



# CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

1608 Seventh Street, Moline, Illinois 61265

(309) 762-0167

www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



February, 2019

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Diana Slininger

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 2nd	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 to 11:00 a.m.
February 2nd	Open House	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
February 2nd	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
February 2nd	Lace Guild	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
February 11th	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 February schedule is as follows:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Gift Counter</i>	<i>Host/Hostess</i>
Sat., Feb. 2nd	Diana Slininger (a.m.)	Barb Michalek (p.m.)
Wed., Feb. 6th	Steve Slininger	Steve Slininger
Sat., Feb. 9th	Mary Gardner-Karcher	Mary Gardner-Karcher
Wed., Feb. 13th	Bonnie Newman	Mary Lou Andrae
Sat., Feb. 16th	Millie Kale	Millie Kale
Wed., Feb. 20th	Barb Coppens	Linda Polich
Sat., Feb. 23rd	Diana Slininger	Diana Slininger
Wed., Feb. 27th	tbd	tbd

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

## Please Check Ahead

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



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

**Waffle Breakfast 1st Sat. of each month**

## Whatever Happened to . . .

Back in 1962, a group of Belgian-Americans from Detroit, Green Bay, and Chicago came to Moline to visit the Belgian folk here. One of the visitors was H.J. Quartermont, the public relations representative for the National Belgian Village Foundation. He was here to explain about the creation of the village that was to be located in Namur, a small town in northeastern Wisconsin, about 25 miles from Green Bay.

The first building to be constructed at the village was to be an elderly residence run by the Sister Servants of Christ the King. The second building was to be the Belgian Village Inn, where only Belgian food would be served. A museum would eventually be built there, too.

The idea of starting a village was begun around 1960 when a group of Green Bay area Walloons wanted to commemorate the Belgian pioneers in the U.S., primarily in Wisconsin. What started as a marker placement, then turned into a museum, and finally turned into the creation of a village

A fund drive had been started, aided by a \$150,000 gift from a gentleman from Rockford, Illinois. Quartermont was visiting with other Belgian-American settlements throughout the country in an effort to raise funds to further finance the project.

Although your editor has heard of Namur, Wisconsin, I had never heard of this visit, this plan, or even the name National Belgian Village. Do any of you CBC members remember anything about this? Intrigued, I set out to discover more. The following is from the May 31, 1975, issue of the *Green Bay Press-Gazette*:

“Namur - whatever happened to National Belgian Village? The prospect of perpetuating Belgian customs with construction of a museum, hotel, a home for the aged and many more dreams rated page-one news for people in this small Door County community. But like yesterday’s soap bubble, their dreams vanished. Money was the mortar lacking for the foundation of this proposed attraction.

Forty acres of property three miles west of Brussels (Wisconsin) were deeded to George Baudhuin, vice-president of the National Belgian Village Foundation. The sale included a tavern and dance hall and was renamed, appropriately, Belgian Inn. Headstones at the old cemetery next to St. Mary’s of the Snows Catholic Church were gathered and condensed to improve the view, and a large sign was erected announcing the coming of Villa Madonna. Nothing more ever happened.

Like a motion picture production, the location was established, the script was carefully written, but the plot apparently didn’t appeal to moth-eaten pocketbook holders, and Old Belgium, U.S.A., was ‘gone with the wind.’”

The dream of a National Belgian Village is long gone. I couldn’t find whether any other funds were raised, or whatever might have happened to any other money. I suspect that with no major interest by any of the Belgian-American groups, any money that had been donated was just returned. And while the dream disappeared, Namur, still exists as an unincorporated community in the town of Union, in Door County. It is located approximately five miles west of Brussels, Wisconsin. Your editor thanks the *Dispatch-Argus* and the *Green Bay Press-Gazette*.

### Doris Southard Lace Guild

A treat for visitors to the CBC will occur on the first Saturday of February. The Doris Southard Lace Guild will be having its bi-monthly meeting (weather permitting) at the Center, beginning at 1:00 p.m. The Guild began in 1991 and is comprised of members from Eastern Iowa. It is dedicated to spreading the knowledge of bobbin lace-making and its history to anyone who would like to learn. Please stop by and visit with these lace makers from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 2nd. They will be happy to discuss and demonstrate the various techniques of bobbin lace-making.

### News of the Membership

Thank You to **Patrick Van Nevel** for his sponsorship of February’s waffle breakfast.

