



# CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

1608 Seventh Street, Moline, Illinois 61265

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[www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org](http://www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org)



December, 2021

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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

November 27th	CBC Clearance Sale	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
December 4th	Waffle Breakfast/Bake Sale	8:00 to 11:00 a.m.
December 6th	Board Meeting	5:00 to 7:00 p.m. <i>(note the change in date/time)</i>
December 11th	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
January 1st	NO Waffle Breakfast in January	

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

## A Special Thank You

After 15+ years as membership chairperson, Bill Coopman has retired from that position. He and wife Sandy have downsized and moved to a new home in Tremont, Illinois. The Center wishes to thank both Bill and Sandy for their volunteer work at waffle breakfasts and the Belgian Fests. Their stepping in to volunteer, whenever they were needed, will certainly be missed. We wish them well in their new locations and in their new home.

## Save at Our 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!

MERRY  
christmas

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

## History and Local Tie-ins, Sort of

Your editor was channel surfing the other night and landed on the History Channel. It was airing an interesting program about the building of the Panama Canal. It gave some history of the initial idea of the need of a canal, the problems the French were having building it, and why they gave up on the project. Suddenly, the name “Rock Island, Illinois” was superimposed across the screen. Now the program really caught my attention, and I realized that two local tie-ins, sort of, would be forthcoming.

President Teddy Roosevelt had persuaded Congress to take over the canal construction after the French gave it up. He hired John **Stevens** as its chief engineer. Stevens was a self-studied civil engineer who had been the chief engineer and general manager of the Great Northern Railway. At the time of his hiring by Roosevelt, he was a vice-president and chief engineer of the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad. Stevens was working in Rock Island at the time. That was historical tie-in number one.



Stevens’ primary achievement was to build the infrastructure needed for completing the canal. He began by building warehouses, machine shops, housing, schools, hospitals and churches for the workers. He began sanitation and mosquito-control programs to eliminate yellow fever and other diseases. He then rebuilt a railway to dispose of excavated soil. But with frequent landslides, Stevens realized that a sea-level canal (basically a ditch), the kind the French had tried to build, wasn’t going to work. He convinced Roosevelt that a high-level canal with locks and dams was needed. Then he quit.

To replace Stevens, Pres. Roosevelt appointed Col. George Washington **Goethals** as chief engineer of the canal in 1907. The second local tie-in came about in that surname. Most anyone who grew up around the Olde Town area of Moline knows the name Goethals. For many years, that name was associated with furniture and men’s clothing. I’m pretty sure “our” Goethals was not related to George Goethals, but interesting just the same.



Although George Goethals was born in Brooklyn, New York, his parents were immigrants from Stekene, Belgium. He won an appointment to West Point Military Academy and graduated second in his class in 1880. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army Corps of Engineers. By 1881, he was placed in charge of the completion of the Muscle Shoals Canal. He later was responsible for the design and building of a single lock with a lift of 26 feet, a world record for lock height.

Without going into further detail about its construction, the Canal was completed in 1914, two years ahead of the target date of June, 1916. Goethals was promoted to Major General and President Woodrow Wilson appointed Goethals as the first Civil Governor of the Panama Canal Zone. Goethals also went on to a storied and successful career in charge of the Quartermaster Corps, by establishing a system of standardization of bureau record keeping and supply chain planning.

So... one engineer had a connection to us through the Rock Island Railroad in Rock Island, and another had the same name as a well-known Moline family and was an honored, first generation Belgian-American. Local tie-ins... sort of!



### WAFFLES and BAKE SALE with St. Nick

**Saturday December 4th  
8:00 - 11:00 a.m.**

We are asking you great cooks/bakers for donations of pies, cakes, cookies, bread and any other goody you might create. Please bring them to Friends Circle on waffle day with a price marked on them. Our guests and St. Nick would certainly appreciate it.

## You Might Miss Out

As you have seen in past issues of this newsletter, we have been promoting the CBC Belgian Tour from August 26-September 6, 2022. Originally planned before the pandemic, it still covers the same locals: Brussels, Antwerp, the Bastogne area, Ypres, Bruges, and Ghent. But what makes this trip special is that it also includes time in the Tielt/Deinze/Nevele/Aalter area; the area from where many Quad-City Belgians emigrated. Our tour stop there gives you a great opportunity to visit with and be hosted by locals. And they are very interested in meeting you! What a great opportunity – one that many other tours don't offer. Of course there will be plenty to do in the bigger stops as well. But why would you miss a chance to meet people who may have known or known about your relatives?

For complete details, costs, and itineraries, go to [www.bluehorizon.net](http://www.bluehorizon.net) or contact Bonnie Newman at (309) 737-0059 or by email at [bonnie@bluehorizon.net](mailto:bonnie@bluehorizon.net).

## Must be Smoooth

Two bottles of the world's oldest whisky have recently sold for \$107,280.00 each in West Flanders. The single malt beverage was stored in a cask for eighty years and was recently divided into 250 bottles.

How did the whisky last so long? It was matured in a special barrel that allowed it to preserve its power and volume. Normally, 2% of volume is lost each year through evaporation. But this whisky is exclusive due to its age – eighty years. The climate is which it was stored, the alcohol content, and the taste – everything came together to allow it to hold its volume and flavor.

For over \$100,700 a bottle, it better be darn smooth tasting!



## Armistice Commemoration

The end of the Great War began with an armistice 103 years ago. Ceremonies of remembrance were held across Belgium on November 11th, with the ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres taking center stage.

The Last Post sounded for the 32,317th time under the Menin Gate; a memorial to British and Commonwealth soldiers with no known grave. It was along this road that many of the Allied soldiers left the town bound for the battlefields of Flanders. Many would never return. Over 55,000 names are inscribed on the Gate.

For soldiers, the Last Post originally signaled the end of their working day. But since 1928, the Last Post is also sounded at the Gate by volunteers of the Last Post Association, as a mark of remembrance.

After the sounding of the Last Post ceremony noting the armistice, red poppies of Flanders' Fields are scattered from the top of the Gate.

(Thanks to Colin Clapson)





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## **Brussels by Night**

NASA astronaut Shane Kimbrough recently offered the world a unique look at the Belgian capital. Traveling at 17,500 mph aboard the International Space Station, Shane took this picture of Brussels by night to share with the world.



## **Lukken**

This recipe makes 4 dozen.

- 1/2 dozen large eggs
- 1 lb. melted butter
- 1-1/2 oz. Whisky or Brandy
- 3 tbsp. vanilla
- 1 dash salt
- 1 lb. light brown sugar, packed (2 cups)
- 1 lb. white sugar (2 cups)
- 2 lbs. all-purpose flour (6 cups)

Melt the butter and let cool. Add eggs, whiskey, and salt, blend together. Add both sugars and mix thoroughly. While blending, mix in flour a little at a time until well blended. Remove any hard chunks of brown sugar. Roll mix into a tube and wrap with plastic wrap and store overnight in refrigerator.

Heat cookie iron on stove (a drop of water will sizzle when it's hot enough). Spoon a lump of dough on iron and close tightly. Cook for 20-30 seconds – until just lightly brown – and flip to other side for an additional 20-30 seconds. Repeat for each dough piece.