



# CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

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www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



April, 2021

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## Closed but Waffles for Sale

On April 3rd, we will again be selling carry-out packages of frozen waffles and sausages, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. or until they are sold out. The price is \$4.00 for a package of four waffle squares, and \$3.00 for a package of four sausages.

The Lacemakers are noting a time change for their meetings. Beginning in April, the group will meet at the Center, on the second Saturday of the month, from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

And, if all works out as we hope it will, we will hold a waffle breakfast at the Friends Circle on May 1st. At this point it is still tentative, but watch for May's newsletter and a broadcast email should anything change.

## News of the Membership

*Thank You* to Vicki Graves, Patrick and Karen Flaherty, Albert and Kathleen DeBo, and **Millie Kale** for their memorial donations for Dan DeBo.

*Sympathy* is offered to **Joan DeClerck** on the death of her son Jay, age 62, of Coal Valley, Illinois.

## Easter in Belgium

The word "Easter" in Belgium comes from the ancient German goddess, Eostre. The month of April used to be called "Eostremonat" (month of Easter). The festival of Eostre was celebrated around the spring Equinox. Easter is called "Pasen" in Dutch and "Paques" in French.

In folksy traditions in Western Europe, the fertility celebrations of old are combined with the Christian celebration of the resurrection. The resurrection of nature is combined with the resurrection of Christ as savior of humankind.

In Belgium, the church bells stop ringing on Good Friday at 3:00 p.m. when Jesus died on the cross, and they only start ringing again on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. to announce the opening of High Mass on Easter. During that time, the bells leave the church towers, fly all over to Rome, load up on chocolate eggs, and fly back to their church towers, after dropping the eggs into the gardens (and sometimes inside the homes on rainy days) of the good children of Belgium.

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## Why the Cap?

We've all seen, and perhaps have been part of, campaigns that utilize various symbols to show support for a cause. Red noses support programs for children living in poverty. Various colored ribbons and wrist bands support cancer awareness. Belgium has added a new symbol.

The highest sphere of the Atomium, the landmark for the 1958 Brussels World's Fair, recently donned a cap – more like a beany. The covering had nothing to do with the cold weather that Belgium recently experienced, but hoped to stimulate interest in a new campaign that was launched by Te Gek!?, a non-profit organization eager to promote discussion of mental issues.



The campaign was launched in February and intended to bring people together and make it easier to talk about psychiatric well-being. The group's campaign slogan is "Make the Head an Issue." Athlete Elodie Quedraogo designed a cap especially for the campaign. It is for sale or could be made by supporters themselves.

To publicize the initiative, Te Gek!? decided the highest sphere of the Atomium should wear the special cap, too.

## She Becomes a First

Wow . . . I never knew this existed, and I will bet you didn't either . . . the Women's Football League Association. It is designed to create the largest and most competitive women's professional full-tackle football league in the world. While women's tackle football teams and leagues have been around for decades, the most promising growth in number of teams and level of competition has taken place in the last five years. The WFLA has created the Women's Pro Football League and it is currently made up of 20 teams in two divisions.

Why this bit of history? Sarah Viola has become the first Belgian professional player in the league. She signed a five-year contract as a receiver with the Las Vegas Devils.



At the age of 10, Sarah was introduced to American football by playing flag football. Due to the lack of women's teams, she went on to play with the Brussels Tigers, surrounded mostly by boys, and winning three titles in the process. Sarah's talent was quickly noticed in a tryout combine here in the U.S., and scouts quickly put her in contact with many in the women's league. Sarah Viola will begin the season with her new American pro team this April.

(Thanks to *BE Bulletin*)

## Brief History of the East End Club

Back in 1938, a group of about 25 rolle bolle players decided to create a club for social and athletic events. They met at the Parkside Inn, located at that time at 331 - 34th Street in Moline. Within one year, the East End Bolders Club had nearly 100 members. In May, 1939, the State of Illinois issued the articles of incorporation to the group. Officers were Peter Pisman, Willis Gonahl, and Gustav Lanssens.

During October 1941, it was decided that the club would build a new home. A committee was appointed to raise the needed money and was authorized to purchase land and erect the building.

Beginning in early 1942, construction was started on the brick building. It would feature a clubroom, meeting room with space for dancing, a kitchen, and rolle bolle

courts. When completed, there would be no mortgage, as 100 members contributed the money for construction.

