



**NEWSLETTER – August 2021**

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### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Bonjour tout le monde,

First, I'd like to thank all who attended our Bastille Day "Potluck Picnic" at Old Mill Park. Although a severe thunderstorm blew in about 15 minutes before the scheduled starting time, 10 or so members scrambled around, holding down tablecloths and moving food and other items until the worst blew over. Finally, the rain stopped, the sun came out, and more FSCA members appeared from their shelter in parked cars. In the end, 32 members enjoyed our first in-person gathering since before the pandemic, welcoming the conviviality of the evening in spite of the weather. We missed the members who were unable to attend and hope to see you at upcoming programs. Here are a few photos from Wilbur Brown, Moriah & Nathan Autry.



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Secondly, here's a program update: As you know, the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities, including the Giant Omelet, had to be postponed in 2020 due to COVID restrictions. Then, as the summer of 2021 approached, it was clear that pandemic conditions and timing would still prevent hosting a group of French visitors and putting on the activities of this significant anniversary. So once again, we postponed the visit from Frejusiens. At this writing, October 2022 is scheduled for celebrating the "twinning" of Fredericksburg and Frejus as official Sister Cities.

If you were around in 2000 or 2010 for our 20<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, you will realize what a big deal these celebrations can be. Now, with the hiatus of the pandemic year and the loss of some key people who had begun to organize the activities, it's a bit like starting over, and we're definitely going to need many helping hands. Watch for details to be announced soon. I hope many of you will respond to help in whatever way you can.

A la prochaine fois,

*Judy*

Judy Hansen, FSCA President

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Laissez le bon temps rouler



## **NEWS FROM FRÉJUS**

Dear friends,

Today I am sharing symbols of our Friendship....Beautiful Memories. So longing for new meetings .....



**Maryse Rigoulot**  
Director of Fredericksburg Section



## **FAVORITE HAPPY MEMORIES**



Merci mille fois to our three guest presenters this month. If you would like to provide something for our October or future newsletters – email me at [acpcw1@gmail.com](mailto:acpcw1@gmail.com) . I would love to have more volunteers. Each “Memory” is unique and interesting. I am receiving many compliments on this project that has helped get me through these many months of forced inactivity. Phyllis – your newsletter editor.

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## KRISTIN MOELLER

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I first heard about FSCA from my middle school French teacher, Mrs. Leigh Perret-Dowd who suggested I keep the exchange in mind when I got to high school. In 2009 I was accepted into the student exchange program and one of our chaperones for the summer was Leigh. I have more incredible memories from that summer and the next than I can describe. Some of my favorites were the tour of Fragonard, La Maison du Chocolat (where we were tricked into trying 90% pure Cacao), climbing L'Arc de Triomphe, touring Washington D.C., and just hanging out with the students.

After college, I moved back to Fredericksburg and Leigh brought me in to help with the student exchange program, as she was now the VP. I loved every single second of working with them and taking them to Richmond to tour VCU and watch a ball game. As Leigh's tenure as VP wrapped up, she nominated me to fill the role as VP. During my time as VP, I learned so much and loved every single second of it! I have so many incredible memories from that time, sitting in board meetings, attending events, laughing with the board, meeting incredible people from Fréjus, and getting to watch the students grow.

Here are a few photos of some of my "happy memories":



With Leigh at the Louvre in 2009



And here I am in 2018 with the French Chaperones at our Bastille Day event in Market Square

And one more photo on the next page



## Lake Anna Social 2018 with the board and chaperones



To say that this organization has played a role in defining who I am is an understatement. I have been incredibly privileged to be allowed to be involved and hopefully I will get to continue to make memories with FSCA for years to come.

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## CHARLES SIERACKI

Sister City participants open doors to their world and their friendship, but It is the little moments I treasure the most.



During our visit in 2005, when Mickey and I left the bedroom for coffee our first morning at the Chateau d'Haut, the home of Claude and Mado Rosso in St. Aygulf, we found our host Claude, a retired baker, whistling merrily in the kitchen as he made the best-ever croissants for us. We enjoyed an unforgettable breakfast on their patio overlooking the pool.



