visiting. The dream came true, and not one aspect proved to be a disappointment. There is no substitute for living in a country whose language you are learning to speak. It did not take long for me to realize what a wonderful thing I had done for myself by learning to speak a foreign language. The many hours of studying, listening, writing, and speaking seemed so insignificant when compared to the feeling I experienced while communicating in my second language. I felt much respect for my efforts from the French.

The city in which I stayed was Angoulême. It is a beautiful city in the south-western portion of France. The family with whom I stayed made every effort to accommodate my needs. They were amicable, cordial, and delightful. They were a major part in the success of my stay. The house was right across from the St. Pierre Cathedral, probably the biggest landmark of Angoulême. During the day, I would make excursions out into the city. There were many shops where one could find just about anything. I played tennis rather frequently. The daughter in the family was kind enough to include me in almost all of her activities. One evening we had dinner at a restaurant and then went to a nightclub. In the process, I met many of her friends and made some of my own.

I visited other cities in addition to Angoulême. I went to Cognac and visited the Château of François I where cognac is made. I went to Bordeaux and saw the opera house and several impressive monuments. I visited Sarlat, a medieval city which has been restored. One day we took a ride in the country, stopping to look at the many cathedrals. I also visited La Rochefoucauld, a beautiful château. I ended my stay with a two-day stop by Paris.

I appreciate the fact that I was given the chance of a lifetime. I feel that I made the most of the opportunity. I would like to thank my French teacher, Mrs. Clarke, for giving me the inspiration and encouragement to work hard. Many thanks to all who have contributed to such a beneficial program.

John C. Libby, III

Report from Cindy Jacobs

Thanks to the S.I.L.C. homestay program I had the opportunity to boost my language skills, make lasting friendships and see and learn a great deal. In addition to touring, I profited from the experience of living the daily routine of the French life firsthand.

I was able to put to use my five conscientious years of French studies. It's a wonderful feeling to finally get to use the long lists of memorized vocabulary accumulated over the years, and new words, and learn that there's always another way to communicate something by a change of word order or simply with gestures. I found I had the ability to carry on small conversations with my host families on various topics, from food and music, to politics. This not only augmented my vocabulary, but strengthened the bonds between my host family and me and gave me a better understanding of French culture and values by actively taking part in their frequent table conversations. In addition, by visiting several historical sites, such as the chateau in Angoulême and structures built by the Romans in Nîmes, I got a better sense of French history as well as bringing to life textbooks' print. Finally, I truly believe that what I'm learning in the classroom is actually very valuable.

Due to my two month stay with three families I was fortunate enough to see the country in Fléac, the sea in Royan, the mountains of Osseja, and Spain, which enabled me to meet numerous people and

come to the conclusion that people are the same everywhere no matter what their religion, race, or creed. People young and old like to be surrounded by their loved ones or friends whether it be in a discothèque, out on a picnic, mountain climbing together or just to have company and eat and chat. Throughout the world people enjoy relaxing at the table, at lunch or dinner after a hard day's work, watching the news with their families to find out about life outside their own country, or occasionally seeing a movie.

The French, especially, enjoy long full course meals while having boisterous discussions. They are very loquacious and speak regardless of how many others are simultaneously trying to. As in America, there are generation battles between parents and their teenage sons and daughters struggling to become young adults and trying to gain more privileges. By intensely listening to these conversations and attempting to take part, my theory of people was reinforced. However, in France they do not raise their voices when they become angry, they merely change their tone of voice. I admire this quality which so few Americans have.

Basically, I found the French congenial people who are very proud of their country and its long history and are adamant in their firm beliefs and opinions, as Americans are with their initiative and originality.

It was a terrific educational experience and equally an enjoyable vacation which I will never forget. I am confident that the friends I have made will keep in touch and I will continue to write to them in French so as not to forget my newly acquired vocabulary. Valérie and I agreed: we especially liked the apparent care in matching hosts to guests. The good organization resulted in learning experiences on both sides. Once again, thank you for making it all possible.

Cindy Jacobs

Report from Lucy May

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Société Honoraire de Français for the incredible opportunity it gave me in the form of a scholarship. Its generosity and support made a wonderful experience even more special.

