



# CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

1608 Seventh Street, Moline, Illinois 61265

(309) 762-0167

www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



February, 2017

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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 4th	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 to 11:00 a.m.
February 4th	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
February 13th	Board Meeting	5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
February 27th	Mardi Gras	6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Visit the Center for more information and to stay updated on current events.

## Schedule for Volunteers

The February schedule is as follows:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Gift Counter</i>	<i>Host/Hostess</i>
Wed., Feb. 1st	Alan Hoyt	Alan Hoyt
Fri., Feb. 3rd	Rosemarie VanAcker	Joan DeClerck
Sat., Feb. 4th	Barb Michalek (am)	Grace Fisher (pm)
Wed., Feb. 8th	Bonnie Newman	Mary Lou Andrae
Fri., Feb. 10th	Steve Slininger	Steve Slininger
Sat., Feb. 11th	Mary Gardner-Karcher	Mary Gardner-Karcher
Wed., Feb. 15th	Barb Coppens	Linda Polich
Fri., Feb. 17th	Bev Fullmer	Georgia Slininger
Sat., Feb. 18th	tbd	tbd
Wed., Feb. 22nd	tbd	tbd
Fri., Feb. 24th	Bob Francione	Bob Francione
Sat., Feb. 25th	Diana Slininger	Diana Slininger

*Contact Diana Slininger at (309) 792-2790  
as soon as possible if there is a schedule conflict.*

## Please Check Ahead

Winter has now definitely arrived, bringing with it the usual snow and ice. When the weather looks "iffy," we suggest you call ahead to the Center to make sure it is open. We certainly don't want our volunteers or visitors to have any trouble reaching us.

**OPEN Wednesday, Friday & Saturday 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**  
**Waffle Breakfast 1st Sat. of each month**

## First Ward School Follow-up

Last month I asked if anyone knew where the First Ward School was. Leo Hugaert thought it might be the building that became Irving School. I thought it might be the old Washington School. We were both wrong. Ben McAdams was determined to get an answer and got to the Historical Society library before I could get there. With the help of the Society's Kathleen Seusy, it turned out the First Ward School became Erickson Elementary on 5th Avenue and 4th Street. (The building later had its roof removed and even later, was torn down and the present building was built on the site). But now we all know where the First Ward School was.



First Ward School became Erickson Elementary

## A Special Memorial

On December 17th, Bob DeClerck, 72, of St. Paris, Ohio, passed away at his home. He was born in Moline, the son of Frank and Harriet DeClerck. The family chose the Center for Belgian Culture as the only recipient of memorials to Bob.

At the March 4th waffle breakfast, family members will gather for waffles to share memories, and they invite others to join them. Bob would love the thought of everyone donating to the preservation of the CBC. The family noted that Bob had only one bumper sticker that said: Being Belgian is Beautiful.

## News of the Membership

*Thank You* to Elizabeth Roseman for her donation of a three piece set of handmade lace.

*Sympathy* is offered to: **LuAnn Haydon** and family on the death of her father-in-law, Edward Haydon, 94, of East Moline, who died December 24th at Park Vista, East Moline; and to the family of **Mary Gardner-Karcher** on the death of her father, Morris Calsyn, 84, of Davenport, who died December 26th at Genesis East Medical Center, Davenport.

## A Bit of Mardi Gras



We thought we'd have a little fun with a bit of Mardi Gras. You don't have to dress up or create a float, just attend. It will be held February 27th at the CBC from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Appetizers and refreshments will be served. The only cost is a donation.

We'll have a sign-up sheet on the counter and at the February waffle breakfast, or you can call Bonnie Tanamor at (309) 912- 2692 or email her at

[bonnietanamor@gmail.com](mailto:bonnietanamor@gmail.com).

## The Kleine Winkel

The Winkel is still offering a 20% discount on caps, t-shirts, and mugs. And check out the other items we have. Some are new and always make great gifts.

## FEBRUARY WAFFLE VOLUNTEERS



Volunteers for February's waffle breakfast will be Bill Cornelis, Craig Francque, LuAnn Haydon, Teresa Nelson, Jan Irwin and Angie Jennes. Mike Kerckhove will make the mix and start the coffee, and Joan DeCap will cashier. Catherine VanHecke will make sure everyone enjoys their breakfast.

