



CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

1608 Seventh Street, Moline, Illinois 61265

(309) 762-0167

www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



November, 2021

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

November 6th	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 to 11:00 a.m.
November 8th	Board Meeting	5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
November 13th	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
November 27th	CBC Clearance Sale	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

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

News of the Membership

Condolences are offered to **Diane Gelaude** and **Marlene Gelaude-Shattuck** on the death of Diane's husband and Marlene's father, **Donald**, 81, of Orion, Illinois, who died September 25th at the Univ. of Iowa Hospitals and Clinic.

Thank You to **Diana Wagner** for her nice monetary donation to the Center.

It's a Clearance Sale

Saturday, November 27th, is "Small Business Saturday Clearance," and the CBC is joining in. Stop by the Center from 1:00-4:00 p.m. that day and save, as we clear out and make way for new merchandise. We will also have Belgian cookies for sale, bagged as St. Nick treat bags. What a great way to start the Christmas shopping season!

Need Help in Staffing

We need your help! We'd like to start staffing the Center and gift shop again. If you are a willing past or new host or hostess volunteer who could give us a little time, please contact Mary Gardner-Karcher at (563) 447-0160 or email her at gardnerkarcher@gmail.com.

OPEN Wednesday and Saturday 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Waffle Breakfast 1st Saturday of August

Let's Go Touring

Perhaps you'd like to enjoy a scenic ride on one of Bruges's canals. Or witness the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres. Maybe you'd enjoy seeing where many of the area's Flemings emigrated from and talk to people who might have known or about some of your relatives. How about shopping for Belgian chocolates in the Grand-Place of Brussels?

You will have a chance from August 26 - September 6, 2022, with the CBC Belgian Tour. The trip includes Brussels, Antwerp, the Bastogne area, Ypres, Bruges, Ghent, and the Tielt/Deinze/Nevele/Aalter area. There will be plenty to see and do, both scheduled and on your own.

For complete details, go to www.bluehorizon.net or contact Bonnie Newman at (309) 737-0059 or by email at bonnie@bluehorizon.net.



Menin Gate



Bruges Canal

Ideal Park on the Bluff

The Moline Belgian-American Club held many outings there. Our Belgian relatives played there as children, as did many of us older CBC members. It's a great neighborhood park today and is home to our Fall Belgian Fest and the CBC rolle bolle courts. But when, how, and why did Stephens' Park get started there?

It all began in 1909 when G.A. Stephens, president of Moline Plow Company, donated six acres of land on the top of the bluff, between 4th and 7th Streets. A smaller strip of land from 5th Avenue (along today's 4th Street) to the northern border of Stephens' donation was given by the Barnard and Coryn families. By 1911, the city had purchased other properties and the Stephens' Park totaled 24 acres. It, along with Riverside, Sylvan, and Prospect, would make up the park system for the city, along with three city playgrounds.

The city's plan for Stephens' included three playgrounds; one for boys, one for girls, and one for small children. The boys' playground will have a ball diamond and a football gridiron. The girls' area is to be north of the boys' playground and will have a tennis court and basketball court.

The children's play area would be at 7th Street and 15th Avenue and would include a wading pool. A double tennis court will be provided for grown-ups which will be located in the ravine between the children's and the boys' playgrounds.

The master plan for the park included pools and cascades and a road through a ravine starting north of the adult tennis courts and winding through to 5th Avenue. Another drive, from 5th Avenue and 4th Street to both 7th Street and 5th Street at 15 Avenue would include pedestrian paths and foot bridges. While the plan was a grand one, just how much would actually be accomplished was another matter.

Over time, the tennis courts, baseball diamond, football gridiron, basketball court, playground, rolle bolle court, and wading pool were all well-developed. Footpaths were created through the wooded areas, but the expansive plan for scenic drives and pools never really came to fruition.

Stephens' Park has stood the test of time, hosting many ball games, concerts, festive outings, and thousands of Belgian Bluff people enjoying its amenities. And that's the purpose of our Fall Belgian Fest.

Kewanee's Flemish-American Club

Belgian immigrant Peter Moens and a few of his friends had an idea. The men wanted to organize a social club for Flemish-speaking people who came to Kewanee from Flanders to find jobs and make a better life.

After a few discouraging years, the group invited a man who had helped organize Belgian clubs in Chicago to speak to the Flemish community. This was on Labor Day in 1933. Twenty-four people agreed to join. The first meeting was held and officers were elected in the rented hall over the Wooden Shoe tavern.

