



CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois

712 - 18th Avenue
Moline, Illinois
(309) 762-0167

April 2003

www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org

40 years of Celebrating Belgian Heritage – 1963-2003

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bavn1@aol.com

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Center for Belgian Culture

Open Wed. + Sat.
1:00-4:00 p.m.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

Apr 5	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 am-12:00 pm
Apr 5	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00-4:00 pm
Apr 9	Volunteer Dinner	6:00-8:00 pm
Apr 21	Board Meeting	5:30-6:30 pm
May 3	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 am-12:00 pm
May 3	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00-4:00 pm
May 5	Board Retreat	5:30-8:30 pm
May 19	Board Meeting	5:30-6:30 pm
May 26	Memorial Day	
	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 am-12:00 pm
Jun 7	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 am-12:00 pm
Jun 7	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00-4:00 pm
Jun 14	Ambassador van Daele and Consul General Loncke visit	Time to be determined

From the Editor's Keyboard ...

As noted in last month's issue, Patrick Van Nevel was invited to the Belgian Network Conference held on 20-21 February in Los Angeles. Patrick, as you know, was among some 70+ attendees including 23 Honorary Consuls and 10 Foreign Trade Advisors. We promised an update after we discussed the Conference with Pat, so here goes.

Patrick stated that he was honored to represent our area and the CBC and have the opportunity to visit with Belgian officials working both in the U.S. and in Belgium. Having the occasion to visit with the diplomats and discuss current issues, both on the political and economic side, gave Patrick a greater appreciation for the dedication and work performed by our career diplomats and promoters of trade. The tremendous historical knowledge shared by Ambassador van Daele, Consul General Loncke and the other Consuls present at the Conference underscored the importance of dialogue and communication in a global world.

It is interesting that this was only the second time in the history of Belgium's diplomatic and consular presence in the United States that the members of the official and unofficial networks came together.

Patrick took the opportunity to promote the Quad Cities with materials provided by the Quad City Development Group. In addition, he took with him an invitation to the Ambassador to visit and the Consul General to re-visit the Quad Cities.

From the personal standpoint, Patrick was honored to have a visit with His Royal Highness Prince Phillippe. In addition, both Pat and his wife Barb were extremely honored to have a pleasant conversation with Princess Mathilde. Barb tested her language skills and made Patrick very proud when she introduced herself to the Princess in Dutch. During the conversation, Princess Mathilde was interested and a bit surprised to learn that we have an estimated 15,000 people of Belgian descent in the Quad Cities.

From the official perspective, the Conference covered all areas of cooperation among the different parts of the Belgian network in the United States. Presentations by various Belgian government officials helped to bring about a constructive and forward looking exchange of ideas. The Conference was a conduit for information flow on economic and political issues that cross international boundaries. The Global Community at its best.

The economists/business leaders among you will find it interesting that the trade balance Belgium-United States shows a trade surplus in 2002, which has not happened since 1989. Statistics show that the United States is 5th on Belgium's export customer list, while the U.S. is 6th on Belgium's supplier list. Did you know that the exports from Belgium to the U.S. in 2002 consisted primarily of chemical products; gems and precious metals; machines and mechanical, electrical and electronic devices; and transport material? Another interesting tidbit: Belgium imports from the U.S. in 2002 were dominated by chemical products, mechanical machines, and precious metals. With all of these materials flowing between the two nations, it is not surprising that economics is often at the heart of the Belgian-U.S. relations and conferences.

But those relations also focus on the human element. And so did the Conference. Conference coordinators took the opportunity to say "thank you" for a job well done by Honorary Consuls and Foreign Trade Advisors. It is the personal commitment, availability, and willingness to share knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences, and time that make those representatives of Belgian culture so important regardless of the task at hand. Reminiscent of loyal members of the CBC of Western Illinois.

All in all, the Conference is yet another example of successful cooperative efforts when Belgians reach out, whether within the macrocosm of international activities or the microcosm of Western Illinois.