Upon confirmation that I was indeed a recipient of one of the SHF scholarships, I made plans to travel with Sara Emley. Together we traveled to Paris and found CISP Kellerman, where we stayed while in Paris. It was a lovely facility and our stay there was very pleasant. Our guide met us later that morning and assembled our group. We were five Americans, three Italians, and two Portuguese. Each of us was given a carnet for the métro and money for the meals we would need to purchase in Paris. Our guide, Jean, then took us into Paris for our first day of sightseeing. Just a few of the fantastic sights we saw during our three-day stay in the city of lights were: Notre Dame de Paris, the Sorbonne, the Latin Quarter, Versailles, l'Opéra, la Tour Eiffel, l'Arc de Triomphe, and, of course, the Louvre. Many of these amazing places we were given the freedom to discover on our own. The independence we were given made Paris even more exciting.

Thoroughly exhausted from the first three days of our two-week stay, we then took the train which led to the biggest test for our knowledge of French. We spent the next ten days in Arville, a tiny French village that is nonexistent according to American maps of France. There is where I experienced the true France. Paris is beautiful and full of history and culture but it is also full of tourists. I wouldn't have traded my time in Paris for anything; however, I was extremely pleased to have spent so much time in a town where the most "urban" thing was a telephone booth which rarely worked.

While in Arville we slept in tents and our original group plus seven French students we met there shared one shower. These little unexpected "inconveniences" never spoiled our delightful stay in Arville and, in fact, may have added to

the adventure. Upon our arrival we were given a tour of la Commanderie and shown the work we were to do. Our work was helping to restore two of the medieval buildings on la Commanderie. We helped cover the walls with a medieval recipe of mortier and we filled in an anachronistic window in the pigeonnier. The work was much more difficult and time-consuming than it sounds but I found it very enjoyable and quite challenging. Since the work was strenuous, no one was required to work every day. The work days were broken up by tours of 11th and 12th century churches in the area, tours of Blois and Chambord, a tour of a local French dairy farm (where, by the way, we were told that the combination of an American bull and a French cow can't be beaten!), and many other relaxing activities.

One day we went to nearby Vaujourns to assist with the work being done there. Instead of working with mortier, we helped that group clear the vegetation around the ruins of an old château using machetes. I helped in Vaujourns for an extra day along with seven volunteers from the Arville group.

One of the nicest treats in Arville was the cuisine of the cook that the association had hired. We ate delicious, authentic French country cooking for every meal and we became very spoiled. There were, however, a few cuisine-oriented cultural differences that the Americans had to face. For example, one evening we ate a delicious French dish in which the main ingredient was chicken stomach. Another time we had rabbit for lunch and I was the "lucky" person to be served the head. Even those minor culture shocks did not affect my faith in the cook. Everything he made was scrumptious.

I made some wonderful friends from all over Europe and had an experience that would never have been possible had it not been for the SHF and the French Cultural Services in New York. My experience was one that I'll treasure forever and I hope that opportunities like mine will be given to French students in the U.S. for many years to come. Thank you again for such a priceless experience.

Lucy

Report from Mark T. Seielstad

I spent some of the most adventurous and beneficial days of my life this summer in Angoulême. Not only did my French proficiency increase during my three-week visit, but also my understanding of the French people. I received an excellent glimpse into the French culture.

The first week of my stay was enormously frustrating, and I wondered about the advisability in sending second-year students. After that first week, however, I could sufficiently understand the spoken French, but I still could not respond quickly enough. Even at the end of my stay I could not compete in the French conversations. Still, I determined that the benefits of sending second-year students outweighed the initial difficulties.

My most maddening language experience occurred at the airport, when a salesman replied to my French questions in English; the most puzzling incident occurred when I was accosted by another salesman in English. Was is that obvious? However, these incidents were countered when I told, in French, a cafe waiter that I had been cheated.

