



CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

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www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



September, 2020

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Center Closed for Safety

Again for September, the Center will be closed and there will be no waffle breakfast. Safety of our volunteers and guests is most important. The Illinois rules for group functions also affect the breakfasts. It's not a pleasant situation for the CBC and its finances, but we hope that there will soon be some light at the end of this long tunnel.

Thank You

Special THANKS go to **Patrick Van Nevel** for a membership for Bobbi Jackson (welcome, Bobbi) and to **Gary and Margo Francque** for their monetary donation to the Center. A continued "thank you" to **Chris Van Lancker** for her great layout work on your newsletter!

Belgium Going to the Dogs

We already know that a dog can detect marijuana in a backpack, but soon it may be able to tell if you are infected with Covid-19. The universities of Ghent and Liege are right now spearheading a project to train dogs to detect the subtle difference between the odor of sweat infected with the virus and sweat that is not. According to UGhent's microbial ecology department, the dogs should be ready to go to work in about 30 days.

The sniffer dogs must be trained with a specific sweat profile. The coronavirus causes a specific sweat odor, and samples are being collected from both people who are infected and from those who are not. While the sweat might smell different, it does not actually spread the virus so the dogs are in no danger of becoming infected.

The idea is to loan the dogs out to crowded areas such as airports and train stations and eventually festivals or sporting events. Other countries are also training dogs for the same purpose, and dogs are already in use in Dubai.

Sniffer dogs provide very accurate results, but a test can then be done to determine if quarantine is necessary. That is all much faster than waiting until someone has symptoms, then testing and waiting for the result.

(Thanks to *FlandersToday*)

Scholarship

CBC scholarships were awarded last month and the essay by Leland Sumer is offered here. Leland attended Tremont High School in Tremont, Illinois. He was an Illinois State Scholar, a three-year Presidential Award recipient, and a four-year member of the school's jazz band. He was on the varsity squad of both the cross country and the track team and was All-State Medalist in both for three years. Involved in his church, he took part in three youth missions for service projects. Leland is attending Dallas Baptist University and plans to major in either business or education.



My Special Heritage by Leland Sumer

With my father being a former Muslim with Turkish descent, and my mother being a Christian with Belgian descent, my heritage is definitely quite unique and interesting. Starting with my father's side, both of his parents were born in Turkey, got married in Turkey, but settled in Peoria, Illinois, to raise their family. Because of this, I have no relatives on my dad's side in America.

One unusual thing about my dad's parents is that his father is 22 years older than his mother. Yes, you can let that sink in about how big of an age gap that is; my grandfather Sumer was only three years younger than his wife's father. However, their marriage still flourished to almost 50 years, until by grandfather passed away at 93 years old.

Another atypical fact about my dad's family is how they raised him based on their culture. First off, his parents taught him Turkish as his first language, and he didn't learn English until he started Kindergarten. Secondly, although a tad extreme for their culture, my father's parents were really strict. For example, his first sleep-over was when he was a senior in high school. He was not allowed to date or even talk to girls over the phone, and he was not allowed to do any extra-curricular activities at school unless he maintained a 4.0 GPA. Although those rules were definitely not normal back then or during this time period, my father still grew up to be a diligent and hard worker, completing all schooling required to become a doctor, and now has his own medical practice called ICPR Family Practice.

The last thing I want to mention about my father's side of the family is how I have experienced the Turkish culture. For as long as I can remember, my family has gone to my Turkish grandparents' house every Sunday after church to eat lunch, while the satellite Turkish TV played in the background. My grandma always cooked a bunch of Turkish delicacies for us

like manti (homemade pasta), börek (spinach pie), and baklava. I also got to see a Muslim funeral service in a mosque for my grandfather, which was very sad but interesting. The Muslims would kneel down on their mats to pray facing Mecca, as was their tradition. My parents had visited Turkey before they had children, so I myself have not gone yet, but I would love to go see my relatives and learn more about the Turkish culture.

