



CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

1608 Seventh Street, Moline, Illinois 61265

(309) 762-0167

www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



December, 2022

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President
Steve Slininger

Vice President
Laurie Boussemaere Elliott

Secretary
Mary Gardner-Karcher

Treasurer
Ann Noyce

Member at Large
Gary Francque

Honorary Consul
Patrick Van Nevel
pvannevel@msn.com

Membership
Marlene Gelaude-Shattuck

Waffle Breakfast
Bill Cornelis
Kim Kochuyt

Genealogy
Mary Gardner-Karcher
gardnerkarcher@gmail.com

Scholarship Committee
Laurie Elliott

Belgian Fest
Bill Cornelis
tbd

Newsletter Editor
tbd

Gift Shop
Jim Ege

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Sat, Nov. 26th	Small Business Saturday	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Sat., Dec. 3rd	Waffles with St. Nick	8:00 to 11:00 a.m.
Sat., Dec. 10th	Lacemakers	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

The Center will be closed after December 17th until the New Year. As the season of inclement weather is upon us, and we wish to keep you safe, please contact the Center (309-762-0167) prior to venturing out.

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

Small Business Saturday Sale

On November 26th, we will be having a clearance sale from 1-4 p.m. Everything will be discounted. We want to clear out merchandise to allow focus on our exhibits. There will be a silent auction of some beautiful lace pieces, with winning bids ending on December 11th at our Christmas Party. We will also be running a Christmas special on memberships. Purchase a \$35 membership as a gift, and select from one of the following: cookbook, apron, or klakke for each membership purchased.

News of the Membership

Thank You to all our renewing members! We are very grateful for all you – and appreciate the donations many of you included with your dues.

At our annual meeting on November 9th, Officers and Chairpersons for the Center were elected by all present. See the list to the left. The terms will last until 2024. We do have spots open for the Newsletter and Belgian Fest. If you would like to volunteer to help on any of the committees, please contact one of the officers.

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

Heating Costs in Belgium

by Patrick Van Nevel

After volunteering at the Center this afternoon, I checked some Belgian news headlines. As frequent visitors to Belgium where we enjoy the sidewalk cafes, one item particularly caught my attention: “Cafe manager charges \$.20 for 10 minutes of heat...”.

As some of you know, Belgians really like to “een terrasje doen” or enjoy a beverage or snack at a sidewalk cafe. The corona pandemic together with a ban on smoking inside have led to a large increase in sidewalk seating - where smoking is allowed. Most of those spaces also have gas heaters. While we here in the U.S. have seen a large increase in gas and our utility bills, it does not compare to the increased cost in Belgium.

In a news video I learned that to compensate for these costs, the Antwerp Mombasa cafe is charging \$0.20 for 10 minutes of relative comfort thanks to a gas heater. You just put 20 cents in the slot and you will enjoy heat for 10 minutes. When the 10 minutes is up, the heat stops and you can feed it another 20 cents.

The manager explains the monthly utility deposit went from \$550 to \$2,730 and rather than raising the price of a drink or snack, Mombasa charges this price for “comfort.” Both smokers and non-smokers interviewed do not seem to mind that extra cost for being able to sit under a space heater while enjoying their beverage or smoke. Other establishments

leave the heaters off. Wonder if smoking patrons will kick the habit and enjoy a beverage inside going forward? I personally hope so. Not only is it unhealthy, but we also find it frustrating to be forced to inhale secondhand smoke when on a “terras” in Belgium and other European countries where smoking is more prevalent than here.

According to energyprice.be, between September 2021 to September 2022, the annual gas bill of Belgian households has increased by € 1,245.49. Although the price of gas has risen drastically in recent months, the gas bill of Belgians remains one of the lowest in Europe. If we analyze by region, the rise is equally as impressive:

- + € 1,261.20 in Brussels (from € 1,709.69 in 2021 to € 2,970.89 in 2022);
- + € 1,271.92 in Flanders (from € 1,617.91 in 2021 to € 2,889.83 in 2022);
- + € 1,203.31 in Wallonia (from € 1,890.29 in 2021 to € 3,093.60 in 2022).

That Flemish bump of € 1,271.92 would equate to an increase in a U.S. bill of \$1,313. The impact in Belgium is especially felt by small business owners operating on already tight margins.



**CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE
of Western Illinois, Inc.**

1608 Seventh Street, Moline, IL 61265