

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AATF ANNUAL CONVENTION IN MILWAUKEE



AATF Executive Council

The 79th annual AATF Convention, July 5-8, 2006 in Milwaukee had as its theme, "Vues sur le monde francophone: cinéma et société." It actually began a week early with a pre-convention Cinema Workshop led by AATF Honorary Member Jean-Noël Rey, CLEMI, Paris (see page 8). Twenty-two teachers spent several days on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee learning how to analyze films and use them effectively in the classroom. A special thanks to Professor Larry Kuiper for helping to organize this event.



Christopher Pinet, Azouz Begag, AATF President Margot Steinhart

Following two and a half days of meetings by the AATF Executive Council, the convention officially opened on Wednesday, July 5. AATF President Margot Steinhart welcomed attendees. Then Christopher Pinet, Editor in Chief of the *French Review*, introduced keynote speaker Azouz Begag, French *Ministre de la Promotion de l'égalité des chances*, sociologist, and author of the autobiographical novel *Le Gone du Chaâba* which was one of the featured selections of the AATF Book Club. Video excerpts from M. Begag's riveting keynote speech are available on the AATF Web site at [www.frenchteachers.org].

After the opening session, nearly 150 congressistes headed to the atrium of the

Hyatt for the Welcome Luncheon where we were pleased to listen to remarks from His Excellency Jean-David Levitte, French Ambassador to the U.S.

Sessions and workshops began in earnest following the luncheon and continued throughout the next two and a half days. To close the opening day, participants were able to get a first look at the Ex-

hibit Hall (find out more about our exhibitors on the AATF Exhibitor Web page at [www.frenchteachers.org]) during a wine and cheese reception cosponsored by the AATF and, as they have for many years, by the Cultural Service of the French Embassy in Washington. We were especially honored by the presence, in addition to the Minister and the Ambassador, of Richard Barbeyron, *Consul général de France à Chicago*, Robby Judes, *Conseiller culturel adjoint*, et Philippe Sauret, *Attaché culturel, Chef du service promotion du français et établissements scolaires*, as well as a number of other representatives of the French Cultural Service. Everyone was in a celebratory mood thanks to the French victory in the semifinal game of the *Coupe du monde*. Following a brief pause for dinner, many members boarded buses for the trip to the historic Oriental Theater for a showing of *Le Gone du Chaâba*, the film based on M. Begag's novel. The film showing was cosponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for International Education, the University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for European Studies, and the Southeast Wisconsin Academic Alliance in French.

Day 2 of the convention began with a *Dictée*. For the second year, Marie-Simone Pavlovich, herself a finalist in *la Grande Dictée* run by Bernard Pivot, has organized this popular event. Winners were announced during the AATF Delegate Assembly the next day. A full day of sessions and workshops, many highlighting the convention theme of cinema, was broken up by the noontime showing of two other films, *Black, blanc, beur: parlons-en!* on Thursday and *Faat Kiné* on Friday. Day 2 ended with an excursion

to the Milwaukee Art Museum where those who attended were able to enjoy guided tours of the Haitian art collection, a lecture on the 19th-century French print exhibit, and an early-evening reception.



Ambassador Levitte

Special sessions were featured on *la crise des banlieues* organized by Johann Sadock, MIT; Haitian art presented by journalist Owen Georges Leroy (this session was sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies); Orientalism in French film organized by Laurence Porter, Michigan State University; Franco-American cross-cultural experiences organized by Marie-Christine Koop, Chair of the AATF Commission on Cultural Competence; and a theatrical reading of a play by Alek Baylee Toumi, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Other special sessions and meetings included a promotion Swap Shop organized by Ann Sunderland, Co-Chair of the AATF Commission for the Promotion of French, Regional Roundups with the nine AATF regional representatives, exhibitor and commission sessions, as well as meetings of the National French Contest Administrators and sponsors of chapters of the *Société honoraire de français*. Organiza-



Milwaukee Museum of Art



Violinist Bernard Zinck and accompanist

tional meetings were held throughout the convention for Chapter Presidents, chairs of the twelve (now thirteen) AATF commissions (see page 27), and a *French Review* Editors' Luncheon, presided by Editor in Chief Christopher Pinet.