Special Belgian Visitors are Coming to Town

As a result of on-going discussions, Ambassador Frans van Daele and our Consul General Dirk Loncke from Chicago will be visiting the Quad Cities on Saturday, June 14th. It is truly an honor to host such prestigious representatives of the Belgian

government and culture. A tentative schedule includes lunch with the Mayors of the Quad Cities, Quad City Development Group officials, and business partners followed perhaps by an Open House at the CBC. Final details will be published in future newsletter issues.



Waffles, Waffles, Who's Got the Waffles?

The monthly waffle breakfast was held on March 1st and was very successful. We do not have the names of workers at press time, but rest assured that all of you are thanked many times over. The next waffle breakfast is scheduled for April 5th.

In a related issue, there is a continuing opportunity to volunteer your expertise and/or elbow grease. Whether as a host/co-host, a set-up or clean up person, or a server – your time and talents would be appreciated. If you are interested in participating, please let an Officer/Board Member know.

**Calling All Volunteers!
Volunteer Dinner**

ALL volunteers are invited to the **Volunteer Dinner** scheduled for **Wednesday, April 9th at 6:00 p.m.** at the Center. Volunteers are those who help the Center in any capacity, such as hosting on the afternoons that we are open, helping with waffle breakfasts, working at the gift counter, etc. Please join the festivities.

You can make your reservations by calling Jim and Sandy DeSchinckel at 757.8911, or you can sign up at the Center. Please reserve your spot by April 2nd. The Belgian Village will again be supplying sandwiches for the meal, the Center will be furnishing refreshments, and your Board Members will be providing deserts. All in all, this dinner qualifies as a "not to be missed" event.

As we recognize the volunteering that is done at the Center, I will take the liberty of quoting from one of our President's Corner articles: "**met een hartelijk dank voor Uw inspanningen**" – with a heartfelt thanks for your efforts.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION ...

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

Date	Gift Counter	Host/Hostess
Wednesday, April 2	Jon + Gen Vrombaut	Dorene Mummert
Saturday, April 5	Mary Rose De Coster (am)	Norma Manning (pm)
Wednesday, April 9	Mary Lou Andrae	Clara Van De Veire
Saturday, April 12	Margaret Wadsworth	Bill Wadsworth
Wednesday, April 15	Georgia Slininger	Louie Slininger
Saturday, April 19	Joanne Hoyt	Al Hoyt
Wednesday, April 23	Bev Francque	Stan Francque
Saturday, April 26	Barb Van Nevel	Patrick Van Nevel
Wednesday, April 30	Evelyn VanPuyvelde	Al VanPuyvelde

Please call Pat Van Nevel at 332-8752 as soon as possible if there is a conflict or if you need to change your scheduled time.



Board Retreat

The Board has planned a retreat for Monday, May 5th from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at the Center. A light meal will be served. As with regular Board meetings, members are invited to attend. It is requested that members call Pat Van Nevel at 332.8752 (leave a message if no answer) by Saturday, May 3rd at the latest so we can plan accordingly.

Address Books ...

We have received a note telling us that Gene and Peg Horton have moved again. They are now located at 1810 Minnesota Boulevard; St. Cloud, MN 56304 and can be reached at phone number 320.203.2780. Enjoy those new surroundings, Gene and Peg.

Snowbirds who migrate elsewhere for the winter are reminded to **inform Marlene** about your semi-annual **change of address**. Please call Marlene at 309.234.5486 with your Midwest address. And Welcome Home!



Hands Across the Water

Art Holevoet tells us that there is an opportunity to share one month out of your summer with a Belgian high school student. A 16-year-old young man would like to visit the U.S. for the month of July. It would be preferable for your household to include a teen-ager who could help in hosting the student. This may well be a summer that you (and he) will never forget -- quite an experience for all involved. If you are interested in hosting this young man, please call Art at 309.936.7621.



