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Let it bee

Bees in Flanders are dying out in record numbers, raising concerns about future food supply

ALAN HOPE

“A beekeeper doesn’t let it get him down when he’s faced with a major loss in his hives. Bees and beekeepers will never die out completely.” Achiel Geurts spoke philosophically, back in April, after finding out his beehives in Lanaken in Limburg province had been stricken with the condition that’s annihilated bee colonies worldwide. “About 70% didn’t make it,” he said. “But it was my own fault.”

Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) is the new name for

an old phenomenon, previously known as disappearing disease, spring dwindle or autumn collapse. The first published report dates back to 1869 in the US, and there were epidemics on the Isle of Wight in England between 1905 and 1919 in which 90% of the island’s bees died.

The phenomenon is characterised by three main factors, all present at the same time: young bees have been left behind; there is plenty of food stocked; and the

queen is still present. Since about 2007, it has become more common than in the past, with reports of CCD coming from as far afield as the US, Taiwan and across Europe. According to a report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in March this year, CCD has now been identified in China and Japan, as well as in Egypt.

► *continued on page 5*

Up in smoke

Federal health minister Laurette Onkelinx is expected to reject a request from an unidentified tobacco company for permission to put more additives in its cigarettes which would make them more attractive to young people. Expected, because the decision can only be taken after the minister has referred the request to the Health Council for its expert advice. There’s every likelihood they’ll agree with a refusal, but the rules are the rules.

The company wants to add three new additives: E133, which will cause the cigarette to produce blue smoke, which is thought to be considered cool by young people; E418, which makes tobacco smoke taste less bitter, but which also has a laxative effect; and MCT, or Middle Chain Triglyceride, which has an appetite-suppressing effect. The additives are all approved for use in the EU. E133 is used in ice cream, tinned

peas and shampoo; E418 is found in soya milk; and MCT has legitimate medical applications.

However it is the cigarette company’s aims rather than their ingredients that are likely to arouse ministerial opposition. At a time when young people are continuing to buck the trend of giving up smoking, any attempt to attract them to cigarettes would be politically impossible to justify.

Cigarettes already contain up to 499 additives, none of which needs to be listed on the packet as an ingredient, including aldehydes, alcohols and acids, but also liquorice and cocoa. Most are added to the tobacco, but some are used in the filter, paper and even the ink printed on the cigarette. When burned, they produce up to 4,000 different compounds, some of them extremely toxic – and that’s in addition to the tobacco smoke itself.



Parties pause for reflection

New coalition talks begin next month

ALAN HOPE

The Belgian political parties are once more round the table, with one notable exception, in an attempt to finally find a breakthrough in negotiations to form a government, now more than 400 days after the voters made their choice. Or at least they will be, when they return from holiday in mid-August. Last week, following the decision of CD&V president Wouter Beke to join coalition talks on certain conditions, the stage seemed set for the final push. The King, whose National Day speech to the nation had particularly stressed the urgency of finding a solution, then made something of an about-turn; according to a statement from the palace, “The King suggested introducing a pause in the discussions until the middle of August.” The weary negotiators could go off on holiday with Royal Assent.

When they return, they will be sitting down to discuss the document produced early in July by French-speaking socialist leader Elio Di Rupo, which contained detailed plans for state reform, budget balancing and social reforms. Some of the sections of that 100-page discussion document, though, have been dropped for the time being, in a move designed to bring CD&V to the table. Those sections, referred to dismissively as “ballast”, include issues relating to the status of French-speakers in the Flemish municipalities around Brussels, a proposed federal electoral list, and voting rights in the Brussels periphery. They are formally being passed over to working groups, though many wonder if they will ever be seen again.

► *continued on page 3*



ALAN HOPE

Leo Peeters

Last week Leo Peeters (sp.a), the mayor of Kapelle-op-den-Bos in Flemish Brabant announced he was stepping down from politics after 24 years, off and on, on the job. Not exactly front-page news, except that the man in question was, and in a way still is, at the centre of one of the thorniest problems of language that divide the country to this day. Leo Albert Elisabeth Peeters was born in Kapelle-op-den-Bos in May 1950. He was first elected to the town's municipal council in 1977, and immediately became mayor. In 1989 he was elected to the national parliament, which he left in 1995 to become minister of employment and social affairs in the Flemish government. Later the same year he also took on the portfolio of internal affairs.

It was in that capacity that, in December 1997, he issued what has become known as the Peeters circular, sent to the governors of the five provinces in Flanders region, and laying down the rules for the official use of language in the Dutch-speaking areas. Its most controversial aspect concerned the interpretation of the language laws in the so-called facility municipalities, mainly in the area surrounding Brussels. Those facilities had been laid down earlier, but the Peeters circular took a restricted view of the exceptions to the language laws provided for the French-speaking minority.

The facilities, in Flemish eyes, had

been intended as a transitional regime to allow French-speakers already living in the areas concerned to integrate into the over-arching Dutch-language regime. That, however, turned out not to be the case in practice, as more and more French-speakers – both native speakers and foreigners whose second language was French – came and settled in the municipalities concerned.

The Peeters circular, in effect, made it more difficult for non-Dutch speakers to avail themselves of the right to communicate in French with the local authorities, by forcing them to make a specific request for facilities every time a municipal service was called upon. Previously, facilities had been extended to French-speakers automatically upon a single request.

The circular was attacked by French-speaking politicians not only in the areas concerned, but also in Brussels and Wallonia. Opposition led to a battle in the courts, with the Council of State finally upholding the circular. As Peeters himself bows out of politics, his circular is still in force.

Peeters left the Flemish government in 1999, but stepped back into the headlines five years later as the representative of the mayors of the municipalities around Brussels, who were calling for the electoral district Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde to be split. That problem still awaits an outcome.

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FLANDERS TODAY

JULY 27, 2011

News in brief

Eight out of 10 Flemish people are willing to give **money to good causes**, but far fewer are willing to give up their time for charities, according to a report for the Flemish government. In 2009 one in five people did voluntary work averaging 4.5 hours a week, mainly for organisations involved with the elderly, the handicapped, youth, sports and culture. In 1996, however, while the number of workers was the same, the average time spent was seven hours a week.

Marcel Belgrado, since 2007 mayor of the municipality of Meise, north of Brussels, may be 79 years old, but he has no intention of taking it easy. Last week he confirmed he will be standing in next year's **municipal elections**, and seeking another six-year term as mayor if elected. "Right now I feel perfectly fine physically," he said.

The Flemish environment agency VMM last week imposed a **swimming ban** on the Duinen Zee zone of Ostend's beach because of high levels of bacterial pollution caused by heavy rainfall and increased water-flow in the city's sewers. Water samples will continue to be taken daily, and the ban will only be lifted when the situation returns to normal.

Leuven mayor Louis Tobback last week joined singer Stan Van Samang to wave off 300 young

people leaving the city in a race to be the first to hitch-hike all the way to Venice. Each of the participants paid an entry fee of €300 towards a **project for the poor** in Belgium. First to arrive in Venice wins a round-the-world trip.

Police in Brussels are investigating a series of **threatening phone calls** received by a restaurant owner in Etterbeek, complaining that the prices he charges for his mussels are too low – only €15 for 1.2kg of mussels and home-made *frietjes*. "The problem is that we're the cheapest on the market," Sebahattin Sevinc told tvbrussel. "We want to be available for everyone. We're really more of a snack bar than a restaurant." Police suspect rival restaurant owners.

The Belgian army is to discontinue its weekly TV broadcast on the VRT, Televox, from next year, as part of a reform of the **defence ministry's communications** strategy. Instead, the army will feature webcasts on its own website, and buy airtime for advertising. Televox began as internal TV programmes intended for army personnel and families based in Germany, and moved to the VRT (and RTL-TV in the French version) in 1994.

The contents of the **first-aid box** all cars are obliged to carry are not suitable for providing efficient first-aid care at the scene of an

accident, according to a study by three students of the Provincial University College of Limburg. The box, which is usually sold with contents, contains either no scissors or the wrong kind, and has no plastic gloves for first aiders' protection. The law on first-aid boxes dates back to 1968, and needs to be updated, the students conclude.

The last plenary session of the federal parliament before the holidays last week gave the go-ahead to a proposal to allow **cyclists to pass through red traffic lights** in specific circumstances. In locations where it is safe to do so, cyclists would be provided with traffic signs allowing them to ride on or turn right at red lights. The proposal has been criticised by organisations representing both motorists and pedestrians. It has, however, been in operation in the Netherlands for years.

A man fishing by the side of the E19 near Minderhout in Antwerp province hooked more than he bargained for when he landed an extremely **venomous dwarf rattlesnake**, an American species thought to have escaped from its owner. The man called the police, and the snake was given a new home by the Serpentarium in Blankenberge.

FLANDERS TODAY

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OFFSIDE

Brussels "better than Paris"?

"If Hemingway were alive today, I'm sure he would live in Brussels and avoid Paris, which is much too uptight and strict."

A controversial opinion from a columnist in the New York Times, Corinne Maier, who also described the Belgian capital as "a sort of mini-New York".

