



NEWSLETTER

2/ 2012

Calendar of BCSC Activities for 2013

JANUARY

New Year's Reception
Save the date:
January 10 : 7PM – 9 PM

FEBRUARY

Chandeleur/Pannekoeken feest.

MARCH

Wine Trip

APRIL

Hike

MAY / JUNE

Open to Member-suggestions

JULY

Annual BBQ beach party

AUGUST 18, 2013

Pétanque hosted by LA
Pétanque Club

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

Open to Member-suggestions

NOVEMBER

Annual Brunch

DECEMBER

Open to Member-suggestions

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that we are almost at the end of 2012.

I would like to welcome our new Consul General, Ambassador Rudi Veestraeten and his lovely wife, Mireille. I would also like to welcome our new Consul, Nicolas Fierens Gevaert, but don't be alarmed, our Consul, Alain Leroy is still here too. Alain Leroy is Consul / Deputy Head of Mission and Nicolas Fierens Gevaert is Consul (Economic & Public Diplomacy). Please see bio's and photos further in the Newsletter.

I am sorry we had to cancel our wine trip this year, but we do plan on possibly organizing one in the beginning of 2013. We have had the opportunity to have these great wine trips to Temecula and the Santa Ynez Valley over the past few years largely due to my VP, Marc Claessens. He has not only donated his time and dedication but has donated the use of his tour buses. His company, LA Excursions, luckily has been doing well and as we all know business comes before pleasure, alas...no bus to donate for our trip this year. I am happy that he is successful in this economically challenged time and thank him immensely for his participation in these trips...and I must say...while all those behind that driver's seat begin partying on the bus the minute they are picked up, Marc stays 100% focused to and from our destinations...Thank you Marc for all your years of devotion for our club.

In the beginning of April we had our day at the Santa Anita race track...it was a great day, but sorry to say we don't have any pictures to share. Sadly our long time member, Christian Beernaert lost his camera that day with all the pictures...if anyone out there has some to share, please they are always welcome to be emailed to me and possibly be placed on our new website.... The event had a great turn out as the food was flowing although I was in the parking lot handing out the entry tickets and figuring out what kind of April fools jokes I could come up with...and I did.

In May we had the Congo night at Brigitte's house, my VP2's house. It was a very small group but it was a learning experience and great to see the trip through the eyes of Brigitte and her husband, Philippe. (Article on page #5).

In April our long-time website was hacked or stolen...and we still haven't gotten to the bottom of that, but we launched a new one...www.belgianclubsocal.com...(com instead of .org!!!). David McCue, one of my directors, began all the leg work in getting a new site up. As his schedule got busier,(as you may all know: all the members of our Board are volunteers); I had to find another source. I would like to thank Ben Bull, a fellow Pétanque player, for his website savvy and bringing this new BCSC website to life.....it is still in its beginning stages... a lot more is to come, so keep checking our website!

June was our Nethercutt Museum trip organized by Sandy Casci, my secretary. Although I wasn't able to make that event, I have only heard great comments about it. Please see the article and pictures on pages # 6 & 7.

Then the summer arrived...off to the Beach we went for our annual National Day Beach BBQ. Last year it had to be canceled because of carmagedon...but no stopping us this year. Location was Mother's beach this year....It was great to see a lot of new faces out there...thank you. August – Pétanque....always a successful event...and one of my favorites. Please see the article and pictures on page # 9.

Lastly, I really love this club and I have been involved for years. I would like to emphasize how important it is to have our members and their friends participate in our events. We are a non-profit organization and our club can only survive as long as we have you, your family and friends participate in our events. We really don't make a profit on any of the costs we charge for our events; in fact we tend to lose money. Donations to our club are always welcome and we thank those that sponsor us. You could be one too. I would like to thank all our dedicated sponsors (see page #10), our new sponsor for 2012: the Brussels Bistro, and for 2013: Brouwerij Van Steenberg and Global Beer Network.

I wish you all a very happy Holiday Season and I look forward to seeing all our members or future members at our New Year's Reception, on Thursday, January 10, 2013.



Thank you,

Christiane (Chrissy) Lion
Your 2012 President



The Belgian Club now proudly accepts credit cards . For an additional minimal fee you can now pay for all our events by creditcard and do away with sending checks in.



Rudy Veestraeten
Consul General of Belgium



I have the pleasure to announce my recent arrival in Los Angeles as the new Consul General of Belgium.