Day 3 of the convention was equally busy. In addition to the many sessions and workshops and the noon film showing, there was a morning coffee break in the exhibit hall where lucky attendees won valuable prizes at the annual exhibitor raffle. The



Roland Bartholone, CERAN Lingua, Todd Bowen, Robert Ludwig, Margot Steinhart

raffle was expertly organized by AATF staff member Amy Hanson. Thanks to Region II Representative Jean-Pierre Berwald for again handling announcer duties.

In the afternoon, the AATF Assembly of Delegates met to ratify decisions of the Executive Council, and the *Dictée* winners received their prizes. At the close of the day, participants were treated to a concert/lecture by University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee violinist Bernard Zinck who spoke about *Le Chevalier de Saint-Georges*. The Awards Banquet, took place in the evening (see the complete list of honorees on page 7). We welcomed two new honorary members (see page 18), Azouz Begag and Jean-David Levitte, honored Outstanding National French Contest Administrators, and recognized our outgoing Executive Council members, Region I Representative Myrna Delson-Karan, Region V Representative Danielle Raquidel, and Vice-President "Tennessee Bob" Peckham, who will finish

their terms in December. A special award was presented to Elizabeth Miller, outgoing Chair of the National French Contest FLES* Test Development Committee. Among the numerous award recipients were Todd Bowen who received the 2006 AATF Dorothy S. Ludwig Excellence in Teaching Award. This award is sponsored by former AATF Region I Representative and Honorary Member Robert Ludwig, and this year the recipient will also enjoy a one-week stay in Belgium provided by CERAN Lingua. Dennis Meredith of Intercultural Student Experiences was on hand to present the ISE Language Matters Award to Davara Potel who was unable to be present. Her remarks were read by Ohio Chapter President Deborah Stout. The Banquet was followed by yet another concert, this one given by Claudia Hommel and Sean Harris entitled "The Jazz Fauré Project." Claudia has performed at several previous AATF conventions.

Those who did not have early morning flights were able to take advantage of the final half-day of sessions and workshops.

The last official activity of the convention was the departure at noon of two excursions, one to the Sprecher Brewery where participants were treated to special bottles of beer labeled in honor of the convention and another to the Joan of Arc Chapel on the campus of Marquette University.

Each evening participants were able to enjoy the sights and sounds of Milwaukee as well as the perfect weather. In short, the 461 participants were able to enjoy 132 sessions and 7 workshops, 42 exhibit booths, numerous guest speakers and performers, and several unique excursions. The AATF would like to thank the staff members who helped make the convention such a success, Administrative Assistant Darla Macaluso and Bilingual Secretary Amy Hanson. In



Aurélie Dubard



Sean Harris and Claudia Hommel

addition, Jennifer Ramirez handled the AATF Exhibit Booth. We would especially like to acknowledge the contribution of our *stagiaire*, Aurélie Dubard from *La Réunion*. She is pursuing a degree in Applied Languages at the University of Strasbourg and spent eight weeks working at National Headquarters this past summer. AATF staff members were aided in their work by the personnel of the Hyatt Regency Hotel and Valley Expo and Mike Hankins of Technology Express. Furthermore, the help of Brigid Globensky, Senior Director of Education and Public Services at the Milwaukee Art Museum, was invaluable in making arrangements for the museum activities. Finally,



Darla Macaluso and Amy Hanson

the Local Committee worked tirelessly to ensure a memorable convention: Anita Alkhas, Larry Kuiper, Mary Mann, Margaret Schmidt-Dess, Martine Meyer, Gabrielle Verdier, Paula Johnson-Fox, Melissa Kling, Teri Knight, Jim Mileham, Julie Rose, Jennifer Bolen, Anne Herisson-Leplae, Ann Line, James Radtke, Paul Sandroock, and Bernard Zinck. The AATF would like to thank the speakers, exhibitors, and sponsors (see page 39) without whom the convention could not happen.