MORE  
FROM  
CHARLIE  
ON NEXT  
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I treasure the time I spent with Harry Porter, a retired American Army officer who had a special connection with France. On the ferry from St. Raphael to St. Tropez, Harry, was looking intently at the shoreline. He told me he was trying to find the location where he landed to reconnoiter the area the day before he landed with the American troops on August 15, 1944 to liberate southern France.



Harry Porter front left in white jacket, seen here with (left to right) A.C. Whitley, Phyllis Whitley, Francois Leotard – France Minister of Defense & Mayor of Fréjus and other honored veteran, Garnett Strother

Another special moment was when Grand Master Jean Chaminade, who sported the grandest moustache I have ever seen, administered the oath for me to become a Chevalier d' Honneur of the Omelette Geante in 2010.



At the end of my first visit to Frejus, I thought the best was saved for last at the splendid farewell party hosted by the Bihi's at their fabulous house and landscaped garden. But this was to be outdone during my last visit to Frejus when I stayed at the home of Michelle and Djamma Bihi, and along with other sites they took me on a tour of the fortification marking the end of the Maginot Line, which had extended from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. -----

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ODILE PRYOR

2015 - Celebration of our 35th twinning anniversary in Fréus.

We were a big delegation led by Maror Mary Katherine Greenlaw, who with David Rachline, the Frejus Mayor, signed the declaration at the Market Place.



It was a festive day, surrounded by music, good food, flea market with American things brought from US, art exhibit by Fredericksburg artist, etc.

Another memorable event: The outdoor picnic in the park where a small theatrical troupe entertained us with their "Bar de la Marine" stories [Michel Gras translated for non French speaking] while we were enjoying a delicious French buffet. Lot of fun on that day.



Friends gather in the park to enjoy a fantastic buffet presented for all to enjoy.

Story continues on the next page



Philip Pryor makes a toast to the festivities      While the stage is set for the play



The actors at the "Bar de la Marine" who entertained us are: (left-to-right) Claude Rosso in the blue shirt, André Olivier with hat, Fernand Martini in the striped shirt, and in the yellow shirt Joss Le Bihan. Michel Gras is somewhere in the background translating for the Americans who were very happy for the assistance.



Laissez le bon temps rouler



AND NOW.....ANOTHER SPECIAL ARTICLE FOR YOU

## 5 Things to know About Jean Cocteau



Jean Cocteau defies categorisation. While the polymath called himself a poet, he in fact worked across almost every artistic medium, creating surreal worlds in which to immerse his audience through writing, visual arts, plays, and films.

Here, we take a closer look at the leading figure of the French avant-garde.

### 1. *Renaissance Man*

Jean Cocteau was born in 1889, into a wealthy family living near Paris. At the age of 10, his father committed suicide, and throughout his teenage years Cocteau struggled at school and sought solace in the arts. Faced with the harsh realities of life, he turned to creating fantasy worlds through theatre and poetry. From an early age, then, Cocteau developed his artistic sensibilities – characterized by a focus on the personal and the poetic – which run throughout his diverse body of work.

In 1907, Cocteau and his mother moved to Paris. Here, he began frequenting cafes and bistros of Montparnasse, which was a Bohemian mecca in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this neighbourhood, he mingled with trailblazers of Modernism, from Pablo Picasso and Amedeo Modigliani, to writers including Max Jacob and Guillaume Apollinaire. Many became life-long friends and collaborators; when Cocteau created the ballet **Parade** in 1917, for instance, Picasso designed the set and costumes while Apollinaire wrote the programme notes.

A kind of surrealism” is how Apollinaire described **Parade**, thus coining the term a few years before the art movement emerged in Paris. But while Cocteau is associated with Surrealism, he was never truly affiliated with the group. Whilst his work shares the Surrealists’ preoccupation with dreams, the group rejected the romanticism of Cocteau’s style which they saw as antithetical to their ethos. In the 1920s, Cocteau followed Picasso in his rejection of the extreme avant-garde trend of the preceding decade, calling Cubism a “return to order”.

