

FRANCO-AMERICAN EXCHANGE 2003

In April 2003, forty-two students from the *Lycée Charles de Gaulle* in Dijon, France, and their five History/Geography, Philosophy, Science, and English teachers landed at the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport to begin a two-week exchange with Bishop Brossart High School in Alexandria, Kentucky. This is the third time



my students have welcomed a group of students from this French high school. Because there were so many students arriving from France, I also invited students from Campbell County High School, Grant County High School, Harrison County High School, and Villa Madonna Academy to join us in hosting these students.

We sponsor the exchange every other year, and it has proven to be a real "shot-in-the-arm" to our French program. The students and teachers alike feel the excitement both before and during the visit by the French students. There is really nothing like it. The students from France present interesting exposés on French life and culture while they are in our classrooms. Afterwards, the references we make to our new French friends are ongoing. I cannot tell you how many times I have occasion to ask my students what their partners or their families said or did as we discuss customs and manner of speech. The examples we continue to uncover are never ending.

This year's exchange was, in fact, somewhat tenuous as the war with Iraq had just gotten underway. I was asked at school over and over again whether we would proceed with the exchange. Our partners had made all their plans, purchased their tickets, met with parents, ironed out any issues some may have had on their end, and declared how anxious they were to make another exchange trip to meet us. They wanted to come, and we discussed our countries' positions on the war, and, in some cases, agreed to disagree. Nonetheless, diplomacy was the buzz word, and my students even appealed to the student body in a well-worded announcement that their partners were students like ourselves and independent of their respective government's policies in this affair. They were, after all, kids like us making the educational trip of a lifetime. Why not

welcome them with open arms? So we did.

After requesting the monetary support of both the Kentucky Chapter and the National AATF and being granted \$500 from each

we were on our way to being able to finance such an exchange. The American families chipped in at least \$50.00 each to pay for tickets to the *Lion King*, to a Cincinnati Reds game, entry fees for the Cincinnati Museum Center and Omnimax

theater, the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, and an evening of cosmic bowling at the local bowling lanes. Financial backing was also given us by the Alexandria Business Community and the Newport Rotary Club. A total of \$1750 was needed to pay our expenses for the exchange activities.

Throughout the two-week exchange, we had many different outings planned for the entire group. The French students and their teachers attended classes at our high schools every other day, and we took them or sent them on field trips the other days. These included trips to Frankfort, the state capital, the Kentucky Horse Park, a guided tour of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky with a docent from the Natural History Museum, a guided tour of American art at the Cincinnati Art Museum with lunch in Eden Park, and a tour of local farms and vineyards in our area. On the weekend we treated our French guests to a Broadway performance of the *Lion King* in Cincinnati (special underwritten tickets were granted us at \$10 each!) and a Reds game. The Reds won that night, and thus we saw quite a fireworks display at the game. Many partners also accompanied my students to the 27th Annual Regional Foreign Language Festival at Northern Kentucky University that Saturday to see them compete in events such as Drama, Chorus, and to see the costumes, models, and art work they had entered in the competition. Our farewell dinner was attended by at least 150 students and family members. Of course, we served Kentucky Fried Chicken along with the pot luck dishes brought by the American families.

On behalf of my four colleagues, I would like to thank the AATF for its support. I know our guests were impressed by the wide range of activities we were able to plan.

Mimi Hagedorn (KY)

PHILADELPHIA USES AATF SMALL GRANT FOR FRENCH PERFORMERS



Martine Feldmann-Scotto, Diana Regan, Pierre-Olivier Scotto, and Léa Scotto

After a year of planning and many e-mails, Pierre-Olivier Scotto and Martine Feldmann arrived in Philadelphia to perform their original one-man play, *La Comédie imaginaire: voyage au pays de Molière*. Diana Regan, Region IV Representative, invited them to come to the U.S. to present a teacher workshop followed by the performance. Chapter officers and Mme Regan planned a three-hour teacher workshop. Both events were held in April at the University of Pennsylvania. Under the direction of M. Scotto, the workshop attendees had the unique opportunity of experiencing the genius of Molière by assuming the characters from some of his well-known works such as *Tartuffe*, *George Dandin*, *L'Avare*, and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. During lunch, the teachers were able to confer with the actor on an informal basis about the effective use of Molière's masterpieces in the contemporary classroom.

M. Scotto, *pensionnaire de la Comédie française*, and Madame Feldmann are well-known for their creative and innovative work in the U.S. as well as in France and Canada. They have performed their original plays at the *Festival d'Avignon* and at the *Théâtre du Luxembourg* in Paris. In his play, M. Scotto becomes the character of Pierrot from *Don Juan* and imagines that other Molière characters are members of his real family. M. Scotto creates high interest and drama with his use of masks in the tradition of *la commedia dell'arte*.

M. Scotto and Mme Feldmann, along with their daughter Léa, also performed in Boston, at Bates College in Maine, and finally a workshop held at the Northeast Conference followed by the theatrical performance on at the French Embassy, Washington, D.C.

Diana Regan
Region IV Representative

Loreta Chirico, President
Philadelphia AATF Chapter