C'est la rentrée (Back to school time)! It is with great pleasure that I say “bienvenue” to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and everyone who supports the French programme at Indiana University Northwest. This is the second edition of our newsletter “La Lettre du faucon rouge” and the first of the academic year 2013-2014. We are pleased to welcome incoming new students to the study of French. This semester, we anticipate further growth as the rebranding of the programme continues. Over the past summer I had the opportunity to travel to several countries, including three in French-speaking West Africa (Burkina Faso, Bénin and Togo). In this issue of “La Lettre,” we will feature those places as we continue to highlight some of the 50 countries and regions on Earth that speak French in each of our future editions. In other news, those of us involved with the French programme at IU-Northwest are excited to be back to school, as the upcoming semester promises to be a busy one. Some of our upcoming activities include inducting new members into Pi Delta Phi (the international French honour society) and celebrating the re-opening of our newly modernised language laboratory (named on behalf of former French professor and Modern Languages department Chair, the late Dr. Frank Caucci). In addition to those two events, we are in the beginning stages of constructing an interactive online map and website that will focus on accents and linguistic differences in global French varieties, and we are developing a new course dealing with hip-hop music and culture in conjunction with the Department of Fine Arts. In summary, we are excited for the future of French at the university and we look forward to your further support as we continue to be a vital part of the academic community at IU-Northwest. Merci beaucoup et bonne lecture!

Faculty Spotlight

Madame Belinda Potoma, an alumna of Indiana University School of Music (B.M.E. 74) and IUN (MA Ed ’83) now explores her third and fourth careers, having served as a public school music educator for 26 years prior to completing her endorsement in French (at IUN) and transferring to the foreign language department at Calumet High School in 2000. Retired in 2006 to take advantage of an offer to house-sit in Rouillac, France for a year, she completed her MA in French through her studies at l’Université Catholique de l’Ouest in Angers. Since her return stateside, she balances life between her two passions by teaching French for secondary, college and elderhostel students, coordinating education outreach programs for the Northwest Indiana Symphony, presenting lectures on French opera for Lyric Opera of Chicago and singing and playing her clarinet in community choirs, concert bands and theater groups.
To the right: Woman heading to market (Ganvié, Bénin)

Featured Destinations: Bénin, Burkina Faso, Togo

Our featured destinations this issue focus on the continent where the French language is the strongest and its speakers the most numerous: Africa. This past summer, the French programme at IU-Northwest toured three French-speaking countries in West Africa: Bénin, Burkina Faso and Togo.

Long ago, the countries that make up the southern part of West Africa were a central part of the trans-Sahara trade routes that criss-crossed the Sahara Desert to and from the once-thriving Kingdom of Mali. When Europeans started to colonise the Americas in the 16th century and engage in commerce and slave-trading with chiefs along the coast of Africa, it was the West African region where the Atlantic Slave Trade was most prevalent. Contemporary visitors to the area can visit many sites and monuments that honour the victims and discuss the legacy of this tragic period of history.

Today, many people of African descent living in the Caribbean islands and Brazil can trace their roots to the coastal nations of West Africa. The country of Bénin is of particular interest in this regard, given its ties to many people who created the nation of Haiti, including Toussaint Louverture, its founding father. Once the Atlantic Slave Trade ended in the 19th century, the area that makes up present-day Bénin, Burkina Faso and Togo was later colonised by France, and the three countries would become independent in 1960.

Along with Islam and Christianity, the traditional religions of this Francophone region in West Africa are animist, stressing fetishism, nature, ancestor worship, and idolatry. The Caribbean religions of Santeria (found in Cuba) and Vaudou (found in Haiti) are directly related to the beliefs still practised amongst many people in Togo and Bénin.

The landlocked nation of Burkina Faso hosts the largest film festival in Africa (held in Ouagadougou), which in turn also happens to be one of the biggest annual global Francophone cinema gatherings as well. Furthermore, Burkina Faso is also a leader in art and culture and the country hosts the largest craft market on the African continent.