Maier is the author of books such as "Bonjour Laziness" and "No Kids: 40 Good Reasons Not to Have Children." As such, she's no stranger to bucking the conventional wisdom. She also knows whereof she speaks, having moved a few years ago from Paris to Brussels. "Apart from the cheap accommodation, there are many lovely cafés. While Londoners lament the disappearance of their old-fashioned pub, and Parisians complain that bistros are being replaced by "le fast-food," Brussels is an oasis for anyone who craves for an old-fashioned pub crawl or a relax aperitif with friends," she writes.

"This has to be a joke. I lived in Brussels for a year and a half and you couldn't get me out of there fast enough," writes Srsly of London on the NY Times Room for Debate discussion board.

"Brussels as a mini NYC might be a valid comparison, but it is one of the easiest cities to live for a foreigner," writes Olivia from Charleston, South Carolina, springing to Brussels' defence. "The food, drink and entertainment are world class and much less



expensive than Paris or London. You can have a day trip to Bruges, Antwerp, Amsterdam and by Eurostar, Paris with little effort. The locals are perfectly happy to have foreigners in their midst, as long as you are affluent. No place is great for the poor immigrant, but then for that large segment of the population there is no welcome anywhere."

Avidreader from Connecticut: "Having been to Paris and although I love Europe, the city was too big to get around, I fell in love with Brussels as having the feel of a small Parisian city. And the Bistros - that's another article!"

The last word goes to John from Port of Spain in Trinidad: "Brussels? Drab and boring. Why no mention of Antwerp or Rotterdam?"

Taxi!

Brussels will from September be equipped with motortaxis or taxi-moto, for "adventurous people who want to get through town quickly," mobility minister Brigitte Grouwels announced



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ANJA OTTE

King warns of risks of lengthy stalemate

→ *continued from page 1*

Beke, who had wavered between rejecting the Di Rupo proposals as "no grounds for negotiation" and what the press called "playing hard to get", announced that CD&V had got what it asked for: the discussions will deal with the splitting of the Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde electoral district and other matters of state reform before it goes on to tackle the social and economic aspects of the dossier.

Bart De Wever, whose N-VA had issued a categorical No to the proposals, accused Beke of backing down. "I find it tragic and particularly disappointing that CD&V is once more doing what it did in 2008: belling against its better judgement to the will of the PS and the French-speakers," De Wever said in a press release. "Di Rupo has in no way accepted the very mild conditions of CD&V, and yet they go swimming into the net the French-speakers have set out for them."

The King, in his speech delivered

to the nation on the eve of National Day on 21 July, had been uncharacteristically emotional, even angry. Those who had been expecting His Majesty to gloss over the ongoing discussions for the sake of presenting an encouraging message were caught on the wrong foot. Citing the English constitutionalist Walter Bagehot, he described the three prerogatives of a constitutional monarch towards his ministers: to be informed, to encourage and to warn.

"I would be shirking in my duty if I were not to remind you of the risks all Belgians run in the event of a long-running crisis, and also if I were to fail to press home to politicians and those who work with them, the need to be constructive and speedy in finding a balanced solution to our problems," he said.

"The people need not only to press their representatives to take courageous decisions," he continued. "They also themselves need to make an effort to establish an increased understanding between our communities: meeting the other halfway, speaking his language, showing an interest in his culture, learning to know him better – these are all the outward signs of a modern citizenry."

National Day itself was marked, aside from by the expected national downpour, by the King's decision not to include his son prince Laurent in the party on the dais during the annual military parade, a continuation of the



© Boga

estrangement triggered by Laurent's decision to visit Congo against the advice of the prime minister and the palace. Laurent instead joined with 15,000 people in the Bal National event in the Marollen in Brussels. His father, meanwhile, decided to break

with tradition and stay away from the after-parade entertainment in the Royal Park, limiting his participation to the strictly official Te Deum in the cathedral in Brussels, and the military parade later. ♦

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



370,000
people lined the streets of Brussels to watch the annual military parade on National Day, 21 July, under the traditional "national downpour". That's 45,000 more than last year

€3,000
new minimum under which no appeals will be allowed against decisions of a court in a civil claim. The previous base figure was €1,860. For small-claims cases, the limit is €2,000

2,279
accidents involving mail carriers in 2010, up from 2,116 in 2009, according to government enterprises minister Inge Vervotte. The increase, she said, was largely caused by severe weather conditions

30%
of small business owners take no holidays at all, according to a survey by Unizo, the organisation for the self-employed. When they do, the average excluding weekends is a mere 11.5 days

28,000
people have received Belgian citizenship in the two years since new rules were introduced, according to figures from the Office for Foreigners' Affairs. The successful candidates represent half of all applications received

Benefits cut for asylum-seekers "unconstitutional"

A planned new law which would refuse benefits for asylum-seekers is in conflict with the constitution, the Council of State has ruled. The law, intended to stem the tide of asylum-seekers coming to Belgium from Romania and Bulgaria, is "not in the public interest," the council said.

The law would change the current asylum system by making it impossible for local social aid agencies to pay benefits to asylum-seekers from EU countries. In principle, those people are legally allowed to work here, and therefore need not subsist on public assistance. However, the

council said, not all of the people concerned would be able to find work.

In addition, the council said, the new law is in conflict with the "stand-still" provision of the Belgian constitution, which holds that social protections for particular groups may not be allowed to be reduced, unless for urgent reasons in the clear public interest. The intent of the law, to reduce the number of migrants, was not such a case, the council said.

The law is a proposal from Open VLD member Bart Somers, and has the support of N-VA, CD&V,

sp.a and the French-speaking MR. "We can argue our proposal better, and if need be adapt it without changing the basic aim," Somers said. And he criticised the fact that the application to the Council of State, one of whose tasks is to vet new legislation on constitutional grounds, was delayed, making it impossible to amend the law and submit it for a new vote before the autumn. "If this winter there are again problems of finding accommodation for asylum-seekers, it won't be our fault," Somers said. ♦



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Visitors gather at the Norwegian Seamen's Church in Antwerp to sign a condolence book for the victims of the murderous attacks in and near Oslo last weekend. On Sunday, the church held a special mass in remembrance, attended by Norwegians and local people alike, conducted in English and filled to capacity. "It's a great comfort to receive the support of so many Flemish people," said Per Soldevadt of the church council. "We've also received numerous phone calls, among others from minister-president Kris Peeters. If this can happen at a camp in Norway, it can happen anywhere. A society cannot arm itself against madmen."

The Norwegian embassy in Brussels also opened a condolence book from Monday until Wednesday, while many people left flowers outside the embassy. In Antwerp, the young socialists' movement Animo, affiliated to the youth group whose camp was devastated by the attack, held a silent wake at the central station.

At the request of mayor Daniel Termont, the crowds taking part in the Gentse Feesten in Ghent observed a minute's silence on Saturday. The Ghent city authorities later opened a book of condolence at the town hall.

FIFTH COLUMN

The King's Speech

Wouter Beke, party president of CD&V, is off to the Languedoc; his Open VLD colleague Alexander De Croo heads for the Basque area; and *formateur* Elio Di Rupo is going to spend some days in Italy.

Every year, newspapers list out the holiday destinations of Belgium's main political players. Usually, they do this because there is little else to report. But this year was different. The timing of the holidays was particularly odd, just one day after a dramatic speech by the King, which seemed to indicate that this time, for real, the country was falling apart.

Traditionally, the King's speech is somewhat bland. Topics such as tolerance, the arts, or the importance of knowing different languages seem to be chosen because they offend no-one. This year though, the King, fists clenched, seemed to address politicians directly, urging them to find compromises and to form a government swiftly. The speech ended with a remarkable call for unity.

It formed the background to crucial political talks, last Wednesday and Thursday, as *formateur* Di Rupo, whose resignation the King had not (yet) accepted, attempted to persuade the Flemish Christian-democrats to enter coalition talks. CD&V's Wouter Beke played hard to get, demanding that the BHV issue be solved first, without some of the extra compensations the French-speakers ask for. In the end, Beke gave in (or Di Rupo, depending on the perspective). Finally, more than 400 days after the elections, real government negotiations can begin. But first, of course, there are holidays. Even the King agrees on that, noting the "exhaustion" of some of the negotiators and their entourage.

A similar holiday last year, known as the *semaine familiale*, or family week, turned out disastrous. The dynamics of the previous talks had completely evaporated by the end of it. With three weeks off now, this might happen again.

Anyone who does not agree with the current set-up will now speak up. Take Bart De Wever's N-VA, who won the federal elections convincingly in Flanders. N-VA rejected Elio Di Rupo's note as "bad for Flanders" and its middle class voters, and will not be joining coalition talks. Since the elections, CD&V has always stood by N-VA's side. Until now. Or take the radical French-speaking FDF, the party that dreads any deal around BHV. Both of them will no doubt try to destabilize coalition talks. The outcome will soon be known. After the holidays.



BRUSSELS

One of the nicest view over Brussels, 15th floor, close to Brussels centre and European institutions by Métro, 2 minutes from Métro Yser, 2 balconies (one with south view on a farm Brussels centre, one with north view on the canal and the Atomium) quiet neighbours, surrounded by parks.