One of the first things the club did was to establish the Kewanee Belgian Club Sick Fund. In the days before health insurance, this would help members cover their medical expenses.

When membership reached 60 people, the club rented the third floor of the Odd Fellows Hall to serve as its headquarters.

In 1941, the club incorporated and moved to quarters above the Alcazar tavern. It also decided to accept all nationalities, and membership grew rapidly. At one time, the club had as many as 3,000 members.

The club decided to build its own building in 1948, and constructed the south half of its present complex at 313 N. Burr Blvd. That south side still houses a banquet room, kitchen, and lounge complete with an unusual double-horseshoe-shaped bar. Later, in 1961, a new hall was constructed on the north side of the 1948 building to accommodate larger dances and functions.

The Flemish-American Club still functions today and caters to wedding receptions, banquets, benefits, and parties of all kinds. Yet it also faces the same problem as the CBC . . . the aging of its membership.

This information was supplied from Dave Clarke of the Kewanee *Star-Courier*.



So Many Groups

Our Belgian heritage was strong back in 1930. The United Belgian-American Societies of the Tri-Cities was made up of the following groups: the Moline Belgian-American Club, Belgian Workmen's Union, Note's Band, Friends Circle, Moline Bluff Bolders, East Moline Hand-in-Hand Bolders, East Moline North End Club, Moline Pigeon Club, Moline West End Pigeon Club, East Moline Flemish-American Club, East Moline Pigeon Club, East Moline Duivenbond (duivenbond means "pigeon federation"), Rock Island Bolders, Moline West End Bolders, and the Rock Island Pigeon Club.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Fons the Robot Fights for Ghent

The City of Ghent has launched an offensive against the discarded cigarette butt, and in the battle, Fons the Robot has received pride of place. Fons is a conventional city waste bin, but one that has been fitted to an electric wheelchair platform.

The builder, Jan De Coster, fitted out Fons with all kinds of electronic and mechanical equipment that allows him to rove the streets of Ghent. Unfortunately, Fons, who weighs 440 pounds, cannot operate autonomously among crowds. For the time being, De Coster keeps an eye on the robot.

Not only does Fons collect discarded cigarettes, but also will strike up a conversation with smokers and encourage them to put their cigarette refuse in the bin.

Fons the Robot forms part of a wider campaign targeting discarded cigarette ends. Messages on street furniture encourage smokers to put their butts in the bin. 49% of waste discarded on Flemish streets consists of cigarette ends. The filters have a life expectancy of up to 15 years, and even after this time, microplastics remain present in the environment. Cigarette filters are routinely discovered in the stomachs of several animals, including birds. They are responsible for making these animals extremely sick.

As part of the campaign, smokers can also answer questions by throwing their cigarette butt in an appropriate slot on Fons. As part of the drive, 61 volunteers will count and collect discarded cigarette ends and particular spots across Ghent.

Fons the Robot

(Thanks to Colin Clapson)

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Ever Wonder?

Have you ever wondered how many 8 oz. glasses of beer a 13 gallon barrel contains? Unless you own a tavern, you probably don't know. And it may not be a question that has challenged your brain, but it has been an important issue in Belgium. It's been such an issue that the judges at the council of state, Belgium's highest administrative court, were called upon to rule. Pub landlords were convinced a barrel only contains 168 8oz. glasses, while the Belgian tax authorities insisted the number of glasses was 192.

The matter is of some consequence if you consider the tax implications of each side. Landlords are taxed on the basis of the number of glasses they can get out of a barrel.

The fight between pub landlords and the tax service has been foaming over for eight years, but the council of state has finally ruled in the matter. There is justice in Belgium! They ruled in favor of the pub landlords. We now all know how many 8 oz. glasses can be wrung out of a barrel: only 168 and that is 24 fewer than the taxman had been counting.

Your editor wonders if the next big battle will be whether or not the taxman will have to refund the taxes over-collected or not.

The King's Car

The Mahy family of Ghent owns hundreds of classic autos, both old and new. They recently displayed some of them as they are, dusty and without any restoration. All have stories to tell, like . . .

King Boudewijn's Aston Martin. The car was purchased by the Mahy family in the '70s for \$378 and noticed in documentation that the car had once belonged to the king. There were only 102 roadsters of this model manufactured, and the king evidently didn't use it much.

