

French visitors sample tailgating, Cajun culture

Advocate staff report

GONZALES — Members of a 10-person delegation from Meylan, France, left Gonzales last week with suitcases filled with memories from their 10-day trip.

During their stay, the visitors got a taste of LSU tailgating, visited a Lafayette festival, dined on a traditional Louisiana Thanksgiving meal and toured the area.

The Gonzales Committee on Cultural Affairs has been hosting the visitors for more than 20 years as part of a twinning and cultural exchange program.



Advocate staff photo by Darlene Denstorff -- Artists, from left, Carolin J. Milner, Edwige Valla, Catherine Huloux and Marcia Arnold Eisworth gather Oct. 14 at the River Region Art Association's gallery for a reception honoring the French delegation visiting as part of the Meylan/Gonzales Twinning program.

Members of the River Region Art Association expanded the cultural exchange part of the visit by linking two of its artists with two artists from the French delegation, RRAA President JoAnn Eiswirth said.

The artists started communicating via email in June.

Catherine Huloux, of Meylan, and Marcia Eisworth, of Baton Rouge, worked on landscapes.

Edwige Valla, of Meylan, and Carolin J. Milner, of Prairieville, painted flowers.

The artists exchanged gifts during a reception hosted by RRAA.

After the Oct. 14 reception, the Gonzales hosts and the Meylan delegation met for a banquet in Gonzales.

Jean Claude Brunet, the consul general of France in New Orleans, was the guest speaker.



**Advocate staff photo by Darlene Denstorff
Jean Claude Brunet, the consul general of France in New Orleans, speaks Oct. 14 at a banquet honoring the 10-person French delegation visiting Gonzales.**



Andre Lupo, the vice president of the Meylan Twinning Committee, left, speaks in English while Von de Leigh Hatcher, with the Gonzales Committee on Cultural Affairs, translates into French during the twinning group's recent banquet in Gonzales honoring the visiting French delegation.



John Hebert, the founder of the Gonzales/Meylan Twinning program, accepts a book from Karen Hatcher, the president of the Gonzales Committee on Cultural Affairs during a recent banquet honoring the 10-person French delegation visiting as part of the program. The newly published coffee table book is dedicated to Hebert, who started the twinning program more than 20 years ago. Hatcher's daughter and interpreter for the program, Von de Leigh Hatcher, looks on.