SCHAERBEEK

exceptional house at 2 min walking distance from the Rogierplace, near all type of transportation, at 5 min from the Dansaertstreet. Large livingroom, 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, separate storage/laundry room, 1 toilet, fully furnished kitchen. Nice view and access to large garden.



WATERMAEL-BOITSFORT

Deze foto is te vinden op



MERQEN

BRUSSELS



Centre Brussels near Dansaert area: Nice apartment DUPLEX 135m², 2008 + parking place 1 car. Livingroom +/-30m² - separate diningroom + 16m² fitted kitchen - 3 bedrooms (20m²; 12m²; 12m²) bathroom - shower room - 2wc. Individual gaz heating. Apartment with a lot of light. In good condition. Excellent situation near shops, Dansaert area, metro (Yser) and ring.

WOLUWE SAINT-LAMBERT



ANDERLECHT

Two steps away from the House of Erasme, in a commercial district, this building located on 2 a 13ca proposes: commercial ground floor with workshop 143 m²

- 1 apt 1 bedroom of 66 m² and 1 flat of 30 m²
- 1 apt 1 bedroom of 66 m² and 1 flat of 30 m²
- 1 apt 1 bedroom of 66 m²

SAINT-GILLES



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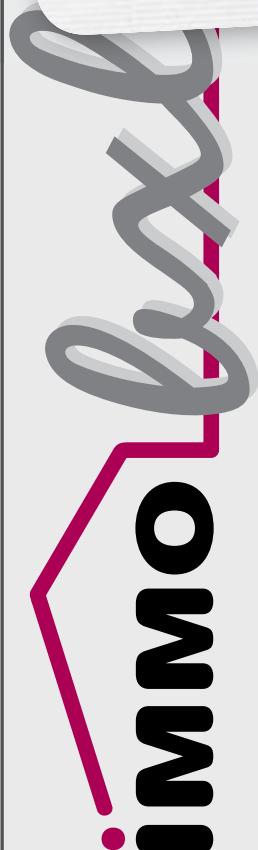
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BRUSSELS

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ANDERLECHT

Godeaux - Bemel area, house 3 façades of +/- 240m*, completely renovated in 2004, living room 42m*, fully equipped kitchen (microwave oven / dishwasher / fridge / ...), breakfast corner, 4 bedrooms, closets, wooden floors, bathroom, toilet, Jacuzzi, 2 shower rooms, garage + space in front of the house, garden, terrace, alarm system, security door, airconditioning.



FOREST

villa 4 façades of 300m*, completely renovated in 2000, living room, wooden floors, fireplace, separate dining room, fully equipped kitchen, breakfast area, laundry room, 4 bedrooms, wooden floors, office area, bathroom, shower room, cellar, garden 5 acres, nice terrace, garage 2 or 3 cars, alarm system.

Let it bee

Farmers and citizens alike take initiatives to save the honeybee

→ continued from page 1

The Flemish beekeepers' union is currently carrying out a survey of colony losses in 2011. The latest figures available for 2009-2010 show an average loss of about 25%. A map of Flanders showing reports of colony deaths (pictured) shows a wide spread of losses under 20%, patches of up to 30% in the Meetjesland above Ghent, at the coast near Knokke and in the south of Antwerp province, and fewer patches of between 30% and 75% in Antwerp and Limburg provinces. Four municipalities in East and West Flanders had losses of up to 75%. Total losses were reported in Limburg near Maaseik, north of Ghent at the border with Zeeland, and in the area around Herentals, Olen and Lier.

A number of causes have been blamed for CCD, from the varroa mite to viruses, pesticides, loss of habitat, genetically modified crops, stress and even mobile phone radiation. Some suggestions, like the last one, are not supported by any evidence. The case is strong that pesticides on farmland, in particular a group known as nicotinoids, can cause sub-lethal damage to bees, compromising their immune systems and leaving them open to attack. On the whole, a consensus seems to be emerging that CCD is the result of a combination of different factors – making it less likely the disorder will be amenable to a silver bullet solution.

"The problem is that we don't know what the best measures are to combat the disorder," says Filip Wouters of the Royal Flemish Beekeepers' Union (KonVIB). "Laboratories across the EU are putting their heads together to find a solution." There are other insects taking part in entomophily, or the pollination of plants. However, because they are many, the role of honeybees is of crucial importance. In this area of northern Europe alone, they are responsible for the pollination of almost every variety of farmed foodstuff, such as:

- Fruits like apples, pears and plums; chestnuts, almonds and all sorts of berries;
- Vegetables like celery, onions, beets, cauliflower and cabbage, bell peppers and cucumbers;
- Spices, aromatics and other plants such as mustard, rapeseed, soybeans, sunflowers, flax and clover.

In other climates, they are also responsible for the pollination of coriander, sesame, as well as mango, papaya, coconut, tamarind, avocado, peach and coffee.

According to the UNEP report, "The fact is that of the 100 crop species that provide 90% of the world's food, over 70 are pollinated by bees."

Farming for bees

Last week the province of West Flanders published a booklet for farmers explaining how to favour local bee populations. The booklet, *Boeren voor Bienen* (Farming for Bees), advises farmers to maintain and preserve flowering plants wherever possible. Even there where it might seem likely to lure the bees away from crops that need pollination, the provision of a rich and varied source of food helps ensure a healthy colony and is ultimately to the benefit of all.

The booklet also advises farmers to allow flowers to grow on the edges of cultivated fields and in unused corners of land; to choose local species like willow and blackthorn when planting trees or hedgerows; to choose cover plants which have a high yield of nectar, such as phacelia or white mustard at the end of the summer to allow bees to build up food stocks to see them through the winter; and to use



© Apicula

Liesbeth Hiele, one of a couple in Ghent keeping bee hives, scrapes out the honey

insecticides and pesticides carefully. The advice, needless to say, is not only applicable to West Flanders. It can be downloaded from the Flemish Information Centre for Agriculture and Horticulture at www.vilt.be.

Everything from pollution to pesticides has a share in the problem. But the underlying cause of bees' vulnerability to the varroa mite is, according to Professor Frans Jacobs of the Information Centre for Apiculture at the University of Ghent, the fact that they are just not healthy enough.

Bees are responsible for the pollination of almost every variety of farmed foodstuff

That is what Achiel Geurts was getting at when he said his losses were his own fault. "The bees' strength depends on a variety of factors," he told *De Standaard* after surveying the damage to his hives. "You need good weather, a large bee population and a well-trained beekeeper. It's possible to arm your bees against sickness with the right treatment, but you have to make sure everything is done at exactly the right moment."

As a first step towards making bee populations stronger, Flemish prime minister Kris Peeters announced in May a grant of €75,000 for a demonstration project that would

make it possible to breed queen bees with better genetic characteristics and higher resistance to disease.

He also told beekeepers that his government will spend €4 million from 2012 to stimulate the planting of bee-friendly cover plants – used by farmers after the harvest of their main crop to protect the soil. This would in effect bring food to the bees' doorstep, and go some way to replace the disappearance of species that have been the victim of modern farming techniques. Bees are supremely efficient gatherers of food, and will always make their way to the richest food source available, but more importantly to the closest.

"The problem of growing bee deaths facing the beekeeping world is a serious one," Peeters said. "That is why we, together with all of the stakeholders concerned, have to make the necessary effort to guarantee the future of this sector, which is so desperately crucial to our food production and biodiversity."

Do it yourself

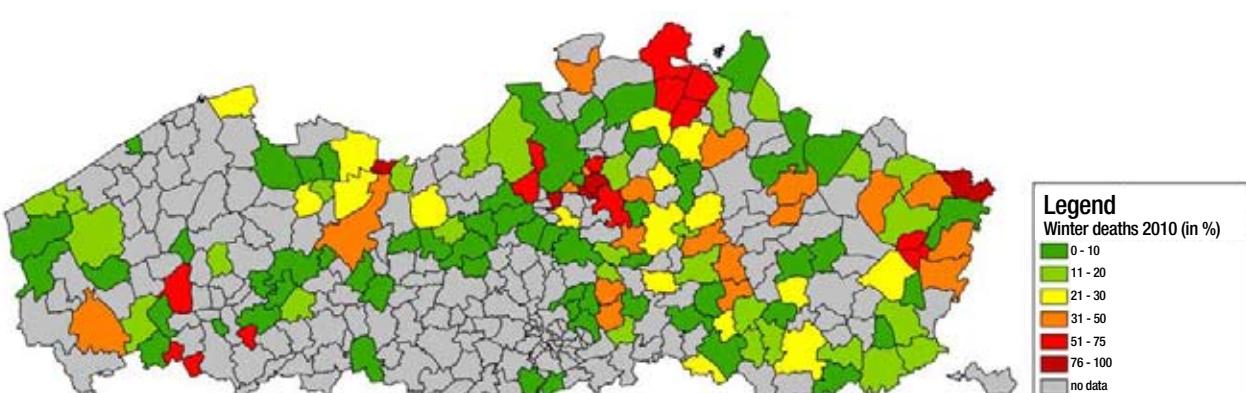
As Flanders Today reported back in June last year, people have begun bringing bees to cities, since they often provide more plant diversity than areas of farming monoculture. The organisation Apis Bruoc Sella has hives installed in the Brussels communes of Oudergem, Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe and Jette, as well as a webcam so you can watch the comings and goings.