## Let's Learn Something

While doing research for another project, this editor ran across several Belgian-American inventors I thought you would enjoy learning a little more about. And many older readers will certainly know of one of our first inventor's biggest creations.

Leo Baekeland was born in Ghent in November, 1863. He graduated with honors from Ghent's technical school at 17 years of age and was awarded a scholarship to study chemistry at the University of Ghent. He earned a PhD at the age of 21. Baekeland married in 1889 and took advantage of a travel scholarship to visit universities in England and the U.S.



Baekeland had already invented and patented a process to develop photographic plates using water instead of chemicals. Seeing potential in the young chemist, Leo was hired by the Anthony Photographic Co. in New York, where he worked for two years. He then struck out on his own as a consulting chemist.

Illness and depleting funds made Baekeland return to his old interest of producing a photographic paper that would allow enlargements to be printed by artificial light. After two years of diligent work, he perfected a process to produce that paper he called "Velox." It was the first commercially successful photographic paper, and Eastman Kodak would soon purchase the rights and process from Baekeland.

Having been successful with Velox, Baekeland set out to find another promising area for chemical development. He looked for a problem that offered "the best chance for the quickest possible results." He began experiments with phenol and formaldehyde. By using the correct ratios of the two materials, and under the correct pressure and temperature, he created the first moldable plastic and called it Bakelite. He received the patent for it in December, 1909.

The invention of Bakelite marked the beginning of the age of plastics. It was the first material that held its shape after being heated. Telephones, radios, and electric insulators were made of the material because of its excellent electrical insulation and heat-resistance. Bakelite applications soon spread to most branches of industry.

At the time of Baekeland's death in 1944, the world production of Bakelite was around 175,000 tons and was used in over 15,000 different products. No doubt everyone still has a product or two in their home made from Bakelite; a phone, small radio, button, coffee brewer, etc., all thanks to "the father of the plastics industry;" Leo Baekeland from Ghent.



Bakelite radio, circa 1940's

## Good Job, Kids

Around 200 members of Belgium's Responsible Young Drivers Association (RYD) made sure nearly 1,500 revelers got safely home on New Year's Eve. Beginning at midnight and ending at 6:00 a.m., 200 drivers and 80 RYD vehicles were used during the operation. In addition to the 1,500 revelers, 500 vehicles were also driving home.

During each trip, an RYD member drove the reveler's vehicle, while being followed by another RYD member in one of the cars chartered for the operation. This was the 25th year for RYD's efforts to have people get home safely after New Year's festivities.



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## More Than Originally Thought

The number of Belgians ordered to work for the German regime that was installed during the First World War has been heavily underestimated. Amateur historian Donald Buyze, from the Wervik region in West Flanders, has been researching Belgian forced labor for nine years.

His aim is to compile a complete list of all Belgians who were called to labor camps, and of all those who died as a result of the work. Deportations from Belgium were mostly to Germany itself or to Northern France. Civilians living close to the frontline in West Flanders did not have to go to labor camps, but were forced to work for the Germans near their homes. "They were, in general, better off, as they could recover at their homes," noted Buyze.

Buyze's research took him to Northern France, across Belgium, and into Germany. He has taken some 150,000 photos at different municipalities in Belgium, covering all the Belgian area occupied during the Great War. Among other things, he took photos of the commemoration plaques at churches that mentioned the names of the victims (both soldiers and civilians), and among the civilians, those who were executed or died as a result of forced labor. He soon

realized that forced labor among Belgians was a much bigger list than previously accepted. In many cases, the lists noted on the plaques of local civilians who died from forced labor, was longer than the list of local soldiers who perished.

The number of Belgian victims of forced labor in WWI was put at 2,600 by a Parliamentary Commission back in the 1920s. The number of Belgians forced to work for the Germans was put at 120,000. This number was often repeated in literature, but nobody ever took the effort to do new, thorough research into the matter.

Buyze did, and came to the conclusion that up to 180,000 Belgians served in labor camps, and that many more than previously estimated died as a result of bad conditions. He presently has almost 7,000 names on his list, and thinks he may end up with about 10,000 when his work is finished. Exhaustion, starvation, disease, the cold, and bad treatment were all causes of death. Some were even twice unlucky, as they were killed by allied bombardments in the frontline.

(Thanks to Michael Torfs of *belgiumnews*.)