

Publication of L'Alliance Française d'Albuquerque
2917 Carlisle Blvd. NE – Suite 110
Albuquerque, NM 87110
Phone (505) 872-9288
www.afabq.com



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Mots de la Présidente

Chers membres, chers amis,

Welcome to our first digital edition of the Alliance Française d'Albuquerque newsletter, *Le Lien*. Those of you who have been members since before 2020 will remember the paper version of *Le Lien* delivered by mail three or four times a year to announce our upcoming events and report on our activities. In recent years, however, we have relied on Mailchimp emails to communicate with you. This allowed us to include live links to RSVP or to access additional information, yet we have rarely reported on past events. This issue is an opportunity for us to share details about happenings and programs you may have missed and hopefully inspire you to join us for such gatherings in the future.

The year 2023 marked the 60th anniversary of the founding of our Alliance, a milestone we celebrated throughout the year with monthly events both big and small. For our members who look for occasions to practice speaking French, we offered two lively in-person Apéros (Happy Hours) at Level 5 of the Hotel Chaco, in addition to our monthly online Café Causette (usually at noon on the last Saturday of the month). Café Causette is an easy and excellent way to practice your French as we send out discussion questions in advance and then divide participants into breakout rooms by level, with a fluent French speaker in each group as a host. For even more speaking practice, we also held an online Soirée Film to discuss the movie “Délucieux” and a Soirée Jeux where we played various word games en français. Later in the year, as part of our mission to bring you French cultural experiences, we had two special presentations. In July we were delighted to welcome professional storyteller Mme Evelyne Koffi-Khaley, the mother of AF instructor Nandi Egber. She gave a captivating performance in French of tales and poems from around the world, illustrated with her own hand-painted images in a Kamishibai-style mini-theater. We so enjoyed her presentation that we welcomed her for an encore performance on April 21. In August our resident art historian, Susan Benforado Bakewell, continued her lecture series in art history with a fascinating Zoom lecture in English on the life and work of Auguste Rodin. And then there were our larger events. As Karin Frings describes in her article in this issue, one hundred Alliance students, members and friends joined us to celebrate Bastille Day and our 60th anniversary in the lovely garden of Bella Roma, hosted by Laura Ferrary and Richard Chapman. In November we had another big gathering, this time at the FUSION, to celebrate la Fête du Beaujolais Nouveau, an annual Alliance event that is always lots of fun. With live music and hors d'oeuvres, we toasted the beginning of the holiday season with the new wine from France. If you have never tried these annual happenings, we wholeheartedly encourage you to join us this year!

In closing, I thank you all—our dedicated AF Board, nos étudiants fidèles, our outstanding AF French teachers and all our members—for your continued support. We are here because of and thanks to you!

Au plaisir de vous voir bientôt !
Carolyn Simmons, President

La Grande Fête et le 60ème Anniversaire de Notre Alliance

La Grande Fête, Bastille Day 2023, took place with 100 guests under the tent at the beautiful garden of the Bella Roma. Everybody enjoyed the live entertainment by our favorite jazz band Jazz Breeze, as well as a champagne toast to honor the occasion followed by a delicious quiche lunch accompanied by great wine and, bien entendu, a 60th birthday cake. President Carolyn Simmons reminisced about the 60 years of our Alliance Française which made us all appreciate the long tradition of bringing French language and culture to our city. There was also a book giveaway table where many of us found just the right reading inspiration for the summer.



Watch for the announcement for this year's celebration on Sunday, July 14. We hope to see you there!



Carolyn Simmons et Karin Frings présentent le gâteau d'anniversaire

La Fête du Beaujolais Nouveau 2023

Le 17 novembre 2023, la fête du Beaujolais Nouveau est revenue après une absence de trois ans en raison de la pandémie. Notre groupe de presque 60 personnes s'est réuni à FUSION Centre d'arts et culture situé dans le centre-ville d'Albuquerque. Pour notre Alliance, c'était la première fête à FUSION. Kevin Soucie, un chanteur et guitariste originaire du Wisconsin, a offert un concert très agréable de chansons populaires françaises telles que « Ne me quitte pas », « La mer », « Que reste-il de nos amours », et « Le temps de vivre » entre autres.



