



CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

1608 Seventh Street, Moline, Illinois 61265
(309) 762-0167
www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



August, 2021

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

August 7th	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 to 11:00 a.m.
August 9th	Board Meeting	5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
August 14th	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
September 19th	Belgian Fest	Noon to 4:00 p.m.

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

News of the Membership

Congratulations to **LeRoy DeBrabander** in celebration of his 90th birthday this past January 21st.

Thank You to: **Pami Triebel, Bill and Mary Cornelis, Lavone Slead, Alan Hoyt, Liz Desseyn, Leo Hugaert**, Jim Kron, and Jim and Carol Bowe for their generous donations to the Center.

Condolences are offered to: **Maureen Simpson** on the death of her brother, Donald Goethals, 88, of Bloomington, MN, who died January 20th; and to **Bill and Kathy Lootens** on the death of their son, Peter, 52, of Lake Charles, LA, who died June 13th.



The Fest is back again on Sunday, September 19th, from Noon to 4:00 p.m. at Stephens Park. As in the past, there will be a rolle bolle competition, Belgian horse rides, lace-makers, bands, Belgian beer, and food. More details will be forthcoming, but reserve the date, September 19th.

OPEN Wednesday and Saturday 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Waffle Breakfast 1st Saturday of August

Scholarships

On June 23rd, the CBC Scholars and the Ruth Lambrick Van Tieghem Scholarship recipients were announced at a reception at the Center. Lucas Bowe and Kaitlyn Curry each received \$750 to use for costs associated with their first year of college.

The Ruth Lambrick Van Tieghem Scholarship awards \$1,250 to a student who has completed two years of college and will be continuing with their college education. This year's recipient is Jessica Elliott.

The three recipients' heritage essays will be published in the next three newsletters, beginning with this issue.



Honoring CBC scholars Kaitlyn Curry and Lucas Bowe were Patrick Van Nevel, Steve Slininger and Bill Cornelis

Our first essay is by CBC scholar Lucas Bowe. Lucas graduated from Bettendorf (Iowa) High School and was a member of the National Honor Society and received the President's Award for Educational Excellence. Lucas volunteered at his school as a math tutor, for Big Brothers/Big Sisters with youth events, at King's Harvest in the soup kitchen and with making repairs, and at the Vineyard Church as a mission volunteer.

Lucas will attend St. Ambrose University and major in mechanical engineering.

My Belgian Heritage by Lucas Bowe

I recently spent some time talking with my grandma Bowe about our Belgian heritage. I discovered that her side of the family tree has roots that run deep into Belgian culture.



My grandmother's parents, Arthur "Art" Borgonjon and Margaret (Claeys) Borgonjon were both children of Belgian immigrants who had arrived at Ellis Island in the early 1900s. Being from the Flanders region, in northern Belgium, all of Arthur's and Margaret's parents spoke only Flemish, not French, which is the primary language in the Walloon provinces to the south.

My ancestors left Belgium because there was a famine, and people were starving. No one had money or provisions, but they saved up as best they could. Some of the family had bought land in the Plains States, sight unseen. Being farmers, when they finally saw the rich, black Midwestern earth, they said, "This is it."

Arthur Borgonjon was a bricklayer who helped build many streets and buildings in the Quad Cities area, many

of which are still around today. He also served as a Navy cook during World War II, where he learned to make amazing flapjacks. Margaret (Claeys) Borgonjon spoke Flemish well, because both her parents spoke mostly Flemish at home. Proud of their heritage, Art and Margaret were members of the Center for Belgian Culture, East End Club, and were avid rolle bolle players. In fact, Art was such a skilled bowler, he was once crowned the World Rolle Bolle Champion.

Arthur Borgonjon's parents, Alfonse Borgonjon and Martha (DeSmet) Borgonjon were florists who live in the Rock Island area. Alfonse raised carrier pigeons that were used during World War I. He trained them to deliver messages across enemy lines. After the war, Alfonse continued to raise and train pigeons. My grandma Carol remembered that he was part of a carrier pigeon group in Iowa who competed against another group in Minnesota. Whenever Alfonse and his group would send pigeons from Iowa to Minnesota, they would always be nervous about losing birds. The pigeons were susceptible to hawk attacks, and some didn't make it home.