In the morning, after the truly small petit déjeuner, I would often help my French father with his work around the house. During the vacation, instead of going to the beach like most French people, he stayed to work on an addition to his house. Often, I would talk with the family, though my French brother and sister had few interests. However, my French mother would go into long political discussions. She applauded the coming of Prime Minister Chirac and his conservative government. She especially liked the imminent dismantling of the welfare programs, the lowering of taxes, and the other changes of the kind we have seen in the U.S., over the last six years. Although we often disagreed politically the discussions were valuable experiences. Often, I would visit Angoulême to take pictures and visit the stores. Like most other French towns, Angoulême is most noted for its Cathédrale and Hôtel de Ville. Unfortunately, I saw little else of France. But with a family of 7 and a Renault 5 (Le Car) travel was difficult.

This was, however, a major weakness in the program.

I also got some insight into the French culture. I was struck by the formality of French greetings even with friends. More than once, I may have blundered by using "tu" instead of "vous" when addressing a person. I was also surprised to find that the French litter far more than Americans do. The supermarket floors were strewn with unwanted grocery bags, and any sort of litter is thrown out the windows of rapidly moving cars. I was surprised by the French women's practice of nude sunbathing. Despite all the slight differences between our cultures we lead a similar life to the French.

Now that I have come back to the U.S., I realize how much my French has improved: my pronunciation is much better, my comprehension has improved, and my vocabulary has greatly increased. Except for some disappointment concerning travel, I had a rewarding trip. I benefited not only in the immediate and obvious way, but also by insuring my future interest and study of the French language and culture. Thank you for giving me this excellent opportunity.

mark

Report from Michelle Wewers

I arrived in Paris and immediately went to my hostel, where I met the other participants. For three days I got to know the others in the group while we visited places in and around Paris. We saw and toured the Louvre, which I have always wanted to see, Notre Dame, Versailles, and much more, including parts of Paris not touched by tourism. From this wonderful city we took a train to Mondou-bleau, about two and one-half hours away, and from there we were taken to a small, quaint town called Arville. There we were greeted warmly by the French people with whom we would be working, and promptly taken on a tour of the grounds. This wonderful group of dedicated individuals shared with us the amazing history of the Commanderie and the near-by land. Over the next nine days, the other parti-

cipants and I helped restore several buildings belonging to the Commanderie. On days when we were not working, we were taken to more historical places, including ancient churches and castles, near the area. Another day, we went to a place close by where more restoration was being started, and helped as much as possible there. Once, a few of us went bicycling!

This program with the French Consulate is invaluable in the lessons and the knowledge received of the French people, their history, and their culture. Without the aid of the Société Honoraire de Français, I would not have been able to go to France, much less learn so much. I believe that I have gained more by participating in this program than I could have alone or through any other program.

My one and only dislike was that I had to spend a night in Paris alone. I was told the program would end at lunch and that I would be able to catch a flight from Paris the same day after lunch. Such was not the case, and I had to leave Arville a day earlier than the others and spend the night in Paris at my own expense.

Other than this inconvenience, I had an incredible time, gained excellent experience, and recommend that this program be continued. I thank you and the Société Honoraire de Français for the chance.

Michelle

Creative Writing Contest

Are your students ready for the Creative Writing Contest this year? We shall again offer five prizes, starting with a twenty-five dollar award for first place.

If you submit a picture or drawing, please be sure they are done in black ink.

Limit compositions to 200 words, please.

Observe the following rules:

1. Entries must be submitted by the chapter sponsor.
2. A sponsor may submit a maximum of 3 entries for the chapter, but only 1 entry

per student.

3. Mark all entries clearly with name of student, high school, city, and state. Also, please indicate the level of French in which the SHF student is currently enrolled.

4. Please send copies since I cannot return entries to you.

5. Prizes may also be distributed to individuals submitting original works of art, providing the conditions stated above are met.

6. Deadline for all entries is:

March 1, 1987

7. Please send entries to the Executive Secretary who, along with the SHF President, will select winners:

**Dr. Stephen Foster, Ex. Sec., SHF
Dept. of Foreign Lang. and Lit.
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23508-8526**

Miscellany

1. Pins and charms are still available from Balfour Company, 25 County St., Attleboro, MA 02703. Write Dr. Foster for an information brochure.

2. Gold seals, available from the SHF office, are 40 for \$5.00. They are now self-sticking. You may order when you write for certificates.

