



CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

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



September, 2022

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

September 3rd	NO Waffle Breakfast	
September 10th	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
September 14th	Board Meeting	5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
September 18th	Belgian Fest & Waffles	Noon to 4:00 p.m.

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



The Fall Belgian Fest returns for another year on Sunday, September 18th at Moline's Stephens Park. The Fest runs from Noon-4:00 p.m. and there will be music by The Happy Belgians and Gray Wolf Band. Plenty of Belgian beer, waffles, brats, Belgian Village Inn sandwiches, horse rides, lace making demonstrations, and even pigeons. Always a fund day, so bring the family and relive a little Belgian culture and fellowship that once took place at Stephens Park.



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

Scholarship Essay

Our second CBC scholar is Sophia Sumér of Tremont, Illinois. Sophia graduated from Tremont High School with a 4.0 grade average. She was the 2022 Graduate of Distinction, the highest honor given to a Tremont High senior. She was a member of the National Honor Society, received the 2022 Lion’s Club award for Academic Excellence, and received the 2022 Presidential Honor Award. Sophia was the homecoming queen and swim captain. She will be attending Bethel University in Mishawaka, Indiana, majoring in nursing.



My Heritage by Sophia Sumér

At a train station in Balikiser, Turkey, in the early 1960’s, a forty year old man could not help but notice a beautiful, short, young lady that was about half his age.

That man went over to get acquainted with the young lady on the train, and in a short time got to know her and her parents better. Soon after, he had to leave the country to work in America, where he was a medical student in training to become a physician. The two kept their correspondence by sending letters for the two years he was away. He then went back to Turkey and asked her to be his wife. They married, moved to America indefinitely, and had two sons: my uncle and my father.

I wouldn’t be here without my father who married my mother, whose family comes from Belgium. While I couldn’t find a love story on my mom’s side of the family that was quite as unique as the one of my grandparent’s on my dad’s side, I can trace back my Belgian family all the way to my great, great, great grandfather Coopman. Not only does my family have the written history of almost every family member from my great, great, great grandfather on, we also have pictures, the stories my relatives tell, and the cultural food that make me feel like I’m experiencing it all myself. And you may be thinking: how would I know what it’s like to be in Belgium? I know because I got to go there and see it all first-hand.

In the spring of 2018, my siblings, parents, and grandparents (Bill and Sandy Coopman) all went on a trip to Europe and had the once in a lifetime opportunity of meeting 50 of my Belgian relatives at once. We had reserved the lobby in the hotel where we were staying to meet with any relative who could come, but we were shocked when so many people joined us. When planning for this meet-up, my grandpa had contacted all the relatives he could (which totaled about 35), but we were all still in awe of the numbers in attendance. It was so cool to be able to look at scrapbooks, pictures, recognize names of distant relatives, and see it all unfold in front of me. It’s an indescribable experience to be able to meet and talk to all the people that make

up your heritage, talk about everyday life, and even update extended family photos.

For the rest of the trip, when we were no longer with the relatives, my family and I spent much of our time trying nearly every Belgian waffle vendor we walked by on the street, as well as enjoying pommes frites (Belgian fries) from vendors and trying every traditional Belgian restaurant and their delicious food as well. Now, we indulge in Lukken cookies every year around Christmas time, and we have nearly perfected the traditional Belgian waffle recipe. The experience and flavors that it creates in our Central Illinois kitchen takes me back to that unforgettable experience meeting my family’s history. Even now, without being surrounded by all the Belgian people, food, and culture, I always have a part of it within me.

One day I hope to take a family trip to visit my relatives in Turkey. While I have been blessed to enjoy some authentic Turkish cuisine that my grandma would make homemade, I’m sure it’s just a glimpse of the flavors that are consumed every day in the country. I hope to also see my relatives face to face, visit all the unique sites of Turkey, and understand more of their culture by being there to experience it myself. Maybe for now this is all just a dream, but someday it will be a reality.

Celebration of Culture

While trying to write something I hadn’t written about before, I decided to give a little information on Tielt (pronounced “tilt”). Many of our ancestors came to the Moline area from Tielt. Located in the province of West Flanders, the municipality comprises the city of Tielt and the villages of Aasele, Kanegem, and Schuiferskapelle.

