

The French Review

From the Editor's Desk

You who did not attend the joint meeting of the AATF and the Fédération internationale des professeurs de français held from 19-23 July in Atlanta missed out on something special. The chance to meet other French teachers from over 115 countries (there were between 1100-1200 in attendance) of every color, ethnicity, and religion does not come along every day! Nor does one often get the opportunity to speak French with them and to learn of their cultures, customs, and concerns. I had one particularly poignant conversation with a French professor from Sudan who agonized over the situation in her country. The one negative note was that the U.S. government refused visas to the Cuban delegation in spite of repeated intervention by organizers and by members of Congress. Diversity was indeed the order of the week and it extended from papers to Tables rondes; from multicolored native dress to accents; and to entertainment. Highlights of the latter included a concert by the Cajun baladeur and rocker, Zachary Richard; the Royal African Drummers of Africa; the Quebec singers, Nathalie Renault and Laurence Jalabert; and the Quebecois group, Grand' Débâcle. Bernard Pivot, who exposed our orthographic inadequacies in 2000 in Paris, presented his new show, "Double Je," a program devoted to people of foreign origin living in France who possess at least two languages. The hotel rooms in the Hilton were wired by TV5 so that attendees could keep up on news from France and the francophone world.

Numerous dignitaries from the francophone world were present. These include Abdou Diouf, Secrétaire général de l'organisation internationale de la Francophonie; Xavier Darcos, Ministre délégué à la coopération au développement et à la Francophonie de la République française; Michael F. Kergin, Ambassadeur de France à Washington; Nathalie Normandeau, Ministre au Développement régional et au tourisme du Québec; Eliane De Pues-Levaque, Représentante permanente de la Communauté française de Belgique en Louisiane; Jean-David Levitte, Ambassadeur de France à Washington; Chantal Manès, Chef du service de coopération universitaire, linguistique et éducative, Ambassade de France à Washington; René-Serge Marty, Consul de France à Atlanta; and many others. Their remarks were a cut above what one usually hears at these gatherings, and one sensed both their passion and commitment to the French language and its preservation and growth in the global arena.

In addition to the many sessions on pedagogy, the teaching of French in francophone and non-francophone settings throughout the world, and culture, there were several sessions devoted to literature. I was fortunate enough to preside at a Table ronde on francophone literature which featured the Senegalese writer, Aminata Sow Fall; the Cameroonian writer, Angèle Kingué, who teaches at Bucknell University; Samir Marzouki, a poet from Tunisia who lives in Paris; Alek Toumi, an Algerian-born (Kabyle) American playwright who teaches at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point; and the Martinican poet, Monchoachi. There was also a Table ronde on francophone journals, where I joined editors from other countries and talked about the long commitment of the *French Review* to francophone literature and culture. We hope to publish a few, selected papers from the conference in future issues.

As always the editors of the *French Review* held their annual luncheon; this year at Dailey's in downtown Atlanta. Thanks to the team at National Headquarters we were able to offer a copy of our May 2004 special issue entitled "Le Monde Francophone" to all attendees who presented the ticket found in their mallette.

The special issue for May 2005, "Le Québec et le Canada francophone," is now set and I hope that you will find it exciting. You should already be making plans to attend the annual conference to be held in Quebec City from 7-10 July, 2005.

In Montana French enrollments have rebounded after the wave of francophobia that many of us experienced. Let me know whether or not that was true in your part of the country. I trust that the sixth annual Semaine du Français was a great success across the United States. I wish all of you de très bonnes vacances et une excellente nouvelle année!

Christopher P. Pinet