



CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

1608 Seventh Street, Moline, Illinois 61265

(309) 762-0167

www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



January, 2019

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 2nd	Center Closed	
January 5th	NO Waffle Breakfast	
January 5th	Open House	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
January 5th	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
January 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 January schedule is as follows:

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

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

Thank You Bakers and Buyers

At December's Bake Sale, the table was chock full of wonderful cookies, candies, cakes, and pies. Your editor purchased a nice array of goodies and sampled a few, as well. All who baked for this sale . . . you outdid yourselves. Because of all the great goodies and the generosity of our patrons, the sale raised \$467 for the Center! Thank You for your baking efforts, your purchases, and for your great support!!!

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

Christmas Party

On Sunday December 9th, 30 members and guests enjoyed the Center's Christmas Party at the Friends Circle, with plenty of food, good conversation, and laughter. VP Bill Cornelis emceed a Christmas-themed trivia game that produced fierce, but friendly, competition and had more than a few people scratching their heads for the correct answers.

Thanks go to Bill Cornelis for donating the red wine, Kevin DeRoo for the poinsettia plants, and Catherine VanHecke for the great Belgian chocolates.

Winners of the raffle prizes were: Santa (Julia Haight); Isabel Bloom statue (Bill Cornelis); cookie jar/CBC cookbook/\$25 Olde Towne Bakery gift card (Mary Chappell); cooler w/Leffe beer (Bertha Bredar), and grill tools/apron/hat (Anne Noyce). Congratulations to the winners!



Belgium has Mail Issues

We often hear that the price of mailing a letter in the U.S. is increasing. It hasn't happened here yet, but Belgians using the mail will be facing an increase of nearly 10% beginning this January. The national postal service Bpost will also introduce a new priority stamp at the same time.

Currently, a standard stamp for sending a standard-sized letter weighing less than 1.76 ounces within Europe costs \$1.55. The new price will be \$1.66. A standard-sized letter sent to a country outside of Europe currently costs \$1.80, but will increase to \$1.91 with the pricing change.

Like the U.S., Bpost also issues special edition stamps, which cost more. And again, like the U.S., postage will

increase for letters that do not conform to a standard dimension or that weigh more than 1.76 ounces.

Added to all of that, Bpost is also reducing the number of mailboxes in Belgium, from 13,000 to 10,000. As here, fewer letters are being posted. Since 2004, the number of letters sent has fallen by 60%. According to Bpost, fewer than six letters per day are posted in 25% of the country's mailboxes.

(Thanks to *FlandersToday*)



How Friendships are Made

Ron Coene of Potomac, Maryland, sent an interesting story along with his membership renewal. I thought you would enjoy reading it.

Jean Rotsart was the mayor of Maldegem, Belgium, as was his father and grandfather. The three Rotsarts served for a total of 72 years. Thirty-plus years ago, Jean Rotsart sent his son Ben to East Moline, as part of a sister city project. Ben would repeat his senior year in high school to improve his English language skills. While in East Moline, Ben stayed with one of the VanLancker families.

At the end of Ben's year in East Moline, Vic Standaert, who was the local coordinator for the project, asked me if we could host Ben for a few days so he could sightsee around the Washington, DC area before returning to Maldegem. We did, and Ben wound up staying for three weeks, thus beginning a long friendship with him and his family.

On our first visit to Maldegem some ten years ago, we were visiting one Sunday at the Church of St. Barbara's, trying to locate genealogical information on the Coene family. That is where we met Rita DeSmet, who helped in our search of church records. In conversation with her, we mentioned our connection with Ben, whereupon she said that we had to meet his parents. She immediately called the mayor, as it turned out she was his executive assistant. He came along bringing Ben, who happened to be visiting his parents that day, to share some beers at the tavern next door to St. Barbara's.

We have been back to Maldegem two more times, first with my brother and sisters from Moline and their spouses, and last year with my three children and their spouses. Each time, we reconnected with the Rotsarts and Rita.

What's In a Name

We are all pretty much familiar with the 7th Street area being called Olde Towne. But did you know that back in the early 1900s, it was once known as the Belgian Bluff? I didn't, but I did . . . sort of. About seven years ago, the City was applying for a special designation for the Olde Towne area that would open it up to grants and funding for improvements. In the paperwork for its submission, the City was calling the area The Belgian Bluff. The first Flemish Fest came about as part of the City's efforts to revive interest in the area, and that is how I learned of the area's former name.

According to the City and various early newspaper articles, the Belgian Bluff covered an area from 7th Avenue south to 19th Avenue and from 1st Street east to 16th Street. While we think of Olde Towne covering the 7th Street business district, the Belgian Bluff also included a second business district known as Uptown.

Uptown began to develop about the same time as Olde Towne; the late 1800s. It was also made up of the same type of businesses as was Olde Towne. In fact, Edward Coryn's grocery store was on the west side of 15th Street, a few doors south of 13th Avenue (today it's a Mexican restaurant). Groceries, meat markets, dry good stores, clothing stores, repair shops, saloons, and even movie theaters were located in both districts.

The accompanying photo, from 1912, shows Hans Schmidt's dry good store (which many may remember as the Ben Franklin store). On the corner is the Commercial Savings Bank (later to become Wheelock's Drug Store). On the photo's far left, Schmidt's saloon and beer garden stand on the corner where the former Uptown National Bank would be built in 1929.

Today, and in the coming months, you may see signage in both the Olde Towne and Uptown areas noting both as part of The Bluffs.



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Flemish Film Nominated

Flemish director Lukas Dhont's debut film *Girl* has been nominated for a Golden Globe in the category Best Foreign Language Film. It is the story of a teenager, Lara, who is transitioning from male to female, while starting a grueling training to become a ballerina. It's based on the true story of a transgendered woman from Antwerp, who went through the same experience.

The film has already won a number of awards in Europe. It is undergoing editing for English-speaking audiences and will be available on Netflix.

(Thanks to *FlandersToday*)

Please Check Ahead

During these winter months,
please check ahead before visiting the CBC.
We want everyone – visitors and volunteers – to be safe.