Today our three featured countries stand at the forefront of development for Francophone Africa and each has a growing and tourist and business industry. Tourists to the region can visit spectacular beaches along the southern coast, thick rainforests in the interior, and the Sahel grasslands in the far north. Visitors can also tour many UNESCO World Heritage Sites and meet people from numerous ethnicities and cultures, all of whom share French as their common official language. Many people from Bénin, Burkina Faso and Togo are well-known in the Francophone world in regards to the arts, literature, music, and sports.

West African French Slang & Expressions

One of the most fun things about a foreign language is learning about the many different regional differences used by its speakers. Here are some of the expressions and words we overheard and learned from travelling in three Francophone countries in West Africa this past summer:

*Bonne arrivée* (“Bienvenue”): Welcome.
*Un maquis*: A small street-side restaurant.
*Marcher avec le pied* (“venir à pied”): To arrive somewhere by foot.
*Bonsoir*: A greeting stated universally at any point after the time of 12:00 Noon.
*Tu es là*: A greeting stated as you see someone you know as you pass them when walking, etc.
*On se dit à tout moment* (“À bientôt”): See you soon.
*Doucement* (“Pardon”): Pardon, or careful.
*C’est comment?” (“Comment ça va?”) : How are you?
*C’est gaté” (“C’est brisé, cassé”): It is broken.
*Ça caille* (“Il fait très chaud”): It is very hot outside.
*Chosiner* (“Faire quelque chose”): To do something.
*Bonne traversée*”: (“Bon voyage”) Have a good trip.

West African trivia, did you know?

In small villages outside of cities, many houses are round in shape and are made of mud with a thatch palm roof.

Known in colonial times as La Haute Volta (Upper Volta), Burkina Faso means “Land of the Honourable People.” Les Burkinabés are known amongst many in Africa to be the most honest people on the continent.

Burkina Faso has perhaps many of the world’s best city names. The country’s capital, which is one of the oldest on Earth, is named Ouagadougou. The country’s second-largest city is Bobo-Dioulasso. Also found in Burkina Faso are the towns of Gorom-Gorom, Bouroum-Bouroum, Fada N’Gourma, Tin-Akof, Niangoloko and many more. Talk about some tongue twisters!

Many speech patterns that are prevalent in African American Vernacular English can trace their roots to the variety of languages spoken throughout Bénin, Togo and Burkina Faso.

Bénin, Burkina Faso and Togo all share the same monetary unit as currency: The Communaute Financiere Africaine (CFA) franc.
Study Abroad scholarship for IUN students (Frank Caucci Scholarship)

We are excited to offer students a new IUN-only scholarship for those who wish to study abroad. The Frank Caucci Memorial Scholarship, so named for the late Dr. Frank Caucci (who was a long-time professor of French and former Chair of the Department of Modern Languages), has been established to enable IUN students to further their knowledge by living and studying in another country. Students of French or Italian who have a GPA of 3.0 or better in their language courses and who have been accepted into an overseas study programme administered or affiliated with Indiana University are eligible for this award. The amount awarded will be determined in part by the number of students who will be studying abroad in any given year. We are pleased to offer current students this great new opportunity for funding and everyone is encouraged to apply for an IU study abroad programme and this scholarship.

Student Spotlight
Adam Kris

1. Why did you choose to study French?
Even since I was very young, I have always been absolutely fascinated by languages. Prior to studying French at IUN, I studied German and Russian, and I still continue those studies occasionally, but I wanted to study a language with more practical use. I also heard that the French were some of the most interesting writers in the world, and it seemed to me like most people take Spanish when they are required to take a foreign language. I wanted to take the path less travelled.

2. What is your favourite French subject so far?
It’s hard to choose between history and literature as my favorite French subject. I’ve always loved studying history from different perspectives, which the French programme definitely allows one to do so extensively. However, I have never liked reading very much, but French literature seems more interesting than anything I’ve ever read in English.