A two-day formal dedication program was held in May, 1942, and the new building was officially opened at 3712 - 4th Avenue. Dinner, dancing, and archery and contests were the highlight of the weekend, with nearly 2,000 taking part. By January, 1943, all members who loaned money for the club's construction were repaid, and membership totaled 300.

Over the years, the East End Club has been active with rolle bolle, archery, and bowling teams. It has held civic meetings, political rallies, social functions, and wedding receptions. It continues today as a spot for Belgians and the general public to socialize.

**He Helped Make it Work**



Robert Cailliau was born in Tongeren, Belgium, in 1947. When he was eleven, he moved with his parents to Antwerp. Following his secondary school education, he graduated from Ghent University as a civil engineer in electrical and mechanical engineering. He also has a degree from the University of Michigan in computer, information, and control engineering. During his Belgian military service, he maintained computer programming that simulated troop movements.

In December 1974, Cailliau began working at CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research). In 1987, he became group leader of Office Computing Systems in the Data Handling Division. While in that position, fellow CERN engineer Tim Berners-Lee proposed a computer text system for access to the many forms of documentation at, and related to, CERN. Berners-Lee created the system between September and December of 1990, calling it the World Wide Web.

During that same time, Berners-Lee and Cailliau co-authored a proposal for funding the project. Cailliau became a key proponent of the project and developed with Nicola Pellow, the first web browser for the classic Mac operating system called MacWWW.

In collaboration with another, Cailliau started the European Commission's first web-based project for information dissemination in Europe. As a result of his work with CERN's Legal Service, CERN released the web technology into the public domain on April 30, 1993.

Today we think nothing of shopping on line, doing our banking, posting on various social media forums, or checking for something on Google. Belgian Robert Cailliau helped make this all possible.

**Easter in Belgium**  
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Thus every Easter morning, the children of Belgium are hunting chocolate eggs and chocolate statues of rabbits. Eggs and rabbits – two symbols of fertility in many cultures.

(Courtesy of Global Beer Network)

**Town Hall Featured**

This editor does not play on-line games, and I'm not sure how many of our readers do, if any. But on-line and individual games are certainly popular with the younger crowd.

Gaming fans have been sharing their enthusiasm on social media after spotting the town hall of Brussels and other Belgian landmarks in this year's update to the popular Age of Empires II video game.

Bert Beekman, project leader for the game developer, told the Brussels Times: "It has been exciting to put something of my home country in a video game, especially since Belgium is rarely seen or represented in a video game. We drew inspiration from the Brussels town hall, although it had to be adapted visually to fit the world of Age of Empires."

The Brussels' impressive town hall is an architectural jewel dating back to 1401. Located on the Grand Place, it is considered a masterpiece of civic Gothic architecture.

Fans of the game are also finding many other nods to Belgian history.



CELEBRATE

*Easter*

APRIL 4th

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### Looking for Help

This past year has certainly been a trying one with the COVID pandemic, closed businesses, cancelled events, changing lockdown rules, and even the weather a few times. I'm going to throw one more into this mix. While activity at and around the Center has been pretty much non-existent, we have a need. Every year I make this plea, and this year is no different. **We need more VOLUNTEERS!**

If you look at the left-hand column of page one, you will note three open slots. There will soon be a fourth and a fifth. Our biggest need is a waffle chairperson. But we also need an archivist, and someone who might have ideas to market or showcase the Center. We will soon need a secretary and a genealogist.

The board is not getting any younger, and we cannot do everything. If you have some time and interest, and could lend support to YOUR Center, please let president Bill Cornelis know. And as always, thank you to those of you who do step up to help us.

### Early Retirement



The oldest gas station attendant in Belgium – even Europe – has retired after 64 years at the pump. Maria Van Hemel was notable not only for her age (88), but because she actually pumped the gas for the customers.

Van Hemel has run the Total station in Herentals, Antwerp province, since the day it opened in 1957. In her earlier years, she worked from 6 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., seven days a week. She is a beloved figure in Herentals, having served the local motorists since before many were even born.

Maria's husband once ran the garage behind the station, but he died several years ago. When Total decided to dismantle the station, she knew it was time to enjoy some retirement.

No doubt, after 64 years of dealing with customers, she has some great stories to tell.