In Molenbeek, also in Brussels, the municipality has set up two hives in the much-maligned Maritime quarter, as part of a project to encourage biodiversity that includes the planting of 300 new trees where the bees will feed, and the mass planting of flowers by local people.

A couple living in Ghent, meanwhile, have set up a project called Apicula (Latin for "little bee") which now has five hives on the roof of the Vooruit cultural centre, within easy reach of three city parks, and nine more in other locations. One of the two, Liesbeth Hiele, wrote of her new interest: "Why would you do such a thing as keep bees? That's like asking why you would go surfing, collect stamps, or go birdwatching. Passion and reason don't go well together."

→ <http://apicula-stadsimkerophoogniveau.blogspot.com>

→ www.konvib.be



Fingerprints are ancient history

An innovative scanning technology from Flanders has charmed the US government

COURTNEY DAVIS

Denise Grauzinis isn't your typical success story. She's been doing the unexpected for years. It began in university 20 years ago. "I studied marketing and communication at a time when marketing was really just starting to develop as a concept," she says. "I found a job and was working the entire time I went to university. By the time I graduated, I had four years of experience. Marketing was fluid then and still being invented, not yet defined. I went on to work in Paris, London, Munich – always in relation to marketing."

This trailblazing mentality is one of the reasons why Grauzinis, 42, seems to do what makes her happy, no matter how unconventional. "I was always active in technology," she says, "making the link between the commercial and the technical. In school, I took physics and math just because I liked it, even though I was studying communication. I like to understand what I see. I don't like to watch something and not understand how it works."

It explains how, during a slower period of her life when she was recovering from an accident, Grauzinis developed an interest in renewable energy and started to research it. From a home office, she went on to start a company that had windmills bringing renewable solutions to homes and small offices. "I didn't have anything to do with the topic before," she says, "but I'm very technically spirited. I got to the bottom of the idea, discovered good patents, and found people doing similar things in wind and solar energy. Within one to two years, I sold it to a larger company, Home Energy, and it is still going strong today. I still have shares but am no longer involved in daily management."

She makes it sound effortless. This small anecdote about starting and selling a profitable, inventive and technology-laden company is told with such ease, it is obvious that it's just one of many similar experiences in her life. But it is the story of her current company, 4DDynamics, that has many taking notice.

"My husband created a company called 3DDynamics ten years ago," she continues, "consulting the movie industry about high-end blockbusters. Back then, big players like Spielberg and Warner Brothers used to work with stuntmen. But to do things realistically



Denise Grauzinis counts the US government among her clients

© 4DDynamics

that weren't possible with people, they wanted something that wasn't yet on the market."

Together with a spin-off of the Catholic University of Leuven, Grauzinis and her husband set off to enhance a technology to visually capture and recreate things as realistically as possible. The worldwide premiere of this technology was showcased in the film Charlie and the Chocolate Factory where they multiplied one man's performance to create the Oompa Loompas. Grauzinis' husband then worked independently, trying to develop the technology further, working on and improving the algorithms that put all the scanned data to use. About two years ago it became ready as a finished product that combined the hardware with the right algorithms. "Finally there was a product ready to market," she says, "that had been tested and used. I decided to introduce our 3D scanner to the world and to develop a

worldwide distribution market. I started with our film industry contacts and did some market research as to where else we could sell it."

It turns out this flexible scanning concept is applicable in many different uses: from scanning art in order to prevent forgery to human bodies in order to check for scoliosis. Non-invasive scanning has attracted many fans, including the government of the United States. Grauzinis was invited to take part in a trade mission to the US sponsored by Flanders Investment and Trade, a Flemish government agency promoting home-based companies abroad. Honored to be asked, it allowed her the chance to get into contact with the US Department of Homeland Security, who, as it turned out, are interested in the technology for palm scanning, as an alternative to fingerprint scanning. Non-touch, palm-scanning is safe; by briefly holding one's hand in the air, a complete and individual scan is created.

"They saw what we can do," Grauzinis says, "which was above their expectations. Our hardware can be built in such a way that it fits their requirements. They can use the technology in government buildings or in open areas such as airports. This project could put us on the map in the security world. You only see end products on our website. But our knowledge-base are really our algorithms; in specific areas this makes scanning profitable and useable."

With no venture capitalists or bank debt, the company has been paying a team of in-house researchers out of its pocket for the past ten years. The US government deal is a big contract and they're in the process of finalizing the details. Yet even this big jump doesn't seem to faze Grauzinis. "I couldn't do this without my husband," she says, "or our R&D team. But if you don't believe in

yourself, no-one else will. You can do a lot by motivating. If you give 100% and do a lot of work, people around you will be inspired and do the same. Lead by example; this is very important."

The inspiration and belief Grauzinis and her husband have, translate into the products. "I sit down on a regular basis with the R&D team to have them really explain everything they're doing. This is crucial to me so I can then tell the story in a different way. I keep asking questions: why do this and not that? I gain trust and knowledge from both our team and our clients this way. People sense fully if you understand something and truly back it. If they have a doubt, you can't convince them by saying you'll get back to them."

The technology was used to multiply one man's performance and create the Oompa Loompas

Grauzinis has many people convinced. But she's not overly impressed with herself or the achievements that have made 4DDynamics so suddenly lucrative. "I work hard for a reason," she says. "I work hard to enjoy it. You must live the life as well. It was a good trip to the US, working from early morning to late at night, but we make sure to celebrate the deals with champagne. Then we get up again in the morning to keep going. Never forget to celebrate even these small accomplishments so you don't forget what you're working for."

► www.4ddynamics.com



New rules on job students

ALAN HOPE

The Senate last week agreed a new regime for student work, which will allow them to work more days while still benefitting from the tax and social security exceptions allowed to students. The new rules come into force on 1 January 2012, and allow students to work 50 days in the year, without restriction as to when those days fall. At present, students are limited to two periods of 23 days in a year, one in the summer vacation and the other outside it.

Part of the new system involves employers filling in a quarterly electronic declaration for any students they have employed, detailing their working days. The database will be open to bosses and students alike to consult, to enable them to keep track of how many days they have used up, and how many remain.

Opposition Open VLD, however,

maintain their demand for the limit to be transformed into one of 400 hours instead of 50 days. Despite the two measures being roughly equivalent, supporters including Nele Lijnen, member of the federal parliament for Open VLD, consider a limit based on hours would permit more flexibility for students and employers alike, since at present even a day worked at half-time is considered towards the limit of 50.

Meanwhile employers have until 15 August to nominate a job-student of their choice for this year's Job Student of the Year award, organised by Unizo, the organisation for the self-employed. This year for the first time, an award goes not only to the national winner, but winners of provincial heats will also receive a smartphone and an honourable mention.

During a survey conducted in the last period of student employment in the Easter holidays, Unizo discovered that



© Shutterstock

37% of employers thought job-students were as good as permanent staff, while 51% thought it worth time and money to invest in training for them.

Unizo welcomed the agreement on the new day-limits. "The new rules

are more in keeping with the reality of job-students," the organisation said, "and respond to their more flexible efforts." ♦

Passenger numbers – and aggression – up at Brussels Airport

Brussels Airport saw more than 1.7 million passengers departing and landing in June, an increase of 8.7% compared to the same month last year. The increase was mainly in passengers travelling within Europe, and partly due to renovation of the Brussels Airlines fleet, with new larger planes offering more places.

On long-haul flights, the company said, a more stable political situation in many African countries saw an increase in traffic to those destinations, although numbers flying to Tunisia and Egypt are both down on last year, before the political changes that have recently taken place there. Freight traffic through Zaventem, on the other hand, was down 2.3% to 38,000 tons, mainly as a result of reduced imports from China and India.

Unions representing airport staff have called for an increased presence

following an increase in incidents of aggression and violence by passengers. Police at Zaventem recorded 170 incidents in 2010, 15% more than in 2009. Unions said the real figure was higher, as not all staff decide to make a complaint.

Meanwhile the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan (OTPP), a Canadian pension fund, has taken over a 39% stake in the airport from the Australia Macquarie Airports, to become the largest shareholder in Brussels-National. The Belgian state still owns 25% plus one share, while 36% remains in the hands of two Macquarie-owned infrastructure funds.

In return for the Brussels Airport shares, and 30% of Copenhagen airport which OTPP also takes over, Macquarie received 11% of Sydney airport, and an undisclosed sum in cash. ♦

Science news

• A student from Ghent university college has developed an application for Android smartphones that can convert mobile phone voice messages directly into images, allowing mobile phones to be used by the deaf and hard of hearing. The application by Laurens Van Acker could also be adapted to provide translation for people with language problems.

• The family of Bart Verbeeck (*Flanders Today*, 9 February), the young man who chose to end his life by palliative sedation and was featured in a VRT documentary, have set up a new fund to support research into Ewing's sarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer Bart was suffering from. The fund will work together with professors Patrick Schöffski and Paul Clement of the Experimental Oncology department of the Catholic University of Leuven.