Margaret Borgonjon's parents, Triphon Claeys and Philomena "Mina" (Andries) Claeys were farmers. Triphon and Philomena had several children, each of whom got their own land and vehicles, and spread out around the Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois area.

Just up the street from the Belgian Center was a shop called the Flemish Lion – named to honor the lions on the Belgian crest. This shop used to carry and sell Belgian lace. My great-great grandma Mina and great-great aunt Nellie made lace that they would sell in that shop. My mom even has some of the doilies that Nellie made.

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Belgian Heritage Essay
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My grandma recalled her great grandmother Mina made the best oliebollen (Belgian oil balls) and lukken (Belgian waffle cookies). She remembered spending days at her grandma's making the lukken dough, pressing the lukken with a special iron (lukjver) and then deep frying them. They sound so good. Another favorite treat she made was Leidenkugen, a honey desert bread. Making these deserts with her mom and grandma was one of my grandma Carol's favorite Christmas traditions. Still today, she follows this tradition with us grandkids. When we were younger, we would make all sorts of Christmas cookies with her.

I learned a lot about my Belgian heritage talking to my grandma. I will never forget it.

What is Lambic?

In talking to one of my friends about Belgian beers, he asked me, "What is Lambic beer?" I couldn't answer him, so I looked it up. And now you'll know, too.

Lambic is a type of beer that belongs to Brussels and the valley of the Senne River, where the yeast used for brewing is not added, but instead comes from the natural yeasts and organisms in the air. Because of its special nature, Lambic can only be brewed in the cool season, while the natural yeasts and bacteria have time to do their work. The production of Lambic brewers is therefore not year-round, which makes their products even more desirable in world markets.

Lambic is known as a sour beer, but people probably know it better as the basis for gueuze and kriel. Gueuze (pronounced "gooz") is a blend of several different years of barrel-aged beer. At a minimum, gueuze beers take three years to make. Kriel is a fruited sour beer flavored with cherries. I'm guessing that all three sour beers need an acquired taste.

It's Time to Renew

It's time to renew your CBC membership. **But please note: if you joined the Center after January 1, 2021, your membership is good until July 2022.** You'll find a membership application/renewal form with this newsletter. We hope you'll fill it out or make copies and give to your relatives or friends.

Walloon Municipalities Flooded

Heavy, week-long rains have caused massive flooding in southeastern Belgium. Ninety percent of Wallonia municipalities have been impacted. The official death toll is 31, and 163 people are missing or "probably missing." Walloon PM Elio Di Rupo thinks the amount of damage will amount to hundreds of millions of euros, maybe even billions.

Well over 30,000 households have no electricity, 20 villages have no drinking water, and about 2,000 tap water hubs suffered impact from the flooding. Most of those have now been repaired, but others will still need days to complete.

Here in the Midwest we've endured major flooding, but nothing like what is being seen in southeastern Belgium and southwestern Germany. Please keep these people in your thoughts.

(Thanks to Michael Torfs)



It's a Biggie

The third-largest diamond in the world, reportedly more than 1.5 billion years old, recently arrived in Antwerp from Botswana. The value of the 1,175 carat diamond – roughly the size of a baseball – can only be determined once an analysis is made. Best guesses put the worth at tens of millions of euros.

The gem, along with other diamonds of a five set piece, will be analyzed during the next four to six months to determine its exact composition, quality, thickness and purity. The set all together weighs 2,500 carats.

The diamond was sent to Antwerp, as it is the only city in the world that can process this kind of diamond. Before it is cut into smaller diamonds, it will go on tour.

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August, 2021

Membership Renewal (Please detach and return)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

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

Recruiting Member's Name (if applicable): _____

Date: ____/____/2021

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

**If you joined the Center after
January 1, 2021, your membership
is good until July 2022.**

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.

