



CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

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www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



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Center Update

As of the first of January, the Center for Belgian Culture has officially gotten a new home. It's in the 1600 block of 7th Street, across the street from DeRoo Funeral Home. Utilities to the building have been put in our name. Bids are being sought for painting, some floor work, and for moving the major contents of the old building to the new one.

With the new home comes a more visible location, better parking (including the DeRoo lot when not being used for a visitation or funeral), and handicap accessibility.

There are still several items that are being discussed with the new landlord, but it is hoped that these will be worked out by the time you read this. It is hoped that by the end of February or before, the CBC will be totally up and running at the new location.

Survey Responses

We received a total of 87 survey responses, although not every category was filled out. On the question of how important was it that the CBC stay on/around 7th Street, 53% felt it not important, but that we should stay in Moline. 39% felt it very important that we stay in the 7th Street neighborhood.

Regarding the question about renting or purchasing, 52% said that we should rent, and 41% felt we should purchase a new location, while 7% said we should purchase our current location.

Features that respondents would like to see in a new location were: a more visible location (24%), better parking (38%), a safer neighborhood (9%), a larger facility (9%), and "other" (9%), which included more seating, handicap accessible, more food/drink options, and the sharing of a building.

Of those willing to donate time to a new location, 67% stated that they would, and 77% answered that they would be willing to pledge \$50 or more towards a purchase.

Don't forget your Valentine on the 14th

Lincoln's Birthday is February 12th

Washington's Birthday is February 17th



My Great Aunt

Several months ago, CBC archivist Millie Kale gave me a clipping from the February 7, 1979, *MetroNews* and asked if I had ever seen it. The article featured my great aunt, PHARAILDE COOPMAN, and yes, I had seen it, but that was so many years ago that I brought it home to read it again.

At the time the article appeared in the paper, Tanta was 93 years old. The reporter focused on her background, her lace making skills, and her undiminished vitality. She was born in Wingene, Belgium and was one of 13 children. She married Alphonse Coopman, my grandfather's brother, and came to Moline in 1922. Unfortunately, Alphonse died in 1941.

Already skilled at making lace, she presented two sets of alter linens, trimmed with her handmade lace, to her parish church, Sacred Heart, and another set to Holy Trinity, during her first year in America.

At the 1933-34 World's Fair in Chicago, Tanta demonstrated her lace making skills at a booth set up by Belgium.

When my brother and I were little (yes, those who know me know I was never "little"), our father had us go to church with him and would then take us to visit Tanta, especially at Christmas and Easter. As we got older, Tanta would join us at all our holiday meals. Later on, as my brother's two children became a little older, Tanta became a favorite of theirs, and hers.

Why do I tell you about this? First, it hit me that it had been 35 years this month since that article had been written. Second, it brought back many memories of those visits after church and of the dinners we shared at holidays. Those memories would include my stopping at her apartment to pick up a raisin bread or two that she would bake each month; hearing her giggle as she watched a golf match on television and telling me she enjoyed watching "those men try to catch the little ball;" or her telling me how much fun she had grocery shopping with my mother and then having something to eat at the Belgian Village.

Perhaps the third reason is that much of what I know about Belgium life during the first World War came from Tanta. Her



Tanta Pharailde Coopman and her lace.

family owned a tavern in Wingene, and German soldiers commandeered that tavern and residence for their billet. She talked of how the officers made her and her family wash and press their uniforms, and how the younger "dog soldiers," the German draftees, thought the officers shouldn't do that. She related how both the Germans and the Allies bombed her village and destroyed many of its buildings. Yet through all the hardships that war brought to Belgium, her family and many of their neighbors managed to endure.

Learning about our heritage comes in many forms. While we can always read about history, nothing replaces talking with people who actually lived that history. I'm glad I had that opportunity.

News of the Membership

Sympathy is offered to the family of former member Marjorie DeDecker, 86, of Silvis and formerly Moline, who died January 10, 2014. She and her husband Jim were charter members of the Center and volunteered many hours. Jim played St. Nicholas and Marj made his robes. Also, our sympathy to **Fr. Jim DeBisschop** and his family on the passing on the death of their mother, **Faye DeBisschop**, who died January 16th at Unity Point-Trinity, Rock Island.

An Aesop Fable - Belgian Style

A father and his young son were harvesting plums; it was the Fall of the year. The son and father previously had had a discussion concerning the son's choice of companions, with whom he spent leisure time.

"These troublemaking friends will change you into one of them – a delinquent," reprimanded the father. "Already you disobey our rules, vandalize, and stay out too late!"

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Trappist Beer to be Brewed in the United States

A Cistercian monastery in the United States is gearing up to become the first outside the Europe to brew Trappist Beer. Currently Trappist beer is brewed at just eight places in the world, six of which are in Belgium. The financial daily 'De Tijd' reports that the American monks are receiving assistance from monks from Chimay.

The new beer will be brewed in the village of Spencer, in the state of Massachusetts. The Order of Cistercians has had a monastery in the village that is about an hour's drive from Boston for the past 60 years.

The monks there already produce a wide range of products including jam. They are now busy building a large brewery at the monastery. Their Belgian brothers from Chimay are on hand to assist and advise them.