On my mother's side, her parents were both born in America, but the Belgian heritage comes from her father's grandfather, Gustaf Coopman, who was born in Belgium. He later married Pharilde Verkest, also an immigrant from Belgium. They settle in Moline and had four children including William Coopman, Sr., my great grandfather. Their family was very active in the local Belgian community. My mother's parents, who still live in Moline, didn't have any strange rules or quirks like my Turkish grandparents did, although they do have a love of Belgian beer and waffles! Therefore, I want to focus on my trip to Belgium, for it taught me a lot about the Belgian culture and how it is connected to my heritage.

My family and my mother's parents went to Belgium for one week during spring break two years ago, where we visited Amsterdam, Brugge, Brussels, and Tielt. In case you were wondering, Brugge was my favorite place of the four cities. It was a nice and quaint little town filled with historic sites like the Belfry and the Basilica of the Holy Blood. Brugge also had many different stores and restaurants, yet it all didn't feel nearly as touristy as did Brussels.

The meat and potatoes of the trip was when we stayed at a hotel in Tielt and rented out its bar/lounge area for a couple of hours to meet up with my Belgian relatives. In the weeks leading up to the trip, my mother and grandfather contacted nearly all of our Belgian relatives, many with the help of Facebook, and invited them to meet in Tielt. The event was such an awesome opportunity for family to get together and share stories. Almost 50 relatives came (we were expecting only 20), all of which I'd never met, and my parents hadn't seen for around 20 years. I was able to talk to cousins around my age, who told me about their life in Belgium. They shared stories about how they get hour-long lunch breaks during school where they could leave and drink beer at a bar during that break. Another awesome benefit that came out of this reunion was that we were able to sit down with some of the relatives and expand on the family tree on my mother's side.

Scholarship

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They shared many details about our family lineage that we may not have discovered without our being together. My mother was then able to take this information and put into a detailed scrapbook filled with pictures and paragraphs that explain everything about the generation before her.

Even though most of my Belgian relatives live far away from me, and it may be a long time before I see any of them again, I will always keep a special place in my heart for them.

An Unusual Trespasser

Rail traffic in Brussels was recently halted due to a “rail trespasser.” Firefighters were called to the scene after a tip from the public. The caller mentioned “an eagle” walking between tracks at a station without showing any intention of flying away.

Fire Services sent two members of its animal rescue team to the spot: they didn’t find an eagle, but a kestrel. The bird had sustained a serious injury to a wing and wasn’t able to fly. Rail traffic was halted to allow the team to catch the bird. It was then transported to a sanctuary to recover.

Wasn’t that a nice story for a change?



From Bottle to Bench

More than 1,100 lbs. of plastic that was thrown away during a music festival last year has been turned into furniture. Using a 3D printer, the waste – much of it from drink containers – became benches that are now in use at the headquarters of brewery AB InBev.

AB InBev has been working with different organizations to increase awareness of recycling and sorting waste among festival attendees. The regional president of AB InBev noted, “As Belgians, we’re proud of our beer and want to be able to keep brewing for a long time. Sustainability and a green policy are crucial.” The company’s aims include making 100% of its packaging from recycled or reusable materials by 2025.



Tiny Bubbles

No, we aren’t speaking of the song made famous by Don Ho. The contact bubble in Antwerp province has gotten smaller due to an increase in coronavirus cases. A late-night curfew, from 11:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. has been imposed. All non-essential outings are banned during those hours. Cafes and restaurants must close by 11:00 p.m.

Remote working is required except when impossible to do so. Masks must be worn in public places at all times, except when eating or drinking. Team sports are banned. In Antwerp city center, all events and festivals are cancelled.

Nationwide, Belgium has further tightened its coronavirus measures. Through at least August, the contact bubble has been narrowed to five adults outside the family living under one roof. Shopping must be done alone, unless accompanying children or a vulnerable person. A 30-minute shopping time rule has also been put back in place.

(Thanks to FlandersToday)

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CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE

September, 2020

Membership Renewal (Please detach and return)

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: () _____ **Email:** _____

Recruiting Member's Name (if applicable): _____

Date: ___/___/2020

Would you like to volunteer? If yes, please let us know how below:

Annual Fees Enclosed (check appropriately):

Single/Family (one per household) \$25.00 _____

Senior (70+) Single/Family (one per household) \$15.00 _____

Please note that complimentary memberships are automatically renewed.

