

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

FRANCE

HOMETOWN HERO

Replica in Alsatian village commemorates statue's designer

By Albert Stumm
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

The Statue of Liberty, resplendent in her flowing robes and pointed crown, proudly holds her torch above the grassy hump of a humdrum traffic circle, welcoming not the tired, poor and huddled masses but rather tourists yearning for the canals and cafes of a medieval French village.

The 39-foot replica on display just outside Colmar, in the Alsace region, is a reminder that this most patriotic of American symbols was a French idea. Other copies are spread around France, including three in Paris and one in Bordeaux, but this one commemorates a hometown hero, Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, who designed the original.

On the day of my visit in May, the sun poked out from behind the clouds just as the bus from nearby Strasbourg stopped at the Unterlinden Museum, a former convent with artwork spanning medieval to modern and archeological artifacts from Gallic and Roman times. Signs of spring spilled from window boxes tended with purple, pink and yellow blooms. Finches twittered away in the trees, and elderly ladies leaned on their canes during a late-morning stroll.

Along the short walk over the Lauch canal into the historic core, hints appeared everywhere of a region with feet planted in two different cultures. Wooden signs dangled from curlicued wrought iron on colorful half-timbered buildings. Their hand-painted, decorative facades could have been found in the Black Forest or Swiss Alps, pointing toward the village's origins during the German-speaking Holy Roman Empire.

The pastry shop windows brimming with baguettes and macarons signaled two centuries

of French rule that started with Loius XIV after the Thirty Years War. A laissez-faire ease in the shopkeeper's manner showed a town that held on to that identity despite two more turns with the Germans, once for nearly 50 years ending at World War I and a second during the Nazi era.

Locals stick to calling themselves Alsatian and try to keep it light. As goes one classic joke, "Alsace is like the toilet of France. It's always occupied."

At the Bartholdi Museum, housed in his family home, the plight of the Alsatians is on display as much as the bronze models of the artist's most famous works, which include a 73-foot sandstone lion and a light-up fountain at the US Capitol. Many of his allegorical representations depict fighters or victims of various wars in a classical, muscular style. Yet there's one that romanticizes the life of the vintner, portraying a boy gleefully chugging wine.

The museum also conveys a life of privilege for the son of a lawyer and landowner who split his time between Paris and Colmar. The ceiling of the dining room, for instance, is decorated with Japanese and Chinese dishware. "His mother," according to the English audio guide, "fully supported the artistic career of her cherished angel."

The top floor is set aside for that statue in New York, actually titled "Liberty Enlightening the World." Glass cases hold several clay models of early designs, showing that Lady Liberty could have taken a much different pose. In one, the female figure seems relaxed, leaning backward as she rests her weight on one leg. Another's hair is covered by a cloth, looking more like a nun than the familiar, star-crowned final copy. The exhibit includes photos of

workers in France hammering 300 sheets of copper to the steel frame of the statue, which was shipped off in pieces, as well as a life-size cast of an ear that Bartholdi kept in his personal collection. Gustav Eiffel of Parisian-tower fame gets a nod for taking over as architect long before it was dedicated in 1886.