3. The next page is an order for certificates. I promise to do a better job getting certificates back to you in time for your ceremony this year. In any event, something will be mailed you 10 days prior to your ceremony. Hopefully, I can mail lettered certificates, but, if not, blanks will be sent and lettered certificates will follow. If you so desire, you may order blanks.

4. If anything on this address label is incorrect, please make the necessary changes and return it to me. Newsletters will be sent bulk mail, but scholarship applications will be sent first-class.

5. For rush orders (usually same day for blank certificates only), call Dr.

Foster at:

(804) 440-3954

(804) 440-3973 (leave precise information with secretary)

6. If you need a copy of the ceremony, constitution, pin order form, seals, etc., please ask!

American Association of Teachers of French
Société Honoraire de Français

Send the following information, printed neatly or preferably typed, to:

Initiation date _____ Dr. Stephen Foster, Ex. Sec., SHF
Dept. of Foreign Lang. and Lit.
Chapter name _____ Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23508-8526

Sponsor's signature _____
(I certify that I am a current member of the AATF)

School _____

Address _____
(street) (city) (state) (ZIP)

Initiate's fees: Fee of \$1.50 per student must be enclosed; checks should be made payable to the Société Honoraire de Français. The SHF will be happy to letter student names onto certificates. However, should you be pressed for time, please request blank certificates. Orders containing lettered certificates or substituted blank certificates will be mailed at least 10 days prior to the date of your ceremony.

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| 9. | 18 |

Lettered Certificates

Blank Certificates

New Chapters

Marvell HS (1845), Marvell, AR,
 Mrs. Lula Orsby Jones
Boca Raton Academy (1846), Boca Raton, FL
 Mrs. Constance Paladino
Madisonville-North Hopkins HS (1846),
 Madisonville, KY, Lisa Myers DiPasquale
Mansfield HS (1848), Mansfield, MA,
 Ms. Diane R. Jackson
Martin County HS (1849), Stuart, FL,
 Mrs. Marlene Beard
Saint Francis HS (1850), Morgantown, WV,
 Mrs. Mary Louise Miles
St. Gregory HS (1851), Tucson, Az,
 Dr. Marsha Varney
Marian Central Catholic HS (1852), Wood-
 stock, IL, Mrs. Doreen Hartz
Cardinal O'Hara HS (1853), Springfield,
 PA, Miss Marilyn McCarthy
Central HS (1854), Capitol Heights, MD,
 Ms. Constance Markert
Green Mountain HS (1855), Lakewood, CO,
 Miss Ann Olson
Berkner HS (1856), Richardson, TX, Susan
 Patterson, Sheryl Tucker
Maine Township HS Est (1857), Park Ridge,
 IL, Dr. Margot M. Steinhart

Hernando HS (1858), Brooksville, FL,
 Mrs. Joyce S. White
Plano Sr. HS (1859), Plano, Tx, Aleta
 Lubbers, C. A. Borshard
Immaculate Heart of Mary HS (1860), West-
 chester, IL, Mrs. Joan Marshall
Woodbridge HS (1861), Woodbridge, NJ, Mr.
 Thomas A. Koch
South Miami Sr. HS (1862), Miami, FL, Mrs.
 Nelly Hirschhorn
S. R. Butler HS (1864), Huntsville, AL,
 Mrs. Deborah T. Palmer
Bartlett HS (1865), Bartlett, TN, Mrs.
 Valerie Bennett
Staunton River HS (1866), Moneta, VA, Miss
 Helen Irene Pope
The Gilbert School (1868), Winsted, CT,
 Mr. Kenneth DosSantos
Christian Brothers HS (1869), Memphis,
 TN, Mr. Dan H. Murrell
L. D. Bell HS (1870), Hurst, Tx,
 Mrs. Barbara Chandler
Garinger HS (1871), Charlotte, NC, Mr.
 Paul D. Campbell, Jr.
Forest Park/Greenhills HS (1872), Cincin-
 nati, OH, Ms. Silly Peterson
Edgewater HS (1873), Orlando, FL,
 Mrs. Carol Sheber

Société Honoraire de Français (A2234)
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