

CIEE Study Center in Rennes, France

November 2012

Newsletter 2, Semester 1, 2012

Greetings from Rennes!

Since our last newsletter, the students have had a busy month of courses and midterms, and many opportunities in between to deepen their cultural exploration through excursions and trips throughout Europe during Fall break.

Weekend excursions – We went on two weekend excursions. For the first excursion, we went to Normandy. The novelty this year was the visit to Arromanche 360°, where we saw a film entitled *The Price of Freedom* projected onto 9 screens in a circular room that puts the audience at the heart of the action. The movie cuts between footage shot in 1944 by war correspondents and footage shot in the same places nowadays. The students seemed to like it and they also enjoyed the fact that they were then able to visit the pretty little town of Arromanches and stroll along the seashore.



Our second excursion to Cornouaille was marked by bad weather, which disrupted some of our activities on the second day. However the students were still able to appreciate the visit and the delicious meals we had over the weekend helped us to forget the damp conditions. A surprise came on Saturday night at Concarneau where a unique outdoor show with drummers and flame-throwers playing with flame-covered hoola-hoops took place in the historic district of town. The students enjoyed the impromptu spectacle. Later that evening, several of them attended an indoor punk rock concert that they described as being one of the strangest things they had ever seen (If you want to read more about our activities and student stories, please do not hesitate to visit our blog and drop us a line at: <http://study-rennes-la.ciee.org/>). All in all, the students enjoyed the opportunity of visiting picturesque sites outside of Rennes.

Night at the Theater – In early October, the students went to see a contemporary dance show entitled “Puzzle” at the *Théâtre National de Bretagne*, directed by famous dancer and choreographer, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. In this show, the set was transformed by the dancers themselves, accompanied by the entrancing music and songs of a Lebanese singer, a group of Corsican Polyphony singers, and a Japanese musician playing the flute and traditional drums. This eclectic musical choice matched well the themes of the plurality of identity and the puzzle of cultures at the core of the show. Some students enjoyed the show more than others but everyone found the experience memorable.

Intercultural nights – In October, many students participated in the CIREFE’s two intercultural nights (formerly one evening known as *parrainage*), a party where international students are given language/cultural partners. Several of our participants have since been in contact with French students. Hopefully this meeting will develop into meaningful long-lasting relationships.

Campus news – In October-November, our students took their midterms and results were good. This week, we finished our first round of internship observations for the students teaching EFL in the local schools. Those observations are very important because they allow us to double check if the teaching internships take place under the right conditions, to provide personalized and immediate feedback to our student teaching assistants, and to maintain a good relationship with the schools. At present, there is only a month and a half left before the end of the semester and for the students to continue the progress they have made in the French language.



Event on the horizon – Next week, we will be celebrating Thanksgiving with our colleagues and friends from the Franco American Institute. As always, please, feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the program or particular concerns you might have for your students.