Tim Vangerven, a graduating student of the Xios university college in Diepenbeek, related to the university of Hasselt, was not only awarded an unprecedented 20 out of 20 for his master's thesis in industrial sciences, his thesis project was also awarded a European patent. Vangerven's project concerns LED lighting which can be printed on anything from postcards to billboards. "His work is immediately applicable for our company," said Wouter Moons, CEO of Lumoza, a spin-off company from the university of Hasselt and nano-technology specialists Imec, where Vangerven spent an internship before preparing his thesis.

"This thesis comes very close to the level of a doctorate," said the school's director Dirk Franco. "An unbelievable performance, never before seen in our school." Vangerven meanwhile intends to follow doctoral studies at Hasselt university, while continuing to work for Lumoza. ♦

Clampdown on building-site fraud

Up to 40% of construction sites are cheating on workers' social security payments, according to the latest annual report from the government's social security service RSZ. The service carried out 1,279 checks in 2010, and found 505 cases where contractors' declarations were not in order, a substantial increase on 335 in 2009 and 207 in 2008. The RSZ, together with the social information and investigation service SIOD, is currently working on 4,679 fraud cases in all sectors, more than one in ten of the 43,000 files it dealt with in 2010. Because construction is known to be a sector vulnerable to social fraud,

contractors are obliged to declare a site in advance to allow checks. But many still don't, the RSZ reports. In June, the government agreed to bring in a system under which everyone present on a site wears a unique identification badge issued in advance. Whenever a worker is not required or cannot work, his absence from the site is registered to prevent working off the books. Social inspectors will also have access to a new computer system containing social security and tax data. The intention is to push the proportion of fraud cases brought to light from 25% at present to a target of 65%. ♦

Flemish government logs on to TomTom

The Amsterdam-based GPS equipment provider TomTom has agreed to provide historic traffic data to the traffic centre of the Flemish government, to help it plan new road infrastructure on the basis of 4 trillion pieces of data gathered from motorists during actual driven trips. Hajo Beeckman, manager of operations at the Flemish Traffic Centre, says: "We have matched TomTom's traffic data with our loop systems. The countrywide coverage of this data and detailed accuracy makes this source a cost-effective solution that can be used by governments to save valuable resources and more efficiently manage road networks."

Maarten van Gool, managing director at TomTom Licensing commented, "We are pleased to be able to assist the Flemish Government in improving the flow of the traffic on their roads. Our highly accurate and granular traffic data will provide insights for the Flemish government to significantly better analyse road conditions and traffic performance. This important customer win underlines the benefits that TomTom can bring to governments in tackling the issues of road network performance and congestion". ♦



THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Advertising • BBDO

Advertising agency Proximity BBDO has taken a novel approach to recruiting, by launching a campaign which allows candidates to be interviewed at a place of their choice, including a local café, by a "flying squad" of BBDO staff. Nine jobs are currently advertised as open, details from www.velosquad.be.

Call-centre • Sitel

Management and workers at Diegem-based call centre Sitel have reached an agreement on restructuring that will see the loss of 70 jobs instead of the 200 originally considered. Many of the jobs will go through voluntary redundancy, though some lay-offs will occur. Sitel employs 850 people, including 120 at a centre in Geel, which is not affected by the cuts.

Congresses • Meeting

Non-profit Meeting in Brugge took in €2.6 million last year in revenue for the organisation of congresses in the city, a 37% increase on the previous year, and has plans to attract more custom with a direct rail link with Zaventem airport, and investment in the Oud Sint-Jan conference site.

Internet • Netlog

The company behind social media site Netlog has been relaunched as Massive Media, and intends to become an online media provider including games, competitions and online dating. The company is 65% in the hands of Netlog founders Toon Coppers and Lorenz Bogaert, and will shortly come out with iPad, Android and BlackBerry apps for its gaming portal Gatcha.

Investment • Gimv

Antwerp-based independent investment and venture capital company Gimv is to partner with its Nordic counterpart CapMan to take a stake of 19% in Expert Photo, a Russian supplier of photo-related services which employs 250 and last year turned over €10 million. Gimv said the acquisition would strengthen its position on the Russian market.

Metals • Bekaert

West Flanders' steel producer Bekaert reported the acquisition of the Chinese steel-wire manufacturer Quindao Hansun from Hankuk Steel Wire of South Korea for a price estimated to be around €30 million. Hansun employs 330 people in Shandong province.

Telecoms • Belgacom

The sale of government-owned shares in Belgacom to Deutsche Telekom has been described as "pretty unlikely" by a senior analyst at Royal Bank of Scotland. The German company had been reported to be "exploring the terrain" with a view to buying some of the 53.5% of Belgacom still in government hands. However such a sale was described as "extremely sensitive," and would also necessitate an offer for Belgacom's traded shares.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Sales Assistant - international and dynamic company

Caviar is an Integrated AV Content Provider telling Strong Stories (scripted content through commercials, feature films, TV series, virals) designed and realized by a pool of great international talents, distributing its products directly & indirectly under different brands through diversified channels (TV, internet, theatre, mobile, PC ...) to the consumers; relying on a strong backbone of Production Facilities

Description:

Our client, who is market leader in the audiovisual sector, is looking for their office in Brussels a:

Commercial/Sales Assistant (m/f)

Organizing and following up the sales administration including ordering, invoicing and delivery management

This includes:

- Processing and following up orders (by e-mail or fax)
- Preparing purchase orders
- Handling invoicing in ERP system
- Giving information regarding price & terms for products
- Preparing price offers to customers
- Managing the shoot planning
- Organizing the planning and preparing necessary documents
- Coordinating between supplier, transporters and customer to ensure a smooth service
- Preparing statistics and forecast figures
- Following up open accounts and overdue payments

Profile:

- You are fluent in English with a good level of Dutch and French
- You have a good knowledge of MS Office
- You have a first experience as Commercial or Sales Assistant, Customer Service, etc.
- A first experience in an audiovisual sector is a plus
- You are a true problem solver
- You have excellent communication and planning skills
- You are flexible and can take initiative
- You have a driver's license

We offer:

- An interim contract of 6 months followed by a permanent contract
- An excellent opportunity to work at an international company in full expansion
- A continuous training and great atmosphere
- An attractive salary with extra-legal benefits (luncheon vouchers, transport costs)

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General Accountant with ambition as financial controller

Caviar is an Integrated AV Content Provider telling Strong Stories (scripted content through commercials, feature films, TV series, virals) designed and realized by a pool of great international talents, distributing its products directly & indirectly under different brands through diversified channels (TV, internet, theatre, mobile, PC ...) to the consumers; relying on a strong backbone of Production Facilities

Function Description:

- As a right-hand to the Finance Director, your main responsibility is the A to Z Accounting of 1 entity.
- Your main tasks consist of:
- Vouch invoices for payment. Verify pricing, quantity, taxability, and receipt, obtain approvals as necessary, assign general ledger account codes and cost centers. Take discounts according to company policy.
- Monitor and collect outstanding accounts receivables and report exceptions.
- Vouch employee expense reports for payment. Verify supporting receipts and approval, extend report, assign general ledger account codes and cost centers.
- Resolve problem invoices and expense reports in a timely fashion coordinating with vendors, buyers, employees, and supervisors.
- Accurately input vouched and approved invoices and expense reports into the Account Payable system.
- Cut manual and computer checks. Match with vouched invoices and obtain necessary signatures; file vouched invoices.
- Perform month-end closings and check run on a rotation basis
- Furthermore, you will gain responsibility within the controlling domain as well as extra growth opportunities based on your potential as finance professional.

Profile:

You have minimum a bachelor degree and 3 to 5 years of experience in accounting. Excel is your playground and knowledge of EPR system is an asset. You have excellent verbal and written communication skills in Dutch and French. You strive for a high level of accuracy and you work efficiently and organized with dependable follow through.

Offer:

In a nutshell our client offers a learning curve to boost your professional career. You will receive an attractive salary package with interesting fringe benefits and growth opportunities within an international environment.

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A Waffle Western

An interview with actor/director Johan Heldenbergh about his latest film

DAAN BAUWENS

Every Belgian, from north to south, knows the best ideas are born in bars. That is not hard to understand. But just imagine the following situation: you are in a bar with friends, drinking and having fun. After a couple of beers, one of your friends starts joking about how funny it would be to dub a famous American Western in the local dialect. Everybody laughs. One of your other friends, maybe just a little bit under the influence, replies you should go ahead and make your own Western. Again everybody laughs, but he himself is very serious.

So far, this is a perfectly imaginable situation. Now imagine the man who came up with the idea gets up the next morning and starts writing a script. One of the others starts looking for funding. Five years later, a full-feature length Western, made with the help of every inhabitant of your village and the neighbouring villages, is about to hit the box office in cinemas across the country.

"I believe that people, more than ever before, are looking for togetherness"

It sounds unbelievable, but it happened. The Flemish film "Schellebelle 1919", in cinemas from 27 July, tells the tale about a family who struggled to survive the First World War. Coralie, a courageous sixteen-year-old girl, opens her house for no less than twenty-five war orphans. But their peaceful lives are under siege: child protection agencies want to put them away in an orphanage, while local dignitaries want to claim the land the children live on in order to build a road and a gas station. Flanders Today set out to find the man who came up with the idea and was stubborn enough to complete it. His name is Johan Heldenbergh (pictured), one of Flanders' most celebrated actors in both theatre and film.

