



# CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

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www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



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## Center Update

We're getting closer to opening in our new location at 1608 - 7th Street, Moline. The interior walls have been painted and the floor cleaned and waxed. Celie Donohue, Millie Kale, and Catherine VanHecke have spent many hours wrapping and boxing the numerous smaller items in preparation for the move and to save money in having a moving firm handle that job. Quotations have been received, and a local mover has been chosen to handle the large pieces of furniture and the display cases. The tentative date for the transfer of materials to our new home is April 4th. Once the large pieces are in their places at the new location, it will take a week or two to replace displays and to "decorate." Watch for a notice of our Open House coming soon.

## Waffle Breakfast Update

We know you've been missing those wonderfully malty Belgian waffles that have been served for years, topped with fruit and whipped cream. Don't start salivating yet, but waffles will be back the first Saturday of May. The waffle breakfast will be held, not at the CBC, but at the Friend's Circle on 18th Avenue, across the street from our old location.

Why there you ask? If we had purchased our old location or moved to a new location like we are in the process of doing, the City of Moline would require us to have a commercial kitchen if we wanted to serve waffles. That would only add cost for the move, and really only be used once a month. And face it; you don't wash paper plates, Styrofoam cups, and plastic knives and forks. So, we'll use facilities that already have commercial kitchens.

Remember, the first waffle breakfast will be **May 3rd**. Watch for a reminder and details in next month's newsletter. And if you can volunteer your help at the upcoming waffle breakfasts, please contact Mary Gardner-Karcher at (563) 332-4621.

## Scholarship Applications

The postmark deadline for both the CBC and Ruth Lambrick VanTieghem Scholarships is April 12th. Applications were sent to all area high schools and colleges in January. Should you have any questions or need a scholarship form, contact Steve Slininger at s.slininger@mchsi.com.

## News of the Membership

Sympathy is offered to **Al and Joan DeCap, Catherine VanHecke, Bob and Theresa Bailey, and Art and Linda VanHecke** on the passing of the DeCap's daughter, Jane Davis, 57, of Davenport, on February 22nd; **Margo and Gary Francque** on the death of Margo's mother, Marjorie Lannoo, 95, of Rock Island, on March 5th; and to the family of former long-time member **Clara Duytschaever**, 100, of Moline, who died March 13th.

## Looking for . . .

John Descamps of Moorslede, Belgium, is looking for a little help. His mother, Augusta Schreiber, is buried in Colona. He is coming to Moline on May 4th and would like to meet as many of the descendants of the late Herman Schreiber as possible. Herman Schreiber is also buried in the Colona Cemetery.

If you are a descendant, or know of any descendants, please email me (d.coopman@mchsi.com) or call me at (309) 762-6227 to let me know. I will then get more details about John Descamps's visit and arrange for a meeting with him.

## RSVP Recognition Luncheon

For those of you who are enrolled in RSVP as a volunteer to the Center, or to any other entity, the 2014 Volunteer Recognition Luncheons will be held April 15th at the Milan Community Center, and April 22nd at the Fountains Senior Living Clubhouse in Bettendorf. There is no cost for the volunteer, but if you wish to bring a guest, the cost is \$15.00 per guest. Seating is limited to 250 at each location, and reservations must be in by April 7th.

Notifications and reservation forms have been sent by mail, but if you did not receive one or misplaced yours, call the RSVP office at (309) 793-4425 to make your reservation.

## University of Leuven

We've mentioned the university in past newsletters and thought you'd like to know a little more about this prestigious school. It is one of the oldest universities in the Low Countries, established almost six centuries ago as a Catholic university by Pope Martin V in 1425. Over the years, it attracted famous scholars like Andreas Vesalius (physician and author of most influential book on human anatomy),

## Toots Retires

Toots Thielemans, the Brussels harmonica virtuoso and jazz legend, is retiring from performing at the age of 91. Thielemans said he no longer has the strength to last a full concert and, rather than disappoint audiences, has cancelled his remaining concert dates.

Thielemans was born in Brussels' Marollen district in 1922 and started learning the accordion at the age of three, later teaching himself guitar and harmonica. It was as a guitarist that he first became known, playing with names such as Benny Goodman, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis.

Later he began to focus on the harmonica, and in the end, it became his solo instrument. His best-known composition, the 1962 number "Bluesette," has him playing guitar and whistling along in unison. The tune was so successful, he referred to it as his "pension fund."

Thielemans was known for his large discography, for music in movies such as *Midnight Cowboy* and *Jean de Florette*, and for his work with other major stars, from Ella Fitzgerald to the *Muppets of Sesame Street*.

Brussels' minister Guy Vanhengel stated, "Toots Thielemans is for Brussels the greatest of world citizens, a musician with a fantastic career behind him and a great example for the younger generation. We are enormously grateful to Toots for all the musical talent he gave to Brussels and to the whole country."

