



**NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2021** Visit us on Facebook: Fredericksburg association (fscA)  
Visit our website: [fredericksburgfrejus.com](http://fredericksburgfrejus.com)

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bonjour à tous,

Letters from friends in Fréjus indicate that they are as frustrated as we in Fredericksburg by the continued restrictions imposed by this coronavirus. They, too, have had problems procuring the vaccines, and have suffered 6 p.m. curfews requiring written “permission slips” if they must be out and about in the evening. Nevertheless, *C'est le mois de février...le mois des fleurs, des chocolats, des valentins...* Let's concentrate on the delights of the season and do all we can to assure the defeat of this pandemic. Spring **will** come, and hopefully we will soon be free to travel freely, renew normal activities, and once again plan Sister City exchanges.

Voici un petit poème pour le jour de St. Valentin :

*La rose est rouge,  
La violette est bleue,  
Le sucre est doux  
Et aussi vous !*

A la prochaine fois,

*Judy*

Judy Hansen, FSCA President

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In case you missed them last month, be sure to visit Thomas Baer's updates to our website:

**Eliza Monroe's Tombstone Story:** <https://fredericksburgfrejus.com/about/in-search-of-eliza-monroe/>

**FSCA Newsletters:** <https://fredericksburgfrejus.com/organization-documents/fscA-newsletters/>

**Student Exchange Program:** <https://fredericksburgfrejus.com/student-exchange-program/>

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## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Dear members, As the Directors voted to exempt member dues for 2021 for those members who paid dues in 2020 I want to remind you **any extra donations or contributions to FSCA are always greatly appreciated.** For your convenience, I invite you to click on our website , shown at the head of this newsletter, and use the membership application that is there.

Looking forward to future events and participation, I am in the process of forming a membership committee. If you are interested in helping with greeting prospective members and/or are knowledgeable in XCEL spreadsheet date input, contact me - Nancie Lightner, Membership Chair [ncblightner2014@yahoo.com](mailto:ncblightner2014@yahoo.com) or call me at 434-378-1556

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## WORTH CHECKING OUT: Gaëlle Josse: Writing the Memory of Ellis Island-

A moving visit to Ellis Island in 2012 inspired French poet Gaëlle Josse to write a novel, *The Last Days of Ellis Island*. Recently translated into English, it plunges the reader into the mind of a fictional character to bring a chapter in American history to life. As the New York immigration center prepares for its final days on November 3, 1954, its director looks back through his memories...

Every week, *France-Amérique* will compile a list of 5 films, series, documentaries, cooking shows, and children's shows you don't want to miss! > Read more at France-Amérique [info@france-amerique.com](mailto:info@france-amerique.com) via [gmail.mcsv.net](mailto:gmail.mcsv.net)



**Maryse Rigoulot**  
Director of Fredericksburg Section

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## NEWS FROM FRÉJUS

Dear friends,

Since I cannot write about things happening in Fréjus, I will write about the first 2021 event involving our association , which DID NOT happen and was postponed to April (perhaps): The Fréjus Short Movie Festival. Each year the Comité de Jumelage presents a short movie from one of our Sister cities (or from its country). In 2017, it was Fredericksburg with a short movie by Stephen Graham. This year it should have been ... a Tunisian short movie.

But there is another link between us : The French "voice" of a lot of your most famous actors such as Johnny Depp, Matthew Mc Conaughey, Mark Walhberg, Joachim Phoenix, Ewan Mc Gregor, etc .. His name is Bruno CHOËL and he is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Pierre CHOËL whom many of you know. Bruno was last year's Jumelage special guest at the Festival (Philippe's idea). I hope you will enjoy watching and hearing him in the video attached. He is a very agreeable and convivial person. He works mainly in Paris but he sometimes travels to the USA for the dubbings. He is quite busy and it was an opportunity for him to pay a visit to his father in Fréjus, who is now 96 years young. <https://www.facebook.com/france3normandie/videos/1791544130907631/>

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## HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS



Remembering the good times. With hope that What is Past is Prologue

2013

Another busy and exciting year

FRANCAIS » Event all about France



Posing for a photo during the recent first annual *congrès de français* at James Monroe High School are (from left) Caitlin Bonner, French teacher Leigh Perret-Dowd and Kailie Love. The event brought together representatives of French classes from 14 area middle and high schools from Fredericksburg and Stafford, Spotsylvania and King George counties. The event included presentations on French fashion, French cheese and chocolate, ballet, live in a francophone country, fencing and more. The day ended with a friendly competition based on French trivia.



Congress de francais – Initiated by Leigh Perret-Dowd was the 1<sup>st</sup> major event of this type & included 14 area middle & high school groups. Workshops included life in a francophone country, French cheese, fashions, ballet, trivio games and more. It then became an annual event. Merci Leigh & all the others who were there to help. Promoting FSCA, Cathy Herndon prepared a display for International Career Day.

And then there was:



Fundraiser – pancakes on the Omelette Pan The event was help in the local park & was to create awareness of FSCA & recruit new members another fundriaser was a fun day at Riverside Dinner Theatre where a poertion of the ticket went to FSCA.

Fréjus Archaeologist – Cherine Gebara visit – Craig & Cathy took her to Montpelier dig for a day

More 2013 events on the next page

## Student Exchange in Fréjus - 2013



Chaperones, Leigh & Connie are ready for the visit



Leigh, Bernadette, Connie & Annette relax and discuss visit plans



Our Lori & Roy Kessinger were there for the visit & met for lunch

THE VISIT WAS FILLED WITH MANY EXCITING ADVENTURES IN SOUTHER FRANCE & THEN:



The sites and wonders of Paris and environs were amazing. Can you identify the location of each of these photos?