CBC Scholarship Program

It is not too late for interested high school seniors to apply for one of three \$500 scholarships that the CBC will be awarding for next academic year. Local area high schools should have application information, or you can pick up information at the Center. If you have any questions, you can call Bob Vande Wiele, Scholarship Chairman, at 792.8237. Submission deadline is April 12, 2003.



BELGIAN BITS

Since the focus of this issue has been the Belgian Network Conference held in February, it is appropriate that we pass along some "Facts from Belgium" provided by the Embassy of Belgium in Washington, DC. As all nations seek to be part of a Global (economic) Community, business infrastructures and opportunities become more and more important. Some interesting Belgian (Business) Bits include:

- ❖ Belgium has the second highest rail density network worldwide.
- ❖ The traffic congestion index (vehicles per miles of road) is lower than neighboring countries.
- ❖ The Port of Antwerp is the second largest seaport in Europe and the fourth largest in the world, with more than 130 million tons of cargo traffic in 2001.
- ❖ The Brussels Airport is the fifth largest cargo airport in Europe and is the fastest handling and distribution center in the European Union.
- ❖ Belgium has the world's highest cable penetration rate (over 90%) for television and radio.
- ❖ Belgium is the European frontrunner in broadband Internet use, with 38% of regular home Internet users having broadband connection and 9% of all adult Belgians having a fast Internet connection.
- ❖ Belgium ranks among the top 10 countries world wide for loyalty, quality of science and education teaching in schools, percentage of population (more than 40%) who have at least attained higher education, and a multilingual workforce.
- ❖ Innovation has brought about impressive discoveries, particularly in life sciences. Over time, four Belgians have received the Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology.
- ❖ Today, Belgium has about 100 companies involved in biotechnology, with a net revenue of \$1.6 billion. The biotech sector in Belgium experienced a growth of 30% in revenues in 2000.
- ❖ In sum, these Belgian Bits show that Belgium is the "Ideal Location." But then you already knew that, didn't you?

The focus of this portion of "Belgian Bits" has been business and economics. It's time to turn to lighter fare, compliments of a fascinating Belgian ethnic cuisine web page -- http://www.bpe.com/food/ethnic_cusine/belgium.htm. The following excerpt should literally wet your appetite for more.

"Belgium is a highly industrialized country with only 5 percent of the working population involved in agriculture. Even so, they produce 165 different kinds of cheeses and many notable food products. Through history, the country has been invaded and ruled by many other people-the Romans, Vikings, French, Spanish, Austrians, Dutch, English, and Germans-and many great and famous battles have been fought on Belgium soil. This land has become a meeting point for the Germanic cultures of northern Europe and the Latin cultures of the south, and this has influenced their cuisine.

CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE
OF WESTERN ILLINOIS, INC.
712 - 18th Ave., Moline, IL 61265



Paul & Marie Callens
Waterstraat 18
8740 Pittem, Belgium

AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

Cooking techniques and ingredients of the invaders were acquired by the natives, who by the Middle Ages developed a cuisine of their own. Today Belgians proudly say their food is cooked with French finesse and served with German generosity.

The country is famous for its mussels and frites (French-fried potatoes), waffles, and endive. Fine chocolates are a passion and exquisite chocolatiers dot the marketplace of every city. More beer is consumed than wine by the populace. Many beers are crafted by small artisanal brewers whose family recipes and techniques go back generations. Beer laces the national dish, carbonnades flamandes, a Flemish beef stew.

Belgians love potatoes and are fond of game and meat. Charcuterie, a basket of bread, and beer often make a meal. Fish and seafood are important. Hearty soups play a big role, and the so called waterzooies are the most typical. Medieval cookery still influences the cuisine with today's prevalence of condiments, mustards, vinegars, and dried fruits that lend a sweet-sour and sweet-salty flavor to dishes. Almonds and spices are used in abundance, and fresh herbs lace appetizers, salads, meats, and even desserts.

Few cookbooks exist, but the newly published volume, Everybody Eats Well in Belgium by Ruth Van Werebeek (Workman) covers recipes from three generations of her family."