(Thanks to *Flanders Today*)



Toots Thielemans

Desiderius Erasmus (Catholic priest, social critic and theologian), and Gerard Mercator (mathematician and cartographer). It has 434 partnerships with universities across Europe; 41, 255 students were enrolled in the 2012-2013 academic year; and over \$480 million is budgeted each year for research.

## More World War I Ammo Found

Last month's newsletter contained an item about thousands of unexploded bombs and shells that were found in several farmers' barns in the area of Flanders known as the Westhoek. Recently, hundreds more shells from the First World War were unearthed in a field on the border between the towns of Passendale and Moorslede.

The exact extent of this latest find at Passendale is still not clear. The first munitions came to light when a local farmer began to plow under a field that had previously been used as pasture. On the first day of clearance by Dovo, the Belgian army's bomb disposal unit, 50 projectiles of German origin containing toxic gas were dug up, and one was leaking.

Now it has been revealed that an installation in Poelkapelle, West Flanders, maintained by the army for dismantling toxic weapons, has not functioned since 2012 due to a defect. Since Dovo is not able to render the munitions safe, it is stockpiling the bombs instead. The site in Poelkapelle currently holds 3,200 toxic projectiles, all containing poison gas.

Clearing the Passendale site is expected to take four weeks with police patrolling the area against souvenir hunters at night. It is unknown when the Poelkapelle installation can again make the toxic shells safe.

No doubt more unexploded shells and bombs litter the area around Passendale. The name Passendale is etched on the consciousness of Great Britain and her Commonwealth. During the Third Battle of Ieper in 1917, the British Army lost nearly 300,000 men in capturing this ruined village and a few kilometers of shell-pocked mud. The British called the village "Passion Dale" – the Valley of Suffering. The cost of the British "victory" is today evident in Tyne Cot Cemetery, the largest British war cemetery on mainland Europe.

Originally, the land that became Tyne Cot was a strong point in the German Flandern Line. Australian troops set up an aid post in one of the bunkers, following its capture in October 1917. A cemetery of 340 graves quickly grew up around this bunker, containing men who had died at the aid post or nearby.

Between 1919 and 1921, the specialized "exhumation companies" brought in many thousands of bodies from the surrounding battlefields. Only 3,800 of the victims



The Cross of Sacrifice was built over the captured German bunker that later served as an aid post.



Tyne Cot Cemetery

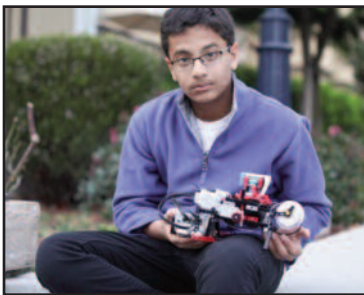
were identified by name. Tyne Cot Cemetery was inaugurated in 1927 and also contains a memorial to the missing.

Nearly 12,000 soldiers of the British Commonwealth are buried in Tyne Cot, along with a number of German prisoners-of-war who died in Allied hands. The screen wall at the back of the cemetery commemorates a further 34,957 missing soldiers who died after August 15, 1917. The more than 55,000 missing who died before this date are honored by name on the Menin Gate Memorial in Ieper.



## Lego Blocks More than Toys

A 12-year old boy originally from Hasselt, Belgium, is stunning seasoned technology experts in the Silicon Valley and beyond with his low-cost Braille printer that he built primarily with a Lego kit. Shubham Banerjee has put step-by-step instructions online, so anyone can build and improve the device he has dubbed Braigo.



Braigo began with a simple flyer that was mailed to the Banerjee family in Santa Clara, CA, asking for donations to help the visually impaired. Like many curious kids do, Shubham asked his father how blind people read. His father, who works for technology company Intel, told him to look it up online. For most kids, that's where the story would end.

But Shubham's interest grew when he learned how expensive Braille printers are. The devices, that make text into Braille cells, cost around \$2000. A big fan of Legos, Shubham decided to build his own Braille printer using a Lego Mindstorms kit – costing around \$350 – and some cheap add-ons. With this basic equipment, he created a braille printer for education, teaching, and home use.

Working at his kitchen table after finishing his homework, it took about three weeks and seven different models before Shubham settled on one type that he could program. The printer works using a normal drawing pin to push holes in a roll of paper, one letter at a time. All the building instructions and software are available for free at the online community page for Lego Mindstorms.

Shubham is unsure about a future career. He stated, "I'm only in seventh grade and haven't decided on a study path yet. I'm thinking of becoming an engineer, doctor, or scientist. In general, I love science."

No doubt he'll go far in whatever field he chooses!

(Thanks to Andy Furniere at *Flanders Today*)

Happy Easter!