My wife Mireille and I are thrilled to be part of the Belgian community in the United States of America West of Mississippi in the coming months and years. My team at the Consulate General is committed to providing Belgians with a professional, friendly and efficient service. I aim at excelling in our consular work, because I strongly believe that you deserve the best possible customer service. I consider it my core duty to optimize the branding of Belgium in the USA West of Mississippi. In the coming years, I will multiply the efforts already done by all of you on a daily basis.

Belgians living and working here have a splendid reputation of being hard working and modest people who also know how to party when the time is there. With these strengths, we can do a lot and maybe even a lot more. My team and I can't do this alone, so we will count on every available Belgian citizen to join us.

Alain LEROY: Consul/Deputy Head of Mission at the Consulate General of Belgium



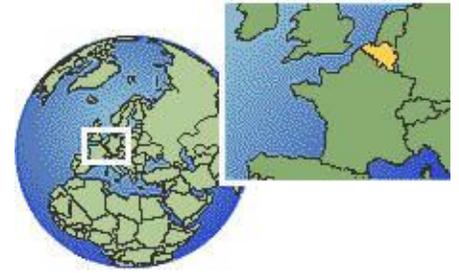
I was born in Brussels in 1966. After my graduation as a translator, I married my wife Isabelle. We are the proud parents of two children, Clara and Theo. We arrived in Los Angeles during the summer 2012.

As Deputy Head of Mission at the Consulate General of Belgium, my scope of tasks is highly varied. I am mainly dealing with consular and administrative affairs and act as the focal point for the Belgian community. Should you have any question regarding a passport renewal, a notary deed or the Belgian citizenship, do not hesitate to contact me or my team.

Los Angeles is my second posting after Kinshasa and a short assignment in Barcelona. Before embracing the diplomatic career, my passion for foreign languages gave me the opportunity to work as a translator for the European Union and to travel in most parts of the world.

I look forward to meeting you at a future event of the BCSC!





Nicolas FIERENS GEVAERT:

Consul Economic and Public Diplomacy Belgian Consulate

I joined the Consulate General of Belgium in August and will be dealing with economic and public diplomacy for the next four years. After a few months at the Embassy in Washington, DC, this is actually my first official posting as a Belgian diplomat.

I was born in Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve (Brabant wallon) in 1981. My first professional experience was as a business lawyer in Brussels. Since international affairs and politics have always been appealing to me, I eventually decided to embrace this passion by studying international law in Boston. This gave me the opportunity to work as a human rights advisor for the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the United Nations in Geneva, before joining the Belgian Foreign Service in 2011.

I am eager to promote Belgium in the USA West of the Mississippi!

BCSC MEMBERSHIP RATES 2013

\$35.00 is for a single membership (individual only)

\$65.00 is for couples, spouses (dual membership)

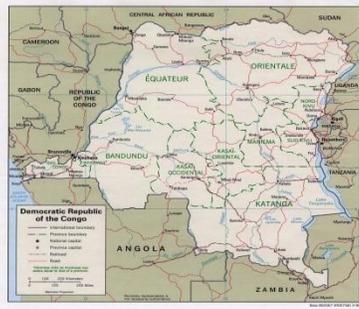
\$150 is for sponsorship

So, for the events it is only the paid Members who pay Membership price. Their additional guests pay the Non-Member price.

This is the only way that we can keep costs for our events as economical as possible.

Belgian Club of Southern California – CONGO EVENING May. 2012.

A great time was shared by all who attended the special event “CONGO EVENING” presented by Brigitte Gaviola-Bequet at her home in Westchester, CA on the evening of May 20th. Refreshments of food and drink were provided throughout the evening. Attendees included Belgian Club members and special guest, Alain Leroy, Belgian Consul in Los Angeles, who had completed his post in Kinshasa Last year.



Border to border.

Wagenia fishermen.

Having spent her two first years of her childhood in the Belgian Congo, Brigitte added a personal touch to the journey that she and her husband Phillip piloted to her former country of residence.



Seeing Europeans for the first time.

Congo River.



After landing in Kisangani, formerly known as Stanleyville, their travel was accented by a river boat trip up the Congo River. Note that tourism travel was not recommended for many years until more recently. The stark contrast of decades of non-Belgian influence and the result of several war torn conflicts was apparent in the architecture and infrastructure visible in the photographs and observations added during the one hour plus presentation.



“Where’s my house”?