Congratulations are offered to Amy Johannsen, daughter of **Barb Michalek**, who was promoted to the rank of Lt. Col. in the USAF Reserves. She became the 914th Maintenance Group Deputy Commander at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, New York, in January.

## Remembering

In a recent conversation with Patrick Van Nevel, I related how Olde Towne was like a second playground for me, and how I remembered what a thriving area it once was. Although I grew up on 15th Street between 18th and 19th Avenues, the Coopman grandparents lived on 9th Street, just south of 16th Avenue. I spent a lot of time there, as my aunt, uncle, and cousins, the Witte's, lived in the same house.

Bill's Corner Tap was always an interesting place to pass by, as my cousin Greg and I would hear the old Belgian playing *rolle bolle* behind the tavern and the huge billboards that stood between the tavern and the alley. And since we couldn't be seen, it was "our job" to lob apples or rocks over the billboards and hear the men cuss us out, in Flemish.

We'd wander past Blondell Plumbing and the Sonnevill Apartments and stop briefly at Van Hulle's jewelry store to look at his window displays. At Acuff's Sporting Goods we'd check out all the neat fishing equipment and other sports gear.

Along 7th Street, we might stop in at Lyphout's Hardware just to look, peer through the various tavern windows to see if we recognized anyone, watch the guys at Lannoo's service station service a car on the lube rack, or stop to look at the hearse and limousines at DeRoo's.

Our travels might end at the Stephens Park playground or ball diamond. Better yet, we'd head over to John Deere Field – at least, that's what we called it. Unrecognizable today, as Heartland Health Center sits on the site, but back then it was a huge acreage with prairie grass, a creek and ravines. It was a great place to play cowboys and Indians, or war.

When not with cousin Greg, I might accompany my mother to shop at DeGreve's Market. Henry DeGreve always knew exactly what mom wanted in the way of meat.

I was usually sent to Goethals' Clothing to buy my shoes. I loved the PF Flyer tennis shoes. I hated the "official" Boy Scout oxfords – until the soles wore down, they left imprints of scout merit badges in the dirt. But the best part was Art Goethals giving me a small plastic shoe with all kinds of neat trinkets inside. After all, he was an official Paul Parrot shoe store. Remember the lyrics to the song? "Paul Parrot, Paul Parrot, the shoes you want to buy . . . they make your feet run faster, as fast as Paul could fly!"

One place I could not quite figure out was Lundholm Drugs. That building had been a drugstore for years,



One of the courts behind Bill's Corner Tap with the billboards to the left.



John Deere Field looking north from about 1935. Heartland Health and Metro Lab take up most of the space today.

but always seemed to have been owned by a Swede. Why was there a Swedish drugstore in the middle of Belgian town? I guess that also brings to mind Weigant's. That German family had a grocery, a confectionary, and a meat market, three stores next to each other.

I guess it goes to show that Olde Towne was a microcosm of immigrants from Europe, who all survived successfully in one big neighborhood.

I'll relate some more memories in future issues. Maybe you have some great memories, too?

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*February 2019*

### *The Most Unpopular*

Christmas 2018 has passed, a time of good will and presents, but many people received unwanted gifts that often ended up on second-hand websites. Like here, the same thing happened in Belgium: one in eight Belgians didn't like their Christmas presents!

The most unpopular presents in Belgium included decorative items, gift vouchers, clothing, perfume and cosmetics, books, and something for the kitchen. Many wound up on second-hand websites the day after Christmas.

Gift vouchers aren't necessarily a good choice, as the recipient can't often pick what he or she wants, or there is a use-before date. Popular choices are also a no-no. Who wants to end up with three copies of a cookbook from a celebrated TV chef?

In the U.S., the day after Christmas is as busy as Black Friday. Sales and the exchanging of gifts for the right size, a better color/pattern, or an entirely different item, fill the stores with people wanting the right gift. Just remember, it's the thought that counts!

(With help from *FlandersToday*)

### **FEBRUARY WAFFLE VOLUNTEERS**



Volunteers for February's waffle breakfast are Michael DeBisschop, Kim Kochuyt, Yvette Van Driessche, Tom Slininger, Janet Hill, and Angie Jennes. Mike Kerckhove will mix the batter and get things started, and Steve Slininger will cashier and supervise.

As always, we need volunteers!! Waffle breakfasts can only continue if we have volunteer help. If you can help, please contact Karen VandeKerckhove at (309) 762-6725.

Happy Valentine's Day