



CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

1608 Seventh Street, Moline, Illinois 61265

(309) 762-0167

www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



May, 2018

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

May 5th	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 to 11:00 a.m.
May 5th	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
May 14th	Board Meeting	5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

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

Schedule for Volunteers

The May schedule is as follows:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Gift Counter</i>	<i>Host/Hostess</i>
Wed., May 2nd	Steve Slininger	Steve Slininger
Sat., May 5th	Barb Michalek (am)	Diana Slininger (pm)
Wed., May 9th	Bonnie Newman	Mary Lou Andrae
Sat., May 12th	Mary Gardner-Karcher	Mary Gardner-Karcher
Wed., May 16th	Barb Coppens	Linda Polich
Sat., May 19th	Millie Kale	Millie Kale
Wed., May 23rd	tbd	tbd
Sat., May 26th	Diana Slininger	Diana Slininger
Wed., May 30th	Bob Francione	Bob Francione

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

Birdies for Charity

Mary and Larry Lorensen want to thank all who pledged to the Birdies for Charity program last year on behalf of the CBC. They have sent thank-you letters and pledge forms for this year's addition of the Birdies program and hope you will all once again make pledges.

The money raised from Birdies goes only towards the CBC's Scholarship Program, which awards stipends of \$1000/each to two high school graduates for use towards college expenses. We also invite all members and friends of the CBC to pledge as little as one cent/birdie, made during the John Deere Classic golf tournament, on behalf of the CBC. It all goes to a very worthy cause.

OPEN Wednesday & Saturday 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Waffle Breakfast 1st Sat. of each month

News of the Membership

Congratulations to **Chet Van De Velde** who turned 100 years old on April 21st, and to **Joan De Cap** who turned 85 back in March.

Get Well wishes are offered to our well-known lace maker **Betty Freeman**.

Sympathy is offered to the family of **Rev. James DeBisschop**, 57, priest at St. Maria Goretti in Coal Valley, and Mary Our Lady of Peace in Orion, who died April 1st.

A Special Visit

On Wednesday, April 4th, the Center hosted Marnix Everaerd on his visit from Lovendegem, Belgium. Marnix was on a pleasure trip to Chicago and decided to visit us to see if we had any information on relatives. He has a landscaping business back in Belgium, and this was his second trip to the States.

Catherine VanHecke picked Marnix up in Galesburg and brought him to Moline and the CBC, as well as provided him with a brief tour of East Moline and Davenport. Linda Polich did some research on a relative and provided him with the information she discovered. Bill and Dave Coopman, Millie Kale, Fred Polich, and Angie Jenness joined Marnix, Catherine, and Linda for a nice visit, discussing Belgians in Moline and learning a little more about Lovendegem.

Thanks to Catherine for her chauffeuring, Linda for her research, and Marnix for his visit and very generous donation to the Center for Belgian Culture.



l-r: Dave Coopman, Bill Coopman, Millie Kale, Marnix Everaerd, Catherine VanHecke, and Linda Polich.

In the Beginning

Vriendenkring, or Friends Circle, was the name of the social organization launched on Sunday, April 18th, in the hall of Note's Band. Composed of Belgian-Americans, it started with fifty members. Object of the group was fraternity, relief of members out of work or ill, naturalization of members, and securing employment for those out of work.

Vriendenkring's first officers were: president Gaston Veys; vice-president; Camiel Vermeulen; secretary Remi DeFeuster; treasurer Joseph DeBisschop; and trustees, Seraphin DeBoeouwer, Phillip Lioen, and Nazaire DeLanghe.

The group's first headquarters was in the large hall in the Sonnevile Building, 9th Street and 18th Avenue, after some construction was completed within the building to meet the needs of the group. Membership was made up largely of Note's Band, Moline Bicycle Club, Moline Homing Pigeon Club, William Tell Club, and the Art and Friendship Club members.

(Thanks to the *Moline Dispatch*)



Original Sonnevile building where the Circle started.