Traces of Roman occupation have been found in the area of Tielt. A first mention of Tielt dates from 1105, and in 1245, Margaret of Constantinople, Countess of Flanders, gave the city its charter and founded a hospital there. Several years later, a market place and cloth hall were built.

In 1393, Phillip the Bold decided to hold an annual fair in Tielt, and the city became the growing center of the flax industry until the end of the 16th century. Times later became hard on Tielt as it suffered two major fires and epidemics including the plague.

During World War I, the city became the headquarters for the German army. Bombing during the Second World War was very destructive. Most of the city center had to be rebuilt. Today Tielt offers commercial, medical, and educational services to the surrounding region.

Good Eating

Recently, the city of Malmedy, in Wallonia, celebrated its 25th edition of the Brotherhood of the Giant Omelette. As the name suggests, the brotherhood prepared a giant omelette in the center of the city, utilizing as many as 10,000 eggs.

The brotherhood is part of a small international community of seven groups across the world. There are brotherhoods in France, Argentina, the U.S., Canada, and the French overseas territory of New Caldedonia.

Malmedy uses a frying pan nearly 27-feet in diameter, and its handle is nearly the size of a telephone pole. The celebration users nearly 10,000 eggs and more than a cubic yard of wood to make the fire. To stir the eggs, wooden spatulas just over two yards long are used.



The giant omelette is cooked Ardennes-style, with bacon bits and chives. Sounds like some might fine eating!



New Member/Membership Renewal



Member Lid Membre Mitglied

It is time to renew your CBC membership. Membership runs August 1, 2022, through December 31, 2023

Please send your member information along with your payment as soon as possible. Membership funds help to support a communal story. A story of shared cultural pasts and presents. A story of cherished family heirlooms, literature, photographs, traditional cooking, and cultural events. A story that invites others to experience the Belgian community heritage. We encourage you to continue joining in the preservation and education of our area's Belgian heritage. Also, we encourage and invite all members to volunteer their time, efforts, and talents – or even volunteer to learn new talents.

The Center for Belgian Culture cannot continue without the support of its members.

Please complete the information below and return the form with membership fees (one per household) to: Membership, Center for Belgian Culture, 1608 - 7th Street, Moline, IL 61265.

----- Detach and Return This Form -----

New Member (\$35) Renewal (\$35) Donation \$ _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number (____) _____ Recruited by (if applicable): _____

Email (for newsletters and mailing lists): _____

Check all that apply: Please add me to waffle breakfast notification email list

Please contact me if volunteers are needed Best time to call: _____

Waffles Fest Museum Other

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September, 2022

Some Thoughts and a Special Thank You

I don't believe any of us join/support a group for any recognition. Nor do we volunteer with a group for any glory. We do it because we care, and it is the right thing to do if we have the time. Sometimes we don't realize the amount of time an individual or individuals have given to an organization. Those people do it for the love of helping a worthy group. Your editor has spent 22 years writing the CBC newsletter. I do it because I like it. Others have been involved much longer than I have.

Patrick and Karen VandeKerckhove were volunteers, handling a variety of duties, for over 30 years. They did it because they felt strongly about supporting the Center and the Belgian heritage in the Quad Cities. **Patrick** passed away in June of this year. He asked that the CBC be noted as one of three organizations to be honored in memory of his death. I just learned that we received the largest gift of memorials in the history of the Center. To Karen and the entire VandeKerckhove family, THANK YOU! Truly, it was a fitting memorial response from the friends of Patrick and Karen.

You might wonder why your editor is writing this. Mainly, it is to "stir the pot," so to speak. With Covid and inflation, waffle patronage is down. Since our forced move a number of years ago, our overhead has increased almost two-fold. And I want to see the Center to continue! There are programs your board would like to do, but volunteers are needed to help. Where do volunteers come from? The membership. We need additional membership. And yes, income.

Whether it be your attendance or promotion of our waffle breakfasts, naming the CBC as a memorial recipient, sponsoring some memberships, waffle breakfasts, or newsletters, or volunteering at the Belgian Fest, any and all of those would help. I'm not begging. I'm just noting ways of helping keep the flame of Belgian heritage in the area burning brightly.

Having said all of this, your board thanks all volunteers for their continued support and service to the CBC. Hopefully, we say this enough.