Kevin Soucie pendant la fête du Beaujolais Nouveau

La fête était organisée par Scott Sandlin, membre du conseil de l'Alliance, aidée par le Comité d'activités. Tout le monde a apprécié l'ambiance intime de la salle, la musique excellente, les amuse-bouches délicieux, et bien sûr, la raison pour la fête : le Beaujolais Nouveau. En partant, on a entendu un membre de l'Alliance dire à son fils : « C'était merveilleux. Je chantais et chantais et chantais ! »

Nous planifions déjà une reprise pour le prochain Beaujolais Nouveau. Nous espérons le fêter avec vous !

La Chandeleur—Le Jour des Crêpes 2024

Une vingtaine de participants ont célébré cette tradition française le samedi 3 février—en présentiel, bien sûr—avec des crêpes délicieuses et du cidre et en apprenant des proverbes comme :



À la chandeleur, l'hiver cesse ou reprend vigueur.

Qui mange des crêpes quand la Chandeleur est arrivée, est sûr d'avoir de l'argent pendant l'année.

En France, on célèbre la Chandeleur (du latin *festus candelarum*) le 2 février, que l'on appelle aussi la Fête de la Lumière ou le Jour des crêpes. La tradition date du 5^e siècle. On devait tenir une pièce d'or dans la main dominante et tenir la poêle dans la main faible. L'objectif, c'était de faire sauter la crêpe dans l'air, puis de la rattraper dans la poêle—tâche plus difficile qu'on ne le pense. Alors, nous étions très contents d'avoir Judi et Karin, deux membres du Conseil, comme « chefs experts ».

De nos jours, certaines personnes font un vœu avant de faire sauter la crêpe. Si elle se retourne dans la poêle, le vœu se réalisera. Attention, il est important de ne pas révéler le vœu pour qu'il se réalise ! Que c'était amusant !

La Distribution des Prix 2024: A French Tradition

On April 18, the Alliance Française d'Albuquerque held our annual Distribution des Prix awards ceremony to honor the finest students of French and their teachers from regional high schools and from our own French for Children program. This year 11 teachers from nine different schools selected 63 laureates who joined us, along with family and friends, in the elegant Kokopelli room of the Marriott Pyramid hotel.

The French tradition of la Distribution des Prix dates to the late 19th century, when the Third Republic, in order to further cement the values inherited from the French Revolution of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, introduced numerous reforms to encourage education across the country. In small villages as well as larger



Prix du Président winner Meredith Smith

towns, la Distribution was an event for the whole community. During the last few weeks of school in June, French students spent nearly all their time practicing dances and short plays or recitations to be performed on the day of la Distribution for their parents, teachers, local dignitaries and many other neighbors and friends. When not supervising the rehearsals, teachers spent time making costumes for students out of paper and cardboard. The books awarded were often very fancy, specially bound in leather with golden embossing or ribbons, and inside was a bookplate with the student's name and grade. While treasured by the recipient, it may also have been one of the few books available to other family members and was likely enjoyed by them as well.



High School Teachers and Carolyn Simmons

Today la Distribution has all but disappeared in France; however, our Alliance is proud to carry on this tradition. AF of Albuquerque founder, Dr. Claude-Marie Senninger, introduced this ceremony to our region some fifty years ago as part of the Alliance Française's mission to promote the study of French language and culture outside of France. Our Alliance gives a certificate of achievement, a French magazine and one or more books to each laureate, and also offers a special gift to each teacher. At the end of the ceremony, the Prix du Président is awarded to the best student in French 4 or 5 or Advanced Placement classes, chosen from nominations submitted by the teachers. This year's recipient was Meredith Smith from St. Pius X High School. As her teacher, Jacqueline Prugar, noted in the nomination, Meredith first became enchanted with French as a child upon hearing the French terms for various steps and movements in her ballet classes. She pursued this

interest in high school French honors classes where, through dedication and consistent hard work, she achieved a high level of proficiency in both her spoken and written French. She even participated in a nine-day school trip to France which inspired her to minor in French and join a study abroad program in college. As her teacher concluded, with the authentic love of the language and culture which Meredith brings to her study of French, she truly embodies what it means to be called a Francophile. We are proud to have her as our recipient of the 2024 Prix du Président and hope that she and all her fellow laureates continue to make French a part of their lives moving forward!