3. What was the most challenging French subject?
French films have been very difficult because spoken French is quite different from written French. Just like any other language, they have dialects, slang, and contractions that are somewhat difficult to understand for beginning speakers.

4. Do you plan to continue with French studies once you graduate?
Absolutely. From what I have seen, language is “use or lose.” I intend on staying as sharp as I can with my language skills and improving them as much as possible.

5. What are the advantages to studying in a small programme at IUN?
Having a small class size really helps the learning process for me, as I imagine it does for many students. Because of the small university atmosphere and often small classes, all of my French professors have been extremely helpful not only during class, being able to devote more time to each student who might be struggling, but they are also very helpful outside of class if you need them. You’re not just another face that they see in the lecture hall but might not remember like in a large university setting.

6. Have you used French outside of IUN?
Yes. I’ve been to Montréal and I loved the city and the people there are very welcoming. I intend to go back as soon as I can to visit the people that I met there with whom I still stay in contact, and hopefully one day I can save enough money to spend some time in France and other parts of Europe. I also still watch as many French movies as I can in my free time.

Study Abroad - IU French

Indiana University offers students a variety of overseas study options, including in many French-speaking countries. Students who choose to study abroad in a Francophone country have outstanding opportunities to learn about a unique culture and history that differs from their own, all whilst improving their reading, writing and speaking abilities in the French language. The following programmes in French-speaking countries are sponsored by Indiana University: Aix-en-Provence, France (semester or year), Rwanda (semester or year), Rennes, France (semester or year), Paris, France (summer), Québec City, Canada (summer), and Dakar, Sénégal (summer).

Financial Aid is available for all overseas study programmes. In addition to traditional sources of financial assistance, IU-Northwest students who wish to study in a French-speaking country are encouraged to apply for the Frank Caucci Memorial Scholarship (please see related section).
Concours/Contest - Win a Prize!

1. The UNESCO World Heritage Site at Ganvié, Bénin is very famous for tourists. When, why and how was this unique city founded?

2. The religion of “Vaudou” in Haiti can trace its roots to West Africa. In which city in Bénin are Vaudou beliefs the most prevalent and celebrated to this very day?

3. What is the full name of the internationally-recognised film festival that takes place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso every two years?

4. What does “Burkina Faso” mean in English and what was the country’s former name?

5. The inhabitants of Burkina Faso are known as what in French (e.g. Americans, Germans, etc)?

6. What is Burkina Faso’s most prominent natural hazard?

7. What do the stripes on Togo’s flag symbolise?

8. Togo’s soccer team qualified for the soccer World Cup finals in what year? What is the nickname of the Togolese soccer team?

9. What are the two principal ethnocultural groups (tribes) found in Togo?

10. Which country colonised Togo before the French?

Can you answer any of the above questions?

If so, send your results to spegram@iun.edu. Each question answered will get your name into a drawing, once. With that said, do your research, answer all of the questions and maximise your chance to win!
Bonne chance!!

Stay Connected / Branchez-vous

Like us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/IUNFrenchStudies
Follow us on Twitter
www.twitter.com/IUNFrench

Pi Delta Phi

The IUN chapter of Pi Delta Phi (French honour society), known as Xi Gamma, was founded in 2007 and has inducted over 25 present and past students into this prestigious organisation. To become eligible for membership in PDP, students must have a GPA of at least 3.0 in all French courses and have completed one upper-level course. All students of French are encouraged to become lifetime members of PDP and earn the right to be recognised at commencement with honour cords.

All of the photos featured in this edition of “La Lettre du faucon rouge” were taken by Dr. Scooter Pégram during his trip to Bénin, Burkina Faso and Togo in June 2013.

Attention former French majors / Minors: Please keep us informed about your news (alumni news, life events, achievements, jobs, studies, etc). Please send your information to Dr. Scooter Pégram (spegram@iun.edu) so we can highlight your accomplishments in future newsletters!