## 2. Theatre & Literature

Cocteau’s first taste of success came when he was just 19, with the publication of a volume of poems, *La Lampe d’Aladin* (1908). A second volume, *Le Prince Frivole* (1910), became his nickname (“The Frivolous Prince”) within Bohemian circles, as he developed a reputation as a dilettante. But, throughout his lifetime of creative innovation, Cocteau proved his commitment to literature and the arts.

He wrote five novels, most notably *Le Livre Blanc* (1928) and *Les Enfants Terribles* (1929). Both works courted controversy: the former for its autobiographical portrayal of homosexuality, the latter for its turbulent relationship between a real-life brother and sister.

Cocteau’s enduring love of theatre is evident in the sheer volume of plays, ballets, and operas he wrote. His first major theatrical work was *Orphée* (1925), a supernatural retelling of the Greek myth, with décors by Jean Hugo and costumes by Coco Chanel. In the proceeding decades, several productions were staged in prestigious Parisian theatres.

## 3. Film

Cocteau’s first endeavour in film, *Le Sang d’un poète*, bears all the hallmarks of the artist. An avant-garde, Surrealist exploration of the tribulations of a poet, it broke new ground as the first film to be constructed as an artwork. It also caused outrage, due to its depiction of a child’s death; as a result, the film wasn’t realised until 1932, two years after it was completed.

His next film, *La Belle et la Bête* (1946) is a fantastical reimagining of the fairy tale, and is now considered a classic of French cinema. After having made several other films in the 40s and 50s, and returned to the director’s chair for a final time with *Le Testament d’Orphée* (1960). Revisiting his previous preoccupation with dreamlike worlds, Cocteau stars in this film as a version of himself. The film’s final line epitomises Cocteau’s intensely personal approach to his artistic practice: “If you didn’t like it, I’m sorry, for I

put my all into it.”

#### 4. Ceramics

After an intense period of directing films, Cocteau spent much of the 1950s focused on visual arts. He found that painting provided relief from depression, and in 1957, he embarked on a new creative collaboration with two ceramicists. At the age of 68, he happily became the “apprentice” to Marie Madeline Jolly and Philippe Madeline, working in their studio in Villefranche-sur-Mer until his death in 1963. Throughout this period, he created over 300 pieces.

It was Picasso who originally piqued Cocteau’s interest in ceramics, and there are similarities between their styles. Both kept it simple when it came to form and made playful references to Classical mythology. But there is a rarefied quality to Cocteau’s ceramics, found in the clean, graphic lines and the stylised profiles of mythical figures. The largest collection of Cocteau ceramics ever to come to auction was offered at [Bonhams Prints and Multiples](#) auction in 2019 to great success. *Grand chèvrecou* (1958) sold for £ 37,562 inc. premium, breaking a world-record for the artist's ceramics at the time.



Jean Cocteau, **L'Esprit minéral**, Edition originale de Jean Cocteau Atelier Madeline-Jolly 4/10, Conceived in 1962 and executed in an edition of 10. © ADAGP/DACS/Comité Cocteau, Paris 2021

#### 5. Legacy

Jean Cocteau died the day after his close friend, Edith Piaf, in 1963. The prophetic epitaph on his gravestone reads “I stay with you”, and indeed, his influence continues to radiate throughout Western culture. From artists such as Andy Warhol to composers including John Adams, creative figures have drawn inspiration from Cocteau’s experimentation with popular culture and high art. Chanel’s 2021/22 Cruise collection, for instance, is inspired by Cocteau, drawing on both his friendship with Coco Chanel and *Le Testament d'Orphée*.

Today, much of Cocteau's work is on display at the [Jean Cocteau Museum in Menton, France](#). The museum shares its collection with the smaller museum created by Cocteau in the town's abandoned fort, the Musée du Bastion. The artist spent the final years of his life restoring the building and selecting works, which eventually opened to the public three years after his death in 1966. Outside of the Pompidou Centre, these are the only places to see a rare Cocteau painting. Works in other media, including drawings and ceramics, are more widely available, and regularly come to the market at a variety of price points.

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### **FSCA DIRECTORS – 2021**

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

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