*A big round of applause to these chaperones and our friends in Fréjus and all the ones before them who work many hours for many months to assure the student exchange is memorable.*



2014

July we welcomed a group from Fréjus and weeks packed with fun activities.

Welcome arrival at the airport:



Great shot!

A tour of the city, art projects, picnics, cookie Bakeoff, tubing on the Rappahannock River, weekends with host family, Bastille Day picnic at Old Mill Park, a day in Washington D.C., A Sports Day with ball games & swimming, trip to Monticello & UVA, swimming at Lake Anna & a Farewell Party at Susan & Bill Beck's Pump House. What a program!

Here are a few photos from the Charlottesville trip :



And still more photos on the next page

Alas, it was time to leave Virginia, to pack the bags and board the train to New York City for more adventures and fun.



BON VOYAGE MES AMIS

In the fall of 2014 our friends in Frejus celebrated our traditional Thanksgiving Day with a grand dinner party. Philippe Jouan was in charge of preparing & serving American style Martini's. Philippe Rigoulot created unique centerpieces for each table.



The Menu



Table centerpiece by Philippe Rogoulot



Philippe Joian serves American Martinis and Annette helps



Beautiful decorations await the guests



Maryse, Michel & Hilary Gras are prepared for a great meal

### Directors for 2014-2015:

Sister Cities International is comprised of dedicated individuals and organizations committed to realizing President Eisenhower's vision of peace through people and advancing the citizen diplomacy movement into the future. These people are still here in 2021 working for the good of this organization. Lori and Roy are moving away soon but the feel free to email each of them and thank them for the good work they do.

President	Bill Beck	<a href="mailto:bill@becksantiques.com">bill@becksantiques.com</a>
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Immed. past president	Cathy Herndon	<a href="mailto:herndoncathy@gmail.com">herndoncathy@gmail.com</a>

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## More History Highlights in future editions of your newsletter

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### YOUR SPECIAL TREAT THIS MONTH – **The True Story of the Queen's Necklace**

January 21st, 2021 by Clément Thiery - france-amerique.com

**The plot from the new series *Lupin* – the first big French success on Netflix in the United States – draws its inspiration from Maurice Leblanc's novels and the affair of the queen's necklace, a scandal that tarnished Marie-Antoinette's reputation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.**

In the words of Mirabeau, the affair of the diamond necklace was the prelude to the French Revolution. Its disappearance is also used as a starting point for the series *Lupin*, available on Netflix in France and the United States since January 8. Omar Sy (*The Intouchables*, *Jurassic World*, *X-Men: Days of Future Past*) plays a contemporary version of Arsène Lupin, the iconic gentleman burglar invented by novelist Maurice Leblanc in 1905. Just like his literary alter-ego, he excels in the art of disguise, illusion, and sleight of hand.

Lupin puts these skills to good work in the very first episode, slipping into an auction hosted under the glass pyramid at the Louvre and stealing the famous Queen's Necklace, set to be sold for 20 million euros. In the short story, *The Queen's Necklace*, published in French magazine *Je sais tout* in April 1906 (then in the *Arsène Lupin, gentleman-cambrioleur* collection in 1907), the young Lupin was only six years old when he stole the renowned piece of jewelry from his cousin, the Duke of Dreux-Soubise! This exploit proves his talent for thieving and launches his career.

However, the necklace behind these fictional tales is in fact real. Historian Evelyne Lever, who

wrote a book on the subject, described it as an “extraordinary piece of jewelry” with 647 diamonds weighing in at 2,840 carats. This masterpiece was commissioned by King Louis XV for his mistress, Madame du Barry, but it was soon believed to be cursed. The king died before the necklace was completed and it remained in the possession of its creators, Parisian jewelers Charles-Auguste Boehmer and Paul Bassenge, who fell into debt while trying to source so many precious stones. In the end, the piece was unsellable. “It was worth 1.6 million French livre,” says Evelyne Lever. “At the time, that money could buy four châteaux in the Ile-de-France region, including the buildings and the grounds!”

### **A Cunning Deception**

This is when Cardinal de Rohan arrived. One of France’s leading chaplains, he was in disgrace with Queen Marie-Antoinette, who had pushed him out of her inner circle for his lewd morals. The cardinal was prepared to do anything to regain her trust. One of the members of his entourage was a certain self-proclaimed “Countess” de La Motte, a descendent of one of Henri II de Valois’ illegitimate sons. This natural trickster claimed to be a friend to the queen, and promised to restore the cardinal to his original status. With this in mind, she organized a meeting in the Queen’s Grove, in the gardens of Versailles, on the evening of August 11, 1784. A woman pretending to be Marie-Antoinette met the cardinal and reassured him about the situation. Rohan was over the moon!

Jewelers Boehmer and Bassenge offered their sumptuous necklace to Louis XVI in 1782, but the queen refused on the grounds that it was immeasurably expensive. Madame de La Motte told the cardinal Marie-Antoinette wanted this prize piece, and he agreed to act as an intermediary, negotiating a plan of four payments over two years. The jewelers were delighted to have finally found a buyer..... CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

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## **FSCA DIRECTORS – 2021**

*Merci mille fois to all our Directors for agreeing to lead us into 2021*

President – Judith Hansen [judyhansen@yahoo.com](mailto:judyhansen@yahoo.com)  
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