Many thanks to all who participated in this event, our AF members whose yearly membership dues and tuition fees help to cover the costs involved, and of course, to all the deserving laureates and their devoted teachers. Félicitations!

Après-midi de Contes



The Alliance Française was delighted to welcome French professional storyteller, Evelyne Koffi-Khaley for an encore in-person performance on Sunday, April 21. As a storyteller, Mme Koffi-Khaley uses her voice, her words, and her original art to transport listeners on a colorful journey into other worlds. She told the story, for example, of a child who learns from his mother and father two very different versions of the origins of men on Earth. She mesmerized the audience with a story about a rainbow-scaled serpent goddess that creates a paradisaical world but must also

confront evil. Using her own illustrations presented in a small kamishibai-style box theater, Mme Koffi-Khaley also recited the poem, “La vie profonde” by Anna de Noailles and a French version of John Lennon's “Imagine.” The AF members, students and friends in attendance were thoroughly enchanted and appreciative of this wonderful talent. We hope to host Mme Koffi-Khaley again on her next visit to Albuquerque and hope you'll join us.

Resources to Learn and Practice French at Home

Whether or not you are taking a class at the Alliance, there are many resources available outside the classroom that can help you learn French. Although nothing will take the place of the face-to-face interactions that naturally occur in the classroom, the resources that are available outside of it are a welcome and powerful educational aid to continue learning on your own. We welcome information from our members who may know of additional resources to share with the rest of the membership. Please send an email to butchartt@icloud.com with your suggestions and discoveries.

Culturethèque: A Free Resource for All Members of the Alliance Française

Culturethèque is the online library of the **French Cultural Network**. The most important titles from the French press, comics, novels, works on current topics, self-training modules, books for French-language learners, articles on the human sciences, concert recordings, web documentaries are all **available 24/7** for everybody! Easy to use, you will access all the resources you want in just a few clicks. The library is **available from any smartphone, tablet, e-book reader or computer**. Go to <https://www.culturetheque.com/fr/explorer/explorer> to navigate and explore the site.





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Calendrier

To participate in any of these online or in-person events, please use the RSVP form in the email announcement you will receive or contact us at info@afabq.com.

April 27	Café Causette on Zoom 12:00-12:45 pm
May 5	Trivia Night at L'Alliance Française d'Albuquerque AF 4:00 pm
May 25	Café Causette on Zoom 12:00-12:45 pm
June 2	Goya in Bordeaux Zoom lecture by Susan Benforado Bakewell



Membres du Conseil de l'Alliance Française d'Albuquerque

Présidente	Carolyn Simmons
Vice-Présidente	Karin Frings
Trésorier	Bruce Hanson
Secrétaire	Carl Cerco
Le Lien	Tomás Butchart
Responsable des adhérents	Carolyn Simmons
Directrice de l'école French for Children	Karin Frings
Directrice de l'école de l'Alliance	Carolyn Simmons
Autres Membres	Joyce Fay Camron, Gloria Cohen, Matt Cronin, Stan Dunin, Dee Garcia, Becky Lee, Bruce McClure, Ralph Odenwald, Lisa Pinceloup, Maxine Schmidt, Judi Townsend et Linda Zemke

Alliance Française Membership

If you aren't already a member of the AF d'Albuquerque, we invite you to join us. Your membership dues enable you to take our classes and attend our events, as well as to use our library. Your dues help us to promote French language and culture here in New Mexico with our school, our activities and our support of local French teachers. Please visit afabq.com/membership-information/ for the 2024 Membership form.

Merci!