MAY WAFFLE VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers for the May waffle breakfast will be Bill Cornelis, Bill and Sandy Coopman, LuAnn Hayden, and Karen VandeKerckhove. Mike Kerckhove will mix the batter and start the coffee, Joan DeCap will cashier, and Catherine VanHecke will ensure everyone enjoys their breakfast.



History of Notes, Part 2

As noted in the previous installment, St. Cecilia's Day was cause for a great celebration for the Belgian immigrants in Moline. Originally planned for the Sunday nearest Thanksgiving, members of the band decided it would be more appropriate to combine the honor to St. Cecilia with Thanksgiving Day. That first celebration started with Mass at Sacred Heart and concluded at the end of the service with the band playing some sacred music. Then the musicians marched.

The band first paraded along 15th Street to the downtown business district, stopping in front of the taverns owned by the band's honorary members, to serenade the clientele and wet their whistles. They then marched to the 7th Street and 18th Avenue business district for more serenades, a banquet, and speeches. In the evening, there was a dance with polkas and waltzes that were popular back in the old country.

This happy Thanksgiving Day event each year until World War I came along. During the war years, Note's Band would meet every train to play cheerful music for the young men heading off to war. They also met every train that brought home the troops.

The band continued to play for St. Cecilia's Day, various parades, picnics, charities, the sick, and Belgian and American patriotic functions. One of the band's biggest celebrations was its 20th Anniversary celebration in

1927, with three days of parades, dances, banquets, and concerts.

In 1929, Honore Note announced his retirement. His plans were to move to Peoria and open a tailor shop there. Replacing Note was Emil Van Loo. After the death of Van Loo, Jerome DeMeyere took over as conductor.

During 1943, with members growing old (most had false teeth by then that made playing difficult), Note's Band called it quits. At the end, there were 18 members. In the band's best years, there were 35 members. Band member Honore Lecat noted in a newspaper article, "We played because we liked music. We played for charity, for picnics, and in parades. We didn't make any money from music, we just liked to play."

Who was Honore Note? "He was considered a first class musician, who probably spent more time on music and the band than on his tailoring business," stated Lecat. "Note was a good tailor and had a good business, but when the music came from a New York publishing house, it sometimes seemed difficult for the band members to play. So Note just forgot about himself and his business and became a music arranger, spending hours fixing up the music so the Moline factory workers could play it."

(Prepared and written by Jane Stewart Cook)



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The 20th Convoy

Dossin Barracks is the Holocaust memorial and museum in Mechelen. It stands on the site of the a transit station that was used to ship Jews from Nazi-occupied areas in Belgium and northern France, to the death camps – in particular, Auschwitz.

The Nazis attacked Belgium in May 1940 and began deporting Jews in August 1942. Simon Gronowski was 11 years old in 1942. His family left their home in Etterbeek, to hide out in Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe. Simon, his mother, and his sister were arrested by the Gestapo in March 1943 and taken to the Dossin Baracks. His father was in the hospital and wasn't held.

What happened next was one of the more daring events of the war. On the night of April 19, 1943, a train known as the 20th Convoy left Dossin Barracks carrying 1,631 Jewish men, women, and children to Auschwitz. Young Simon was one of the passengers.

Shortly after departure, the train came to a halt. Three members of the Resistance at Boortmeerbeek in Flemish

Brabant had placed a storm lantern on the tracks to stop the train. The three then opened one of the cars and freed 17 prisoners. The train continued on again, but the engineer slowed the train and even stopped, emboldening others to open their cars. Men in Simon's car managed to open the door and he was among those who jumped when the train slowed.

Young Simon ran through the woods all night. For the next 17 months, he was taken in by Catholic families who kept him hidden. He was never captured. His mother and sister died in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. His father, still in Etterbeek, died shortly after the war's end.

In all, 233 people escaped the 20th Convoy; 26 were killed and 89 were recaptured. But 118 survived until the end of the war.

When asked if Holocaust survivors can ever feel safe again, Simon responded: "I am Belgian, Belgium is my homeland, and I feel perfectly safe here."

(Thanks to Alan Hope and *Flanders Today*)