Are you satisfied?

I have never worked harder for anything in my life, and it is the one thing I am most proud of. I've been working full-time on the film from December 2009 until July 2010. And with full-time I mean: from 8 in the morning until two in the morning. But it was worth it.

Why did you want to make this movie?

Well, the idea was born in a bar. Jan Baeyens, a friend of mine and later art director of the movie, one night expressed his



A scene from Johan Heldenbergh's latest film, Schellebelle 1919

dream to dub a Western in the local dialect. That's when I said: Don't tell me this is your dream. If you have dreams, you have to make them come true. And make them true in a better way than you have dreamed them. If you do something, anything, you have to do it well. I told him that I would write the scenario. And I did. Marnix Bontinck, another friend who works at the railway company and is also the producer of the movie, started looking for funding. Soon it turned out he was doing a really good job; there was more and more money coming in. We then decided to involve Kenneth Taylor, the mayor of Groot-Wichelen (of which Schellebelle is a part-municipality) and a director at the production company Woestijnvis. That was when we realised that we should involve the whole village in the project. Because that was the only right thing to do.

Why a Western?

That was part of the initial idea, so we went along with it. If I would write and make a new movie, it would probably not be a Western. But on the other hand, it is a genre I hold very dearly. I've seen all good Westerns, over and over again. Soon after Baeyens expressed the idea, I started thinking about all the typical Western elements I could use: the drunk sharpshooter, a shoot-out, the tall black stranger arriving in the village and helping innocent victims, the young and defenceless resisting a higher and evil power. But I didn't want cowboy hats and Indians, I wanted to make a movie set in Flanders. It had to have a plausible story. So it became a family chronicle.

As a resident of Schellebelle yourself, do you feel the making of this movie has changed the atmosphere in the village?

Absolutely. It already used to be a very nice place to live in before we started making the film. It is an open community. But now you can feel people have a much broader view, a broader view towards the village and the world in general. I believe with this movie we have proven that the world is makeable. People sometimes suffer too much from a negative attitude towards life and their surroundings. They get stuck in prejudice and become bitter. That is happening everywhere. Well, you can do something about it. That's what we have proven with this movie. People who live here feel differently now. It means something to live in this village. It is not just a place to go back to after work anymore. Now it is a place where people have friends, where they themselves, too, have a meaning towards others. I believe that people, more than ever before, are looking for togetherness. We have lost the feeling of being part of a community. We invest more and more time in work, we cocoon and always stay within our small families. People really need to connect again. It has happened here: people have breathed a sigh of relief. A sense of harmony, of sympathy has returned and I believe it will stay for long.♦

→ www.okafilm1919.be



New conductor for Brussels orchestra

De Munt orchestra has effectively been headless for the past three years, relying only on visiting conductors. But that's set to change as Peter de Caluwe, the Brussels opera house's Flemish manager who has just been re-appointed for a second term, has announced that 37-year-old French conductor Ludovic Morlot (pictured) will soon be joining him as musical director.

Boyish and charismatic, Morlot first trained as a violinist and is almost better known in the English-speaking world, where he studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and the Pierre Monteux school for conductors in the US, than in his native France. Everyone agrees, though, that he is a musician of enormous promise – an inspiring and exacting leader, an enlightened champion of contemporary sounds, and a worthy successor to Antonio Pappano

and Kazushi Ono, the latest conductors to have left a lasting mark on the orchestra.

Morlot will take up his functions in January 2012. Does that mean he and his family (a landscape-designer and translator wife as well as two young daughters) will be increasing the ranks of Brussels' sprawling French community? Not exactly: the Morlots have just moved to Seattle, where Ludovic has accepted another job as permanent conductor of the local Symphony Orchestra. He plans to juggle the two assignments and to commute to Brussels for two operas and as many concert productions a season, totting up about three months a year in Belgium. Compared to his jet-setting lifestyle up to now, conducting orchestras around the globe and constantly hopping planes, this will almost feel like settling down.♦



→ www.demunt.be

© Usse Arburg

Books for chicks

Fashion, flirting and fierce competition: Flemish chick lit has made its mark

REBECCA BENOOT

Saskia de Coster has quite an extensive and eclectic oeuvre ranging from novels to installations. She is one of the few Flemish female authors today, who is praised for both her poetic imagery as well as her daring and diverse subject matter. Always on the lookout for her next challenge, de Coster was thrilled when the woman's magazine *Feeling* asked her to write a novella which would be given away for free with their summer issue. "They asked if I wanted to write a parody on chick lit," she comments, "because I've been known to use a more tongue-in-cheek approach in my work. But that was the only request. I was free to create my own story and characters, which I really appreciated."

De Coster was given one month and after some intense writing and researching, she came up with *Oh Jackie O*. In this novella, Jessie, a talented young writer, goes to New York with her bland and uptight sister. She has written several texts for an exhibition on Jacqueline Onassis at the New Museum. Jessie anxiously awaits the opening of the exhibition and decides to indulge in a few shows to calm her rattled nerves. Luckily, it is fashion week, but unfortunately, she bumps into her nemesis Sabine...

In 2006, de Coster already wrote a parody on chick lit, *Eeuwige Roem* (Eternal Fame), so she isn't a complete stranger to the genre or to mocking it at least. "My idea of chick lit," she says, "is about ambitious women who reach for the stars and long for status and love, so I toyed with that. That's why I chose the New York Fashion Week as my setting because it's so glamorous and iconic. I really enjoyed researching this story and delving into the lives of these high-society women who spend their days having broccoli massages and sipping champagne. I personally love the absurd and writing the story gave me a chance to embellish it, a perfect fit for chick lit."

Love, fashion and gossip aren't just ingredients of the genre; they are also parts of real life, which is why De Coster feels she hasn't written traditional chick lit. "Women will always be catty or jealous of other women," she continues. "It's a recognizable human pattern but I think contemporary chick lit does have the tendency to use stereotypes. Sabine for example, is a real bitch but she's just doing her thing and gets to where she wants to be. By being competitors, Jessie and Sabine stimulate one and other to reach their goals. It would be too easy to write a story where only good things happen to good people."

Chick lit frequently becomes unrealistic in depicting the so-called lives of contemporary women. But by incorporating several topics from this month's issue of *Feeling* into the novel, De Coster has kept her novella grounded. Other subjects that she tackles, such as sisterhood, jealousy or status, don't necessarily just apply to chick lit but are universal themes that are part of modern women's lives. The kinetic combination of style and tragedy on the other hand, is something you don't encounter so often in real life, unless you're Jackie O, making her the perfect title character. "Jackie O is a real icon," De Coster tells me, "and I loved breathing new life into this character because most people know her but they don't know much about her. She has led an intriguing life which I discovered while doing research for my new novel."

Despite its popularity, not many Flemish authors have profited from the success of chick lit because it is still considered a lowbrow genre by many. "Chick lit is a label for mostly crap," De Coster insists, "but there are also some snappy stories out there. I'm not an expert and when the genre uses cliché role models or thought patterns such as women love shopping, champagne and spending their days waiting for prince charming, it really annoys me. On the other hand, I do believe chick lit can also promote emancipation by being self-deprecating and by doing away with certain stereotypes. It's a genre with a very wide scope but a lot of people still believe that you either write literature or crap. Which is nonsense really, because I personally love to diversify. I'm proud of *Oh Jackie O* but I think that many people still think of chick lit as an inferior genre."

Oh Jackie O is nonetheless a perfectly proportioned helping of "chick lit". Short, sassy and superbly paced, Saskia de Coster has done the unthinkable; she has created an entertaining and well-written piece of fiction about the fashion-conscious female psyche.♦



© Rob Stevens

"I enjoyed researching the women who spend their days having broccoli massages and sipping champagne"

Fresh fiction



Sletten en Prinsessen

Renate Breuer · *The House of Books*

Thirty-something Lili is taking matters into her own hands. After several failed relationships, she is determined to finally experience the difference between love and great sex, starting with sex of course. After a few casual encounters she's reborn and ready to give love another chance until the object of her affection turns out to be a handsome soap actor with a bad reputation. *Sletten en Prinsessen* was regarded as the first Flemish chick lit novel (back in 2009) and is filled with the genres mandatory raunchy scenes, gay best friends and lovelorn blunders.

Mangat

Nele Reymen · *Manteau*

In her second novel, Nele Reymen (a columnist for the woman's weekly *Flair*) once again proves that a dirty mind is a joy forever. The main character in this female fun fest is Lex, a tough cookie who still hasn't found her match despite the fact that she secretly longs for her safe and borderline boring ex-boyfriend. Together with her best friend Ali, who is plotting her revenge on her cheating ex, they decide to play the field and widen their horizons. The dialogues may be sassy but *Mangat* remains a crude and clichéd piece of fiction, yet sheer indulgences for the lovers of the genre.