The beer that will be brewed at Spencer will be given the "Authentic Trappist Product" label, a spokesman for the International Trappist Association confirms. The new beer will be 6.5% alcohol and is described as being light in color with a golden edge, robust with a hint of fruitiness, a dry aftertaste and a slightly bitter hop taste.

It is still unclear as to when the new beer will be launched. It is unlikely that it will be readily available here in Belgium.

(Thanks to *flandersnews.be*)

An Aesop Fable – Belgian Style

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"Instead, I will improve my comrades. They will follow my good example," retorted the son.

It was dusk and they hurried the picking. His father left a few bruised plums with the harvested fruit.

"Father, we should remove those spoiled plums, as they will cause the others to spoil," noted the son.

"Oh, it will be okay, a few won't damage the rest. We'll store the fruit in the cool cellar 'til Mother can preserve them," advised the father.

Toward the end of the week, the mother requested a peck of plums. Retrieving the fruit, the son noticed half of the plums unusable.

"Father left a few spoiled plums in the basket. Now most cannot be eaten! They should have been discarded," wailed the lad.

On hearing this lament, the father replied, "This is an example as to the consequence of keeping company with undesirable companions. You will become as one of them, not the reverse."

Just When You Thought Cheating at Sports Couldn't Get Any Lower

A South African laboratory that tested a number of Belgian racing pigeons has found traces of doping in samples taken from six of them. Traces of cocaine were even discovered in a sample taken from one of the prize birds.

The Belgian Pigeon Fanciers Association sent 20 samples taken from racing pigeons for testing to the national Horseracing Authority of Southern Africa's laboratory.

The results showed traces of drugs in no fewer than six birds. Perhaps most surprisingly of all, traces of cocaine were found in one of the birds tested. The National Chairman of the Pigeon Fanciers Association Stefaan Van Bockstaele and the association's Chairman of Sport Dirk Schreel were shocked when they received the test results from the lab.

Traces of the drug Mobistix were found in five of the birds tested, while the cocaine was found in the blood of the sixth. Mobistix is a medicine used by humans as a pain-killer and to combat fever. The drug also prevents inflammation.

All 20 samples had already been analyzed by a Belgian laboratory that found no traces of drugs in any of them. Normally two samples are taken, one is sent to a lab while the other is kept in case a second opinion is required.

If all goes to plan new doping rules should be in place before the start of the new pigeon racing season in 2014. As the samples sent to South Africa were anonymous the Pigeon Fanciers Association will not be able to take action against the owners of any of the pigeons.

(Thanks to *flandersnews.be*)

Robbery Has No Age Limit

An 85-year-old man from the Brussels municipality of Anderlecht, known as "the oldest thief," has been caught stealing from the collection box of a church in the East Flemish village of Hansbeke. Georges Pirard first hit the headlines several years ago when it was discovered that he was the culprit behind dozens of thefts from collection boxes at churches across Flanders. Mr Pirard took advantage of his free bus pass to visit and steal from churches dozens of kilometres from his Brussels home.

Now the Lowazone Local Police Service reports that the 85-year-old was caught while stealing from the collection box in the chapel of the parish church in Hansbeke. He was detained and is being held in custody at Ghent Prison. There was already a warrant for his arrest, as he had not returned to prison from a period of home leave.

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Belgium during WWI

The City of Brussels and the Broodhuis Museum have launched a website about life in the Belgian capital during the German occupation between 1914 and 1918. Later this year, an exhibition will open in the Broodhuis, on Brussels' central market square. That exhibition, "Brussels on German Time," will also center on everyday life in Brussels during the Great War.

With the focus of most of the Great War centenary events centering on the battlefields of West Flanders and the Somme, Brussels was keen to do something different. It was decided that an exhibition be organized to show what life was like for Brussels residents during the occupation.

The exhibition will open on August 21st and run until May 2015. The website, "Brussels at War 1914-1918," is on the Internet now at www.14-18.bruxelles.be and its pages are available in English.

The exhibition is aimed at people not familiar with the city's cultural heritage, the history of the Great War, or the city archive. Website visitors can learn how the people of Brussels coped with problems like food shortages and mass unemployment during the occupation.

The name given to the exhibition, "Brussels on German Time," refers to the change of time zone from GMT to Berlin time that was required by the German occupiers.

It Wasn't in the Chips

Only two months after it was installed, Belgium's first fully automatic chips machine has already been removed from its location in Molenbeek. It is said that the project is not profitable, but the firm that developed the machine denies this.

The machine was located at the entrance of a store in Molenbeek, Brussels. It allowed passers-by to fetch freshly baked French fries at any time of the day for 2.5 euros (about \$3.40). The chips machine was officially presented in mid-August, but has been removed after only two-and-one-half months.

"At the start, we had many curious people. However, we only sold one or two meals a day after that. It was an experiment, but it turned out not to be profitable. The machine will not return here", explains the man who runs the store.

For a couple of days, the chips robot was out of order. "We were promised we would get a text message when we had to add potatoes, but this didn't happen." However, the man believes there is hope for the owners. "I don't think the concept was bad, the machine was located at the wrong place. You would have to install it in a rail station, or at other very busy places."

(Thanks to flandersnews.be)