

**Media Contact:**Jeff Reiter
Cantigny Park
630.260.8218jreiter@mccormickfoundation.org**CANTIGNY EXPANDS FRENCH CELEBRATION WITH NEW EVENT***French Picnic Under the Stars debuts prior to 10th Annual French Connection Day*

WHEATON, IL, July 24, 2017 — This year, Cantigny Park's annual tribute to France begins a day early, with a festive French-themed evening combining food, wine, live music and stargazing.

[French Picnic Under the Stars](#), a first-time event, is set for Saturday, August 12, from 6 to 11 pm on the Cantigny Parade Field. The park's 23-foot Eiffel Tower will be illuminated, adding a touch of Paris. [Michel Domingue & Co.](#) will entertain with Chicago-style jazz and members of the [Naperville Astronomical Association](#) will assist guests in viewing stars and planets through telescopes. If the sky is clear, it should be an ideal night to witness the Perseid Meteor Shower. Inside the Visitors Center, guests can enjoy a presentation by NAA about the rare total solar eclipse coming up on August 21.

Complete French-themed picnics for two, prepared by Cantigny, feature artisanal meats, cheeses and flatbreads, with wine pairings (optional) from [Gérard Bertrand](#). Pricing and ordering information are online at [Cantigny.org](#).

French Picnic guests will have Cantigny Park all to themselves. Special event admission applies, at \$15 per car (\$12 for Cantigny members). More details, including the evening's agenda, is online at [Cantigny.org](#).

On Sunday, August 13, Cantigny will host [French Connection Day](#), a signature event now in its 10th year.

French Connection Day at Cantigny commemorates an important chapter in the life of [Robert R. McCormick](#), Cantigny's benefactor. In 1918, at age 37, Colonel McCormick commanded an artillery unit in the Battle of Cantigny in France as a member of the U.S. Army's First Division. It was America's first significant victory in World War I. Upon returning to Wheaton, the Colonel renamed his estate after the tiny French village that he and his fellow soldiers helped liberate from German occupation.

In his will, McCormick (1880-1955) established Cantigny "as a public park and museum for the recreation, instruction and welfare of the people of the State of Illinois."

French Connection Day is a prime opportunity for families to enjoy the Colonel's extraordinary 500-acre gift. Attractions and activities will include:

- French Open Air Market by [Bensidoun USA](#)
- Music by [Traveler's Dream](#)

- Can-Can dancers
- Strolling mime, accordionist and vocalist
- French food at *Le Jardin* restaurant
- French yard game petanque (courtesy of [Chicago Petanque Club](#))
- Kids' craft: Create your own portrait (\$3)
- Storytime with Madeline
- Beer and wine garden
- 23-foot Eiffel Tower!

French Connection Day is a free festival. Parking is \$10 per vehicle. Event hours are 10 am to 4 pm.

For more information about Cantigny Park please visit [Cantigny.org](#).

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About Cantigny Park

Cantigny Park, part of the Robert R. McCormick Foundations, is the 500-acre Wheaton estate of Col. Robert R. McCormick (1880-1955). It is home to the McCormick House, First Division Museum (reopening August 26), formal gardens, picnic grounds, walking trails, and a Visitors Center with banquet and dining facilities. More information, including hours, directions, and upcoming events, is online at [Cantigny.org](#). Cantigny Golf, adjacent to the park, features a 27-hole championship golf course, clubhouse with banquet and dining rooms, Cantigny Golf Academy, and the 9-hole Cantigny Youth Links. For more information, visit [CantignyGolf.com](#).