Smoorverliefd

Chris van Camp & Hilde van Mieghem · *Lannoo*

Based on the romantic comedy *Smoorverliefd* (Head Over Heels) by Flemish director Hilde van Mieghem, Chris van Camp (columnist, author, theater maker, you name it) offers us all the juicy details and background information that the movie left out. *Smoorverliefd* follows the lives of four independent women: actrice Judith, her sister Barbara, her stepdaughter Michelle and teenage daughter Eva who all live together in perfect "harmony". First love, serial dating, babies, affaires and former flames turn *Smoorverliefd* into a funny, touching and above all romantic novel.

De Groep

Mary McCarthy · *Arbeiderspers*

Hailed as the first ever chick lit novel, Mary McCarthy's classic *The Group* has finally been translated into Dutch. Set in 1930s New York, 9 Vassar College friends create the Ivory Tower Group. After graduation these 9 ambitious women each go their own way in the big city. This novel describes their trials and tribulations, loves and losses and the fleeting nature of their ideals as they eventually all surrender to suburbia. Poignant, witty and written with a keen eye for observation and compassion, 50 years onward *The Group* still hasn't lost its sheen or relevance.

A playwright for our age

Flanders Today spoke with Tom Lanoye at the arts festival of Avignon

JACQUELINE FLETCHER

Flemish writer Tom Lanoye (pictured) has a reputation for using a language that rolls satisfactorily around the tongue and seduces the ear with its rhythms. With a 10-part adaptation of his novel *Het Goddelijke Monster* (The Godly Monster) to be aired on Flemish TV later this year, a planned feature film of *Het Derde Huwelijk* (The Third Marriage) and his recent success with *De Russen* (The Russians) at theatre company Toneelgroep Amsterdam, his international reputation seems to be soaring. When I met him last week at the annual arts festival in Avignon, France, he was wearing his characteristically generous smile and spoke eloquently about the creation of his new play, *Bloed en Rozen* (Blood and Roses), showing this week in the prestigious *Cour d'Honneur* courtyard of the *Palais des Papes*.

Bloed en Rozen is about Jeanne d'Arc, the peasant girl, the virgin warrior, who led her people into battle against the English before being burnt as a witch. The other main character, her contemporary Gilles de Rais, turned to sexual perversity and magic before suffering a similar fate. Why did you choose this period and these characters?

I see the play as the third part of a triptych of history plays about the relationship between power, war, art and religion. My earlier play *Mephisto Forever* dealt with the role of art under a totalitarian regime, and *Atropa* was based on the Greek tragedies about families destroyed by the Trojan War. *Bloed en Rozen* broaches some big universal themes, but as the German playwright Bertolt Brecht knew well, history plays are a great way to look at our present realities. During the creative process we kept asking ourselves. "What can we do to make it more relevant?"

Does that mean that the plays are inspired by the current situation in Belgium?

It's like the slogan "Think globally, act locally." I have to work from what's happening around me in Flanders and put it into a broader context so that the local becomes global, universal even. The play examines the Machiavellian role played by the bishops in the trials of Jeanne and Gilles and begs the question "When does religion become politics?" We live in secular societies nowadays and we thought religion would become less intrusive. But it is an illusion to imagine that institutions themselves would disappear. This is a topical issue on many levels.

The triptych has met with critical acclaim at home and abroad, so we can conclude that your collaboration with director Guy Cassiers at Antwerp's theatre company *Het Toneelhuis* is a fruitful one.

The strength lies in the freedom Guy gives us and in the team work. There is a long process of research and discussion in which the dramaturg Erwin Jansen plays a major role, but actors, designers and technicians also have their say. We invited a musicologist to introduce us to Flemish polyphony. Guy is willing to listen and try something new



A scene from Lanoye's newest play *Bloed en Rozen*

CULTURE NEWS

Eveline Hoorens, the wife of the artist Panamarenko, was the first passenger to fly a 100 cubic-metre helium-filled Zeppelin in Ghent last week, part of the MiramirO street theatre festival, itself part of the Gentse Feesten. The Zeppelin, christened *Aéroplume*, was later available to give rides to children aged over eight and weighing under 40 kg. "I've seen so many of my husband's Zeppelins, but I've never flown in one," she said.

The bimonthly magazine Zozolala, which covers the field of Dutch-language comic strips, is to cease production after nearly 30 years with a special final issue in October. The magazine, published in Bilthoven in the Netherlands but widely distributed in Flanders, has been suffering financial difficulties. The owners hope to continue with an online version.

→ www.zozolala.com

The five short-listed sites for this year's Flemish monument prize, one from each province in the region, have been announced. They are: the Scherpenbergmolen mill site in Malle (Antwerp); the De Rieten archaeological site in Meeuwen-Gruitrode (Limburg); the Ghent city museum STAM (East Flanders); the Van Reeth building and the Boodschap chapel in Heverlee (Flemish Brabant) and the fishing boat "Martha" in Koksijde (West Flanders). The overall winner of the €12,500 prize will be announced in September. Meanwhile, all five short-listed candidates receive a prize of €2,500.

The new tenant of the impressive Vauxhall Pavilion situated in the royal park in Brussels is a passionate collector of comic albums who is looking for a place for his collection as well as a home, the city of Brussels has announced. The new tenant, who has not been named, takes over the lease from Baron Eric d'Huart, who has lived there since 1987 but left to avoid the noise of the city. The rent comes to a total of €2,410 a year, but the new tenant is responsible for upkeep costs, including €1 million for renovation works already carried out. It is not yet clear if he will open the Pavilion and his collection up to visitors.

The Museum of Original Figurines, a collection of comic-strip figures currently housed on the Reyerslaan in Schaerbeek, will move house in August to a new location in the Horta Gallery of the refurbished Central Station in Brussels. The new premises will also include a library, restaurant and shop.

→ www.moof-museum.be



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 www.tvbrussel.be



Open-air culture festival in medieval Bruges

KLINKERS FESTIVAL 2011

DAAN BAUWENS

Life in Belgium is exciting in summer: with almost every Flemish city offering its own fascinating festival, there literally comes no end to the fun and entertainment. Bruges, even though mostly known for its calmness, history and excessive tourism, is no exception. From 29 June until 13 August, every single night you can dive into the historic town and see some of the world's most renowned artists performing against the backdrop of Bruges' most idyllic places. But the festival offers much more than just music. "This is a multidisciplinary festival," says Patrick Keersebilck, organiser and programmer of Klinkers festival. "Aside from the concerts on the main plazas, there's an open air cinema and a group of stand-up comedians cruising through the city."

But music remains the central asset of the festival: with Belgian bands such as the sizzling reggae collective Pura Vida or the legendary Belgo-Congolese Zap Mama, the festival offers nothing but mere quality. That, plus a range of exquisite world music bands: Portuguese fado by Atlanthida, jazz, bossa nova

and shiny Cape Verdian rhythms by Mayra Andrade, Spanish diva Amparo Sanchez singing Latin, jazz and blues intermingled with Afro-Cuban sounds.

Why so much world music? "That's our path," Keersebilck explains. "With that many summer festivals in the region, we have to offer something specific. So we offer music from all over the world, referring to the reputation of Bruges as a cosmopolitan city." He laughs: "That is, of course, once upon a time, a very, very long time ago. Our other criterion is: the bands have to have an excellent reputation for live performance. They have to be able to entertain a large audience."

While most of the concerts take place on the central Burgplein in front of city hall or in the courtyard of the stunning Gruuthuuse museum, the small and cosy Astrid park is the location for the youth festival Vama Veche, organized by the local youth organization Entrepot. Between the 2 and 7 August, it offers everything from music to spoken word performances and movie screenings.

Those who want to immerse themselves in a different sort

of cultural patrimony will have to visit the city between 10 and 12 August. The side project *Klinkende Kroegen* (literally meaning Sounding Bars) presents evenings with deejays, folk bands, cabaret and jazz in the city's most infamous bars. But all through the course of the festival, the city's inhabitants eagerly await the legendary last night. On that night the city's historic centre transforms into the largest dance floor in Europe, called *Benenwerk* (legs work). With a spectacular line up (Discobar Galaxie, Jazzaanova, Foklof Orchestra and many others), and the kind permission of the weather gods, deejays and live bands will set the city on fire. ♦

29 July until 13 August

Across Bruges

→ www.klinkers-brugge.be

MORE FESTIVALS THIS WEEK

Lokerse Feesten → *Lokeren*

Sfinks Mixed Festival → *Boechout*

Suikerrock → *Tienen*



Antwerp

Het Stadsmagazijn
Keistraat 5-7; 03.292.63.80
Until JUL 29 Croque Musique, terrace concerts with lunch

Kelly's Irish Pub

Keyserlei 27
www.kellys.be
JUL 29 20.00 Olly the Quartz
JUL 30 20.00 Basically Basic

Brussels

Recyclart
Ursulinesstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recycleart.be
JUL 29 23.30 Baba Zula + Process Rebel + Alcalica
AUG 4 22.00 Digital Me

Ghent

Dok
Koopaardijlaan 13
www.dokgent.be
Until AUG 31 Dok beach, open daily with free entertainment, plus breakfast, picnic lunches and more

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be
JUL 28 22.00 Summer Camp #2 - Dubstep



Antwerp

Café Hopper
Leopold de Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be
JUL 31 16.00 Yvonne Walter