A sad reality in hopes of locating her former home sight intact, was finding a pile of bricks dutifully stacked for removal by others at the once beautiful setting as Brigitte elaborated on her childhood memories.

By David McCue

BCSC VISITS THE NETHERCUTT MUSEUM AND COLLECTION

IN SYLMAR: June 19th 2012

One of our members was asked to write an article about this visit. Since he had no time, he nevertheless sent me a short but very nice note. Well, I lost it, or let's say « misplaced » before sending it to our president so here I am writing the article myself! Next time I will pay much more attention as not to lose time any more.

The Nethercutt ... I thought this place was only about cars. Having a car-crazy husband, I was thus not astonished when he said he would join us for this visit. So there we drove to Sylmar to meet the other Belgians at the entrance of the museum.

Well, there were many cars indeed, more than 130. But next to these cars, there is a wholly guacamole lot more! Let me explain.

We have the *Nethercutt Museum* = cars, where a self-guided tour leads you through decades of car history. Their library is very comprehensive on all vintage automobile topics (says Philip who really knows what he is talking about). Outside, you discover a 1937 Canadian Pacific Locomotive and a 1912 Pullman Private Car that make you dream of adventurous train travels.



Then, we have, at the other side of the street, the *Nethercutt Collection* which you can only visit with a guided tour. Our guide made us repeat, right hand in the air "*I swear...that I will not...touch any car...*" First time ever I experience a guide doing that; this should be implemented at some other museums too! The Lower Salon of the collection shows several cars, dolls, coins and crystal figurines.



And then followed the Grand Salon which does not steal its name: a huge majestic ball room with remarkably shiny automobiles. And there, we saw her, we admired her, we

gathered around her to take a group photo (blur, unfortunately) ... a Belgian car, the 1930 Minerva! These cars were built in Antwerp for years starting in 1903. One even won the Belgian Circuit des Ardennes in 1907. They were comparable to the Rolls Royce but cheaper. Charles Rolls was even at a time a Minerva dealer in England and Henry Ford owned one (cfr. Minerva website <http://www.minervacars.com/a/history>)



Upstairs in the Music Room we found another surprise. This room displays a world-class collection of automated mechanical instruments including nickelodeons, music boxes, European orchestrions and more. What a sophistication... What an engineering! Now, the other surprise is the fact that one of those huge



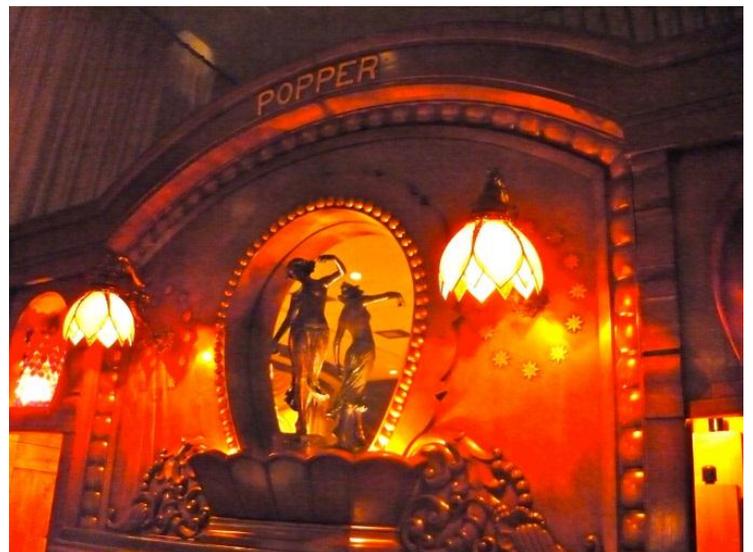
orchestrions - automated organ designed to sound like an orchestra or band, as big as a whole wall - was built in Belgium, and brought here from a café in Belgium where it had been used for decades. In fact, Flanders was well known for the production of these “dansorgels” all the way until the 50’s. In French we would say “orgue de danse” although “limonaire” might be used but wrongly as it means “draaiorgel” (ok let’s stop there before we sum up all the kinds of orgels and orgues we have in Belgium). According to the internet, there still should be an orchestrion in café Beveren in Antwerp, in several other Flemish places and one in Wallonia, café Bellevue in Ronquieres. I mention it just in case you would wander in those areas during your next visit to Belgium.

