



CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

1608 Seventh Street, Moline, Illinois 61265

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www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



April, 2022

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

April 2nd	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 to 11:00 a.m.
April 9th	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
April 11th	Board Meeting	5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

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

We'll Ask Again

How does the CBC stay strong? By promoting what we do. By encouraging or gifting some memberships. By letting the Board know what programs you would like to see us do. But most importantly, by volunteering. Maybe you could help at a waffle breakfast, in the gift shop, or at the Flemish Fest. We are always in need of volunteers. You'll have fun, maybe meet some new people, and even receive a free breakfast or a beer. Please consider volunteering at the CBC!

News of the Membership

Condolences are offered to: the family of **Margie Sonnevile Galvin** on the death of husband **Joseph**, 84, of Naperville, Illinois, on January 30, 2022; the family of **Walt Sonnevile** on the death of wife **Pam**, on February 17, 2022 at the Wilson Health Center in Gaithersburg, Maryland; and to **George and Dianne VanVooren** on the death of Dianne's mother, Patricia Versluis, 94, of Moline, who died February 19, 2022.



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

Magritte Painting Sets Record

Last month's newsletter contained an article about how Belgian surrealist Rene Magritte's self-portrait painting, "Son of Man," influenced the Beatles in their Apple Corps LTD logo. Now, a Magritte painting, "The Empire of Lights," has influenced the art world by setting a new record at a Sotheby's auction; 71.4 billion euros. The painting has been described as one of the most sought-after artworks still in private hands.

Although the auction included work by Picasso, Money, Van Gogh, and Kandinsky, Sotheby's clearly decided the Magritte was the star attraction. The firm even transformed the front of its building into a tribute to the Belgian painter.

The painting dates from 1961 and was a popular theme. Magritte painted 17 versions in oils and seven more in Gouache. His first dates from 1948, but he returned to theme throughout his career. The version auctioned was intended for Anne-Marie Crowet, Magritte's friend and muse. Crowet was a Belgian tennis champion who married Belgian businessman Baron Gillion. The couple eventually donated their art nouveau collection to the Brussels Royal Museum of Fine Arts.

It's believed that for this version of "Empire," Magritte found inspiration in a street near Josephat Park in Schaarbeek, where he had moved in 1954.

(Thanks to Colin Clapson)



Sotheby employees re-create the painting.

Bet You Didn't Know This

One of the most widely used and effective military vehicles is – surprisingly – the bicycle. Silent, swift and inconspicuous, bikes were first used in 1875 by the Italian army. Bikes are useful in hit-and-run forays against superior forces, and a cyclist can pedal four times the distance he can walk, with a lot less energy.

Hundreds of thousands of bikes were used in World War I. Belgian bicycle commandos went behind German lines, sabotaging railroads and blowing up tunnels. By World War II, Military cycling was routine. Every German infantry regiment had a company of bike troops. The Japanese were masters of bicycle warfare, and bikes were an important factor in their invasion of Malaya in 1941.

Bikes really came into their own in Vietnam. Needing only a path and using no gas, they were ideal for jungle transport. The Vietnamese victory of the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 was made possible by an uninterrupted flow of supplies from the north. That flow was made possible by a complex system of about 180,000 porters, each one riding a bicycle modified to carry 500 lbs. of rice and ammunition.

History repeated itself during the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, as thousands of cyclists pedaled along the Ho Chi Minh Trail to provide supplies to the Vietcong. In the end, not even America's modern weaponry could prevail over the old, reliable bicycle.

(From "Significa" by Irving Wallace)

Higher Fines, More Included

Much like many states in the U.S., Belgium has a fine for using a mobile phone while driving. The fine for being caught doing that activity was recently raised from \$126 to \$192. But what makes Belgium's law different is that cyclists and people on mopeds or scooters can also be arrested. Using a mobile phone for GPS directions or as a source of music is only allowed if the phone is attached to a dashboard, or in the case of a bicycle or moped, the handlebars.

What makes the punishment different is not only the increase in the fine, but new drivers will have to retake their written and/or practical driving test.

Perhaps that would be a great idea to add to the rules in the U.S.!

Check Us Out

Now that a bit of our world seems to be back to normal, your CBC Board has been working to get back into the mainstream of things and a bit more modern.

First, our waffle breakfasts are back. Second, we've added a few new, more popular items in the gift shop. We've also added a way to pay for gift shop purchases with your credit card. Third, we have updated and modernized the website.

Our website has a totally new look, and you will now be able to pay for a new, or make a renewal membership, or make a donation or waffle breakfast sponsorship through the site. You can see what is on and when the Center's schedule and volunteer to help. There are new photos, with more to be added. We'll be updating constantly.

Check out the new website at:
www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org.

And don't forget, the Center for Belgian Culture is also on Facebook.

Financial and Mental Issues

Just like farmers and small business owners in the U.S., Flemish farmers are battling financial and mental problems over the high prices for raw materials and energy. Many are facing more costs that were never in trouble in the past.

Farmers at a Crossroads reported 232 cases for the whole of last year. This year, the organization has seen 70 new cases in January and February alone. If the trend continues, that would mean over 400 cases for 2022, nearly double the previous year's count.

Animal feed often includes raw materials from Russian or Ukraine, and everyone has felt the impact of rising energy prices. Sectors that normally manage to stay out of trouble, like the horticultural sector, are now having problems. With the high energy prices, they can hardly pay the heating bill for their greenhouses.

I think we can all feel their pain!!

Dan's Bones Arrive in Belgium

The first pieces of the skeleton of a new dinosaur have arrived at the Natural Sciences Museum in Brussels. The dinosaur, a diplodocus, was discovered in the U.S. in 2017 and has been partially dug up. Due to the pandemic, the project incurred many delays. It is now being brought to the museum piece by piece.

The dinosaur's remains were found in Kaycee, Wyoming, in a layer of earth believed to be 155 million years old. The quality of the fossils is reportedly excellent and paleontologists believe the skeleton is 85% intact.

The bones are packed in gypsum jackets and brought to Europe in a container. In Brussels, the jacket and the stones are removed – a time-consuming project. Reconstruction is expected to take at least two years.



SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER: For those of you whose son, daughter, or grandchild is planning on submitting an application for either the CBC Scholarship or the Ruth Lambrick VanTieghem Scholarship, the due date is fast approaching. The application and all materials asked for are due back by April 16th. The application forms were distributed earlier this year to all area high schools and colleges.

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Another Impact

Covid and the war in Ukraine are having another impact on energy and wheat prices to the extent that a loaf of bread will become 13% more expensive during the course of this year for Belgian consumers.

The 2021 reference price of 2.39 euros (2.62 U.S.) for an average loaf will rise to become 2.70 euros (2.96 U.S.). The main contributing factors are the Covid and the war sparking higher prices for raw materials. The biggest culprit is the cost of energy that rose 258%. Wages and general costs will also contribute.

Again, we can feel their pain!

(Thanks to Michael Torfs)

