



CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE

Of Western Illinois

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Moline, Illinois

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www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org

June 2002

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Center for Belgian Culture

Open Wed. + Sat.

1:00 - 4:00 pm



Calendar of Upcoming Events

June 1	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 am-12:00 pm
June 1	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00-4:00 pm
June 10	Annual dinner meeting/auction	5:00 pm social; 5:30 pm dinner
July 6	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 am-12:00 pm
July 6	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00-4:00 pm
July 11	700 th Anniversary of Battle of the Golden Spurs	
July 21	Belgian Independence Day	
Aug 3	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 am-12:00 pm
Aug 3	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00-4:00 pm
Oct ?	Raisin Bread Bakeoff	



Annual Auction/Dinner Meeting - June 10th

Bonnie Newman informs us of the latest information regarding the Annual Dinner. The menu will include fried chicken, pork loin, cheesy potato casserole, green beans, and desert (Texas sheet cake, probably). A bargain for \$7.00 per person. The schedule is as follows: Social: 5:00 - 5:30 pm; Dinner: 5:30 pm and Auction following the dinner.

Reservations are required and must be received by Bonnie **no later than June 3rd**. You can phone Bonnie at 309.521.8604 to reserve your spot for the festivities.

You will notice that we mention the 700th Anniversary of the Battle of the Golden Spurs on our Calendar. But how many of us know the whole story about this significant snapshot of Belgium's history? I certainly did not. So, it seems appropriate to provide a synopsis of that auspicious Flemish skirmish. Here goes, with this month's "From the Editor's Keyboard..."



The Battle of Courtrai, aka the Battle of the Golden Spurs - July 11th 1302

The National Holiday of the Flemish Community in the European country known as Belgium is held every year on the 11th of July. Many of the people in Belgium know why this particular day is so significant. When they were at school they learned about the Middle Ages and a battle in which the Flemings long ago defeated the French. But it stops there most of the time. Very few people internationally realize the importance of this battle. And it is indeed important, for a Flemish loss would have been the death knell for a nationalist spirit that still prevails in today's Belgium. It is because of this great battle that Belgium exists as a nation and a culture. That distant battle from long ago was the Battle of the Golden Spurs.

France, England and Spain became strong national states in a Medieval environment in which Belgium existed only as an area ruled by geographically dispersed local lords. Those lords ruled over not a landscape called Belgium, but rather over counties (ruled by counts) and duchies (ruled by dukes). Flanders, Brabant, Liege, Hainaut – all were under the control of local lords. Caesar alluded to the fierce "Belgi" tribes of northwest Gaul in 58 B.C., but the word "Belgium" scarcely existed and was not again to be heard until the year 1830.

The Counts of Flanders ruled over the northwest quarter of what is now Belgium – a task that seems easier than it was. For the counts had to deal with petulant French monarchs in Paris, Englishmen who hated the French, and the local vassals who seemed in a constant state of uprising. In 1302, the unceasing upheaval finally resulted in King Philip the Fair deciding to do away with Flanders, arrest its Count and incorporate the rich assets of Flanders into France. Aha – we have the basis for a real battle.

Jan Breydel, a weaver, and butcher Pieter de Coninck (whose statues now stand in the Market Square of Bruges) led their fellow laborers/servants in a murderous rebellion. These commoners went into battle armed for the most part with "goedendags" (how-do-you-do's) – small spiked balls of iron on four-foot chains which they swung violently in circles above their heads. Those ugly contraptions were, amazingly, enough to wage war against some 2,000 French knights outfitted in shiny armor, astride muscular stallions.

The battle lasted for more than three hours; at the end, the most magnificent army of Europe was defeated. That night, several hundred golden spurs were retrieved from the heels of the fallen French knights. (Only knights were allowed to wear gold-plated spurs; squires only wore normal or at the best

silver-plated spurs.) Thus was born a cultural icon: the "Battle of the Golden Spurs". The Flemings had felt oppressed by the French elite. And that oppression awakened a consciousness of self, a consciousness of Flemish identity, a consciousness that lives today in the hearts and souls of all Belgians.

Marlene Shattuck's uncle in Belgium sent her this view of the famous Battle, in the eyes of a current Belgian living the heritage in Belgium:

"The"battle of the golden spurs" was a battle between the Flemish people and the French on 11th of July 1302.

The French were almost all knights and wore golden spurs to ride their horses. As they were defeated by the Flemish (the place was "de groeningekouter" at Kortrijk), the spurs were taken of the dead bodies and were placed in a church at Kortrijk.

The date still remains the Flemish national holiday. The leaders of the Flemish were Jan Breydel, Pieter De Coninck and Gwijde of Dampierre. Famous names and still known by everybody over here."

And now you know the rest of the story...

P.S. For those serious Belgian history buffs, there is a plethora of printed material available at the Center that addresses the Belgium story. Some information from this article was taken from A Masterpiece Called Belgium by Arthur Frommer. Other tidbits were gleaned from various web pages. Google.com is an excellent search site. Happy researching!

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION ...