Another kind of organ is the “pipe organ” and here comes the “bouquet final”. After such a long time on our poor feet, we are kindly invited to sit down and listen to a concert of the “The mighty Wurlitzer”, one of the largest of its kind. Just imagine this one playing the background music of an old black and white silent movie... speaking of ... the event “Silent Movies and Organ” will take place end of October, and “Christmas Concerts” in December. Check the website <http://www.nethercuttcollection.org/>.

Let’s end by mentioning that this whole collection was privately owned by J.B and his wife Dorothy Nethercutt until he decided to share his masterpieces with the public, opening the museum in 1971.

JB’s statement: *“The recognition and preservation of beauty has been a major focus of my life. It would suit me well if what people remembered about me was, ‘Where he went, he left beauty behind.’”*

This was an incredibly interesting afternoon, thank you Sandy for having organized this event.



Brigitte Gaviola-Bequet



BCSC Summer Picnic

by Nate Wunderman



Marina del Rey, CA. On a mild and overcast day not unlike what one would experience on the sea shore in Ostend, West Flanders, the Belgian Club of Southern California gathered for its' annual Summer picnic this past July 22 at Mother's Beach. The attendance figure was estimated to be over 50 by BCSC President Chrissy Lion, "I approximate there were 55 attendees; I personally cooked 63 burgers, so there could have been more."

The annual BCSC event is to honor Belgian National Day, which commemorates the day in 1831 when Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha took the oath to become the first King of the Belgians, Leopold I. The prior year's event had been cancelled due to the 'Carmageddon' weekend closure of the 405 Freeway. BCSC officials reckoned this year's edition of the event was the best attended in at least five years.

The space for the event was secured by a variety of means. Lion and BCSC Secretary Sandy Casci arrived at 7:00 AM on the day of the event. In true Los Angeles style, a homeless man named Chuck aided in maintaining order for the price of a hamburger and a beverage. The event was not broken down until well into the dinner hour.

The attendees varied from BCSC stalwarts like club Vice President Marc Claessens, Christian Beernaert (along with his 'lemonade'), and Felix Legrand. Many BCSC members brought their families along, including special guest, Counsel Alain Leroy. Another attendee of note was *Vlaamse Hollywood Vrouwen* cast member Linda Op de Beeck, lending the event a show business whiff with a Belgian flair.

The cuisine of the day was a mix of traditional American barbeque fare mixed with Belgian style side dishes. For the main dish, there were hamburgers with a variety of Belgian-influenced and homemade condiments. Said side dishes included a multitude of potato dishes as varied as their creators. Also included was a cucumber salad with garden fresh dill and several desserts.

According to BCSC officials, all had a good time and the event went off successfully.





Belgian Day

Pétanque Tournament

The Belgian flags fluttered over the Los Angeles Pétanque Courts in the early morning hours as Belgian Club



members and Los Angeles Pétanque Club members arrived. After checking in with the



tournament organizers croissants, pastries and hot coffee was made available and old and new friends met, mingled and warmed up. Approximately 40 competitors showed up, enough to cause a bit of confusion and extra preparation at the organizer's table.

The tournament was a panache format, meaning for every round of games new teams were created by the organizers, meaning you never knew who you were going to play with, or against. After a group picture the organizers called out the teams and the games began.



Two rounds of games were played before we all broke for lunch, and what a lunch it was! A fantastic spread that included steak tartar, Cesar salad and an amazing smoked tri-tip that came with your choice of mushroom gravy or creamy peppercorn sauce. Then there were the Belgian beers, wines and other assorted treats, finished off by a selection of desserts. You could tell a good time was being had over lunch by the steady stream of



laughter and good cheer, led by the ever ebullient Chrissy le Lion.

After lunch the organizers called out new teams and a few more games were played.



After the last game the organizers and judges huddled and the individual scores and wins were tallied for the final results. They were announced with some fanfare and the giving of medals: first place to Artem Zuev, second place to Veronique Haour and third place to William Widmaier.



All told the Belgian Day Tournament was a day filled with fun, laughter, competition, sportsmanship, good cheer, comradely and lots of great food. What more could you ask for!



By William Widmaier

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Brouwerij Van Steemberg and Global Beer Network



Mailing Address only!!!!!!

Belgian Club of Southern California

22137 Gault Street
West Hills, CA 91303

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1st Vice President	Marc Claessens
2nd Vice President	Brigitte Gaviola- Bequet
Secretary General	Sandy Casci
Treasurer	Annie Rahier
Director	David McCue & Pascal Dropsy

Newsletter: Mia Carremans-Bulcke

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