Brussels

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
Until AUG 27 21.00 Brussels Village Festival, jazz & Latino festival
Until JUL 30 Alain Cupper Quartet
AUG 2-6 Rey Cabrera y sus amigos



Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
www.muhka.be
Until AUG 21 Ten Oosten van 4°24' (East of 4°24'), group show of artists from the Caucasus, India, China, Iraq, Egypt and more
Until SEP 18 Collection XVIII: If you shoot a bullet in a vacuum, will it keep travelling forever?, selected works and films by British artist Emily Wardill

Fashion Museum (MoMu)

Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70
www.momu.be
Until AUG 14 Unravel: Knitwear in Fashion, a wide variety of knitted garments and accessories from across the centuries, with a focus on high fashion pieces and their vernacular interpretations

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.828.13.50
www.middelheimmuseum.be
Until SEP 25 Erwin Wurm: Wear Me Out, open-air display of performative and living sculptures by the Austrian artist

Museum aan de Stroom (MAS)

Hanzestedenplaats 1; 03.338.44.34
www.mas.be
Until DEC 31 Masterpieces in the MAS: Five Centuries of Images in Antwerp, the first temporary exhibition in the new museum

DON'T MISS

In the wake of Rubens

Until 25 September

Leuven and Aarschot

2011 marks the 200th anniversary of the death of Pierre-Joseph Verhaghen (1728, Aarschot – 1811, Leuven) – an ideal opportunity to draw attention to this forgotten painter. Verhaghen was the last representative of the Flemish School and continued the artistic tradition of Rubens into the 18th century. During his life he acquired a solid reputation. In 1773 he was appointed court painter to the Empress Maria-Theresa. The exhibition takes place in three locations: M - Museum Leuven, with a focus on Verhaghen the artist; the Municipal Museum of Aarschot, on Verhaghen the human being; and Park Abbey, just south of Leuven, on the relationship between the painter and his principals.



© Fotostudio Leenhans

shows how Antwerp and Flanders significantly influenced 16th- and 17th-century Western European imagery

Photo Museum

Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00
www.fotomuseum.be
Until SEP 25 Insight, photos by Elke Andreas Boon, Elinor Carucci, Alexandra Cool and Jacques Sonck

Plantin-Moretus Museum

Vrijdagmarkt 22; 03.221.14.50
www.museumplantinmoretus.be
Until AUG 28 Inzichten en Vergezichten (Insights and Panoramic Views), the book and designs of Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven, designer of the light panels for the new MAS Museum

Blankenberge

Belle Epoque Centrum
Elisabethstraat 24; 050.42.87.41
www.belle.epoque.blankenberge.be
Until SEP 16 Hasseltse keramiek, Art Nouveau drip glaze pottery

Bruges

Site Oud Sint-Jan
Mariastraat 38; 050.47.61.00
www.expo-brugge.be
Permanent From Pablo Picasso to Joan Miró, permanent exhibition of more than 100 works by Picasso, plus works by Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Joan Miró, more

Brussels

Atomium
Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72
www.atomium.be
Until DEC 9 Belgium & Immigration: Understand Better So We Can Better Understand One Another, interactive exhibition on migration to Belgium

Antrique House

Haachtsesteenweg 266; 02.215.66.00
www.aautrique.be
Until DEC 31 Victor Horta: A Lost World, works highlighting decisive moments in the career of the architect born in Ghent 150 years ago

Agenda

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80

www.stripmuseum.be

Until OCT 2 The Publiart Adventure, comic strip in advertising

Until JAN 15 2012 Bob De Moor & De Zee, comic strips by the Antwerp artist and Hergé colleague, who was passionate about the sea

Bibliotheca Wittockiana

Bemelstraat 23; 02.770.53.33

www.wittockiana.org

Until OCT 1 Le Fonds Michel Wittock:

de la passion au don (The Gift of Passion), collection of remarkable bookbindings from the Renaissance to the present day

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00

www.bozar.be

Until SEP 4 51N4E: Double or Nothing, sketches by the Brussels architecture firm

Until SEP 11 Jeff Wall: The Crooked Path, works by the Canadian photographer together with prose responding to the work

Until SEP 11 Young Belgian Painters Award 2011, works by the 10 finalists in the prestigious art competition

Until SEP 18 The Power of Fantasy: Modern and Contemporary Art from Poland, works by more than 30 contemporary Polish artists

Until SEP 25 Beyond the Document, works by 14 contemporary Belgian photographers

Brussels Expo

Belgiëplein 1; 070.25.20.20

www.kingtubrussels.be

Until NOV 6 Tutankhamun: His Tomb and His Treasures, reconstruction of the Ancient Egyptian king's tomb, with over 1,000 replicas of funerary objects, including amulets, coffers, chairs, weapons, musical instruments and more

CIVA

Klusstraat 55; 02.642.24.71

www.civa.be

Until SEP 25 Transforming Landscapes, the work of Norwegian architectural firm Reiulf Ramstad

Until OCT 2 Brussel, een sterk staaltje van engineering (Brussels, Engineering Prowess), the world of engineers in the Brussels region

Charliermuseum

Kunstlaan 16; 02.218.53.82

www.charliermuseum.be

Until SEP 30 A Hard Existence, paintings of farmers, fishermen, servants and other manual labourers by late 19th- and early 20th-century artists

City Hall

Grote Markt; 02.279.64.24

www.brupass.be

Until SEP 25 Barok onthuld (Baroque Unveiled), a new way of looking at sculpture in Brussels and Belgium

De Elektriciteitscentrale

Sint-Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.45

www.deelektriciteitscentrale.be

Until AUG 21 Jane Alexander: Security - Surveys (from the Cape of Good Hope), sculptures, installations, photographs and videos by the South African artist

Fondation pour l'Architecture

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.80

www.fondationpourlarchitecture.be

Until AUG 28 Anne Heringer: Building Differently, plans, sketches and photographs by the German architect

House of the Dukes of Brabant

Grote Markt 19

www.this-is-belgium.be

Until AUG 30 This is Belgium - A Signature of Excellence, chronological interactive journey through Belgium's history and heritage by way of the country's best brands

Interactive Media Art Laboratory

Koolmijnkaai 30; 02.410.30.93

www.imal.org

Until AUG 19 Danse, Pouacre & Çavachute, installations by Véronika Usova

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63

www.mjb-jmb.org

Until AUG 28 After Images, multidisciplinary show by contemporary American artists

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32

www.botanique.be

Until AUG 14 Sarah Moon: Coincidences, photos by the British fashion photographer and filmmaker

Marc Sleen Museum

Zandstraat 33; 02.219.19.80

www.marc-sleen.be

Until SEP 25 Nero, Yuri Gagarin and Other Astronauts, space travel in comic strips

Museum van Elsene

Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.22

www.museumvanelsene.be

Until SEP 4 Explosion: Graffiti art in Brussels, 25 years of urban art including works by both pioneers and contemporary artists

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33

www.legermuseum.be

Until SEP 4 1945-2002: Belgian soldiers in Germany, rare photographs documenting 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries

Until OCT 16 War&Game(s), photographs by Virginie Cornet and toys from the period of the First World War

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11

www.fine-arts-museum.be

Until SEP 4 Art and Finance in Europe: 18th-Century Masterworks in a New Light, 20 major works by Francesco Guardi, Benjamí Wolff, Léonard Defrance, more

Sint-Gorikshallen

Sint-Goriksplein 23; 02.502.44.24

www.sintgorikshallen.be

Until AUG 29 1000 voetschrapers, photos of old boot scrapers still outside some Brussels doors, by Christophe H with texts by Laurence Rosier

Villa Empain

Franklin Rooseveltlaan 67; 02.627.52.30

www.villaempain.com

Until SEP 25 Of Women's Modesty and Anger, rituals, wigs, clothing, make-up and more constraints that determined the life of women for centuries

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50

www.wiels.org

Until AUG 14 Charlotte Beaudry: Get Drunk, paintings, drawings and videos by the Brussels-based artist

Until AUG 14 Nasreen Mohamedi: Notes-Reflections on Indian Modernism, paintings, drawings and photographs by the Indian artist

Ghent

Design Museum

Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99

www.designmuseumgent.be

Until OCT 16 Esprit Porcelaine, contemporary porcelain from Limoges

Until OCT 16 Die Essenz der Dinge: Design and the Art of Reduction

Until OCT 16 Johanna Dahm: Rings, ring designs by the Swiss artist

Dr Guislain Museum

Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95

www.museumdrguislain.be

Until SEP 4 In the Margin: Belgian Documentary Photography, work that documents the deviant, the extraordinary, the unnoticed, the other'

Kunsthal Sint-Pietersabdij

Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30

www.gent.be/spa

Until SEP 18 Bruno Stevens: Ground. Palestina 2000-2010, photographs of the Middle East by the Brussels photographer

Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03

www.smak.be

Until AUG 15 Georges Rouault: Misère, prints by the French artist from between 1922 and 1927

Until SEP 11 Carlos Rodriguez-Méndez: Agua Caliente (Hot Water), a giant minimalist sculpture by the Spanish artist

Until SEP 18 Jorge Macchi: Music Stands Still, paintings, sculptures, installations and video by the Argentinian artist

House of the