The **June schedule** for gift counter and host/hostess volunteers is as follows:

Date	Gift Counter	Host/Hostess
Saturday, June 1	Mary Rose DeCoster (am)	Maurine Schweitzer (pm)
Wednesday, June 5	Gen Vrombaut	Dorene Mummert
Saturday, June 8	Margaret Wadsworth	Bill Wadsworth
Wednesday, June 12	Mary Lou Andre	Clara VandeViere
Saturday, June 15	Joanne Hoyt	Al Hoyt
Wednesday, June 19	Elaine Hendrickx	Bob Hendrickx
Saturday, June 22	Barb Van Nevel	Patrick Van Nevel
Wednesday, June 26	Bev Francque	Stan Francque
Saturday, June 29	Georgia Slininger	Louie Slininger



As mentioned in last month's newsletter, **Mary and Larry Lorensen** are chairing the **John Deere Classic Birdies for Charity** this year for the CBC. Unfamiliar with the agenda? Simply put, it's an easy way to raise funds for your favorite charity: the CBC scholarship program. Individuals can pledge and promise to donate any dollar amount for each birdie made during the Classic. Pledges in

any amount are welcome and appreciated. After the tournament, you will be mailed a notice of your pledged amount due date. Mary and Larry have additional information to help you determine a pledge amount. If you are interested, Mary and Larry will be at the June and July waffle breakfasts and the Annual Dinner. Or you can call the Lorensen's at 309.762.6218.



International Festival at Black Hawk College

The ninth International Festival was held at Black Hawk College in Moline this past April. The Festival is a fundraiser for the Black Hawk College scholarship fund. These monies allow more international students to enter English as a second language classes, helping them to transition into a new (American) culture.

In general terms, the Festival was a success that enlightened people of all ages about the various pockets of culture that exist within our singular Quad Cities community.

More specifically, we had CBC members who contributed to that success. **Evelyn and Al VanPuyvelde** participated in a style show and dance presentation, while **Art Holevoet** put together an exhibit of Belgian culture. As the BHC chairs so aptly stated in their memo to festival participants: "The Festival is a special event because of you. You gave us your time, shared with us your expertise, and joined with us selflessly. This attitude is rare in our society these days."

We can all add our "thanks" to these flagbearers of Belgian culture.



SPEAKING OF THANKS ...

It's come to our attention that numerous members have donated items to the Center. Items run the gamut from beautiful lacework to handcrafted handkerchiefs from World War II to prayer books to holy cards to catalogs/books of Charles Catteau exhibitions to Liber Memorialis books. And the list goes on.

Some specific folks to thank include: Robert and Reva DeBock, Georgia VanMelkebeke, John and Gen Vrombaut, and Ray Waeyaert. And then we have some truly dedicated Belgians who donated items all the way from Mesa, Arizona: Robert and Shirley Staelens.

This is only a partial list of those who have donated items that depict their Belgian cultural heritage. To those who we have not specifically acknowledged, rest assured that your donations are no less important. Many, many **heartfelt thanks to all who have donated**. And yes, donations are *always* welcome.



FYI... Meghan Ahern, daughter of Susan and John Ahern, Silvis, will be a Rotary Exchange Student in Neupre, Belgium this year. Meghan leaves in August 2002.

Reggie Schrader, CBC member from Glen Ellyn, Illinois, is recovering from surgery at Central Dupage Hospital in Winfield, Illinois. We wish her a speedy recovery!



FAMILY TREES ... LEAVES OF LIFE ... (continued)

It seems that attention to family history has skyrocketed throughout our society. Perhaps we've all come to realize the importance of our nuclear and extended families as a result of 9-11. The CBC genealogy class that Kay and Gabe Verstraete conducted was well attended and very successful. A barometer of curiosity throughout the CBC.

As a result of that perceived interest, the Verstraetes have graciously offered to once again assist CBC genealogy junkies. This time, Gabe and Kay will be available at the CBC on **Wednesday** afternoon, **June 12th**, to help members enter their family data into the Center's Family Treemaker computer database. For the technologically-challenged, the Verstraetes could be persuaded to enter the data for members.

If you are interested, **please call** Gabe and Kay at 309.755.8812 **to schedule** an hour appointment.



Waffles, Waffles, Who's Got the Waffles??

The May Waffle Breakfast was held May 4th. Gene Fowler reports that a beautiful Spring day (no rain, for a change) contributed to a good turnout. Workers for the breakfast were: Marvin and Mary Brunning, Gene Fowler, Stan and Bev Francque, Marian Knock, Kim Kochuyt, Scott Raes, Evenly VanPuyvelde, Bill and Mary Wadsworth, and a returning Girl Scout volunteer, Marti Davenport. In last month's issue we reported that Marti would not be helping with the breakfasts any longer, but she had so much fun that she wanted to come back. What a testimonial for (youthful) volunteering while having fun at the same time. This month, thanks also to Bob and Elaine Hendrickx for the pre-frying of sausage and Friday setup. And as always, *Thanks* to all workers and patrons. **The next Waffle breakfast is scheduled for Saturday morning, June 1st from 8-12.**



BELGIAN BITS

For the Belgium history buffs among you, the following key dates could prove interesting. Since the present state of Belgium has only been a nation since 1830, it seems appropriate to focus on the more recent history. (Thanks to Dolores Bultinck for the *Newcomer* magazine, the source for this data.)

- ❖ In 1815, the Battle of Waterloo was fought near the village of Waterloo, 18 kilometers south of Brussels. An Allied Army led by the Duke of Wellington defeated Napoleon's French army. The Netherlands was given control of the area formerly known as the Austrian Netherlands.
 - ❖ In 1830, a revolution broke out in Brussels during an opera at the Monnaie theatre. After four days of fierce fighting, Belgium gained independence from the Netherlands.
 - ❖ In 1914, Belgium was invaded by Germany at the start of the First World War. Most of the country was occupied, apart from the small area in the west of Flanders.
 - ❖ In 1940, the country was invaded by Germany and occupied until 1944.
- This should wet your appetite; more to follow in future issues.

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AIR MAIL
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