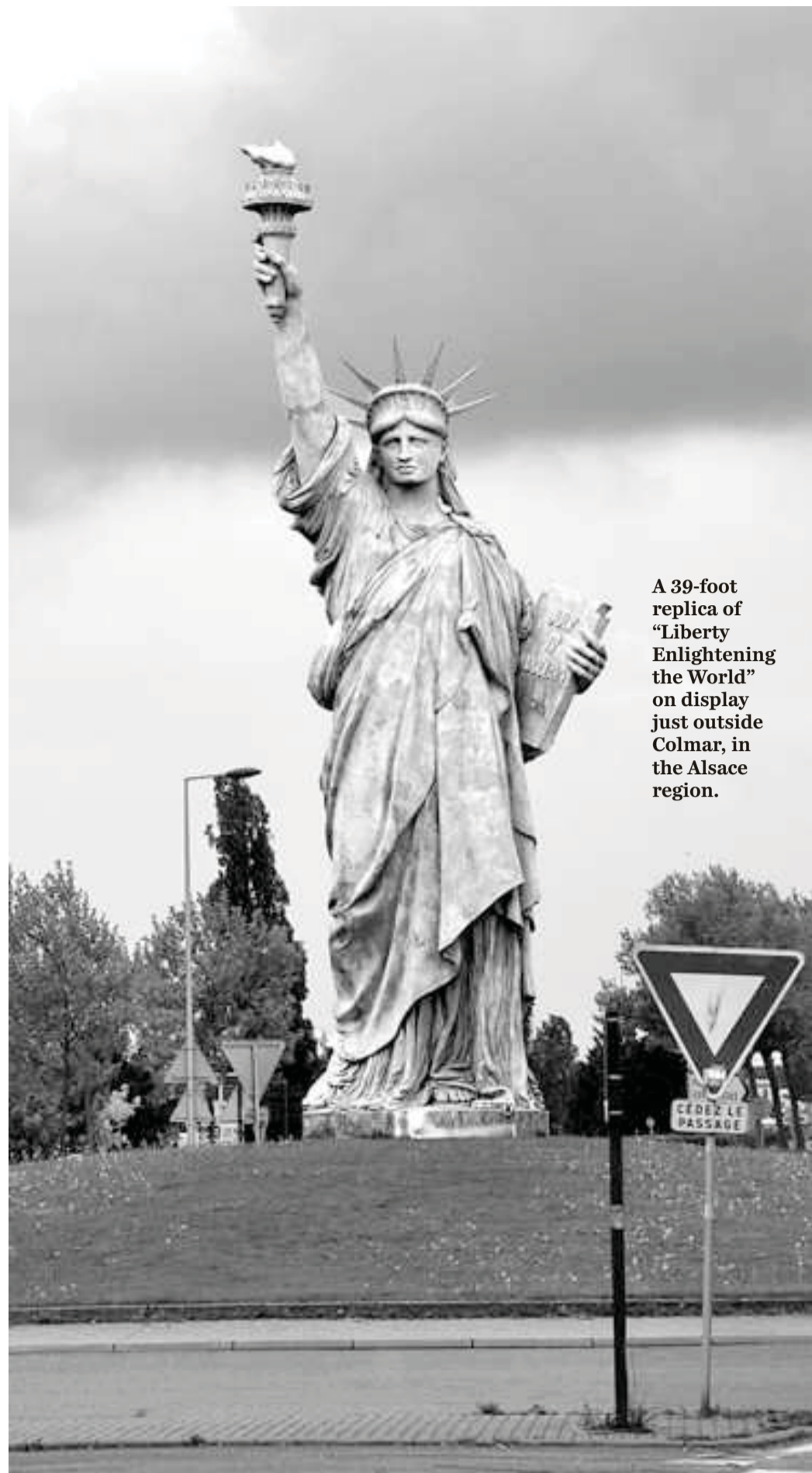
The museum visit took less than an hour, leaving ample time for me to explore, so I trailed behind a miniature tourist trolley that putt-putted its way into the Tanner's District. The neighborhood is across the Lauch from the area known as the Little Venice of Alsace, a bit of a misnomer since there's really only one canal.

It's alluring just the same, and it's practically mandatory to sit outside a cafe for at least one glass of light, dry Pinot Gris. I obliged at canal-side Restaurant Au Koïffus, whose name shows that the Alsatian dialect shares more in common with German than French. As I snacked on a tarte flambée, sort of an Alsatian pizza with onion and bacon, tourists floated by in low-sided wooden boats on a lazy, half-hour canal ride across town, periodically ducking under foot bridges.

On my way out of town, a shopkeeper, Natasha, lured me inside with a free macaron for the road. The heart-shaped treat at Maison Alsacienne de Biscuiterie looked like it would be dry as a butter cookie, but was so flavorful and chewy it was closer to strawberry bubble gum. One clearly wasn't enough, and as Natasha said, neither was one day in town.

"Colmar represents what it is to be Alsatian," she said. "It's a real gem, a pearl!"

Albert Stumm can be reached at albert@albertstumm.com.



ALBERT STUMM FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

A 39-foot replica of "Liberty Enlightening the World" on display just outside Colmar, in the Alsace region.

HERE

THE ART OF MARSDEN HARTLEY IN MAINE

Lovers of art and nature won't want to miss the new exhibit, "Marsden Hartley's Maine," opening at the Colby College Museum of Art (July 8-Nov. 12). Presented in collaboration with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the exhibition showcases the American painter's lifelong artistic engagement with his home state. Approximately 90 paintings and drawings demonstrate Hartley's expressive range, from Post-Impressionist landscapes made in the early 1900s to folk-inspired depictions of the state's inhabitants, rugged coastline, and Mount Katahdin. Free. www.colby.edu/museum/exhibition/view/upcoming. Extend your visit to Maine by retracing Hartley's footsteps. At VisitMaine.com, a map traces the locations that inspired the artist, along with suggested itineraries and sight-seeing, lodging, and dining recommendations. visitmaine.com/things-to-do/arts-and-culture/the-art-of-marsden-hartley

YIDDISH MUSIC FEST

Oy! It's time to get off your tushes and shlep out to Amherst for Yidstock

2017, a festival of new Yiddish music (July 13-16). Now in its sixth year, Yidstock celebrates the ever-evolving nature of the genre with a diverse range of musicians who weave together elements from traditional Jewish music, jazz, Americana, and other styles. This year's festivities include a full schedule of talks, readings, singing, dancing, and instrumental workshops. Concert schedule features Eleanor Reissa & Frank London's Klezmer Brass All-Stars; Hankus Netsky and Eden MacAdam-Somer Duo, performing Yiddish and Hassidic song and klezmer dance tunes; Andy Statman Trio's contemporary-klezmer fusion; and more. Events take place at the Yiddish Book Center, the world's first Yiddish museum. Pass to all concerts: \$236; Individual events \$10-\$50. 413-256-4900. www.yiddishbookcenter.org/yidstock

THERE

BURNING MAN EXHIBIT IN VIRGINIA
Fans of the annual Burning Man festival can experience Nevada's magical desert atmosphere in Virginia this summer when the Hermitage Museum & Gardens in Norfolk debuts The Art of Burning Man, the first-ever exhibition dedicated to the festival (June

3-Oct. 14). The museum's 12 acres of gardens, forest, and wetlands will host large-scale indoor and outdoor sculptures and interactive installations from six of Burning Man's artist teams: Michael Garlington, Charles Gadeken, James Peterson, Bree Hylkema, and Sean Orlando of Five Ton Crane, Kirsten Berg, Gregg Fleishman, and Christopher Schardt. Many works have been exhibited at Burning Man in recent years, and some serve as companion pieces to artworks at the 2017 festival. Open Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Burning Man Nights on select Thursdays, 7-10 p.m. 757-423-2052, thehermitagemuseum.org/art-burning-man

LITERARY BARS IN NEW YORK

A new book explores bars in the Big Apple, specifically watering holes where favorite writers from the 20th century congregated. "Storied Bars of New York," by New York native and Boston-area writer Delia Cabe, is a celebration of New York's spirited literary past, as well as a handy field guide to taverns, cocktail bars, and bookish watering holes. Cabe guides you to spots such as the White Horse Tavern, where Dylan Thomas, Delmore Schwartz and Norman Mailer all held court; The Algonquin, where literary legends of the 1920's gathered (where you can still sip a signature Dorothy Parker gin cocktail); The Odeon, immortalized on the cover of Jay McInerney's Bright Lights, Big City; and many more. Divided by neighborhood, the book provides helpful visitors' information, tips on where to find the best reading series in the city, and recipes for signature house cocktails, such as Hunter S. Thompson's favorite strawberry daiquiri at Pete's Tavern. \$22.95 books. www.norton.com/books/978-1-68268-046-9

EVERYWHERE

REDUCE JET LAG

Jet lag got you down? The Jet Lag Calculator aims to reduce the exhaustive



and irritable effects of long-distance travel with a formula for getting your body clock in sync with the time at your destination. Simply enter your departure and arrival times into the system, plus travel times and dates — as well as your usual sleep patterns — and an algorithm calculates a specific schedule for when to seek or avoid light before your trip. The plan takes

into account the number of time zones you will cross, as well as whether you are traveling east or west. The UK website doesn't list all US cities (Boston is omitted), but JFK in New York can be substituted by northeast travelers. Also answers questions about the nature of jet lag, how long it takes to recover, which direction of travel is worse, does age affect symptoms, and more. Free. www.web-blinds.com/resources/jet-lag-calculator

COMBINATION TENT-HAMMOCK

The Lawson Blue Ridge Camping Hammock can be suspended as a hammock or set up on the ground as a tent, allowing more shelter options based on your camping terrain. No need to worry about that feeling of being enveloped by most hammocks; a spreader bar and pole system keep the sleeping area flat and taut. Includes attached no-see-um bug netting; rain-fly to help you stay dry; two interior storage pockets; O-ring in ceiling for hanging light; and stuff sack. \$199. Hammock straps \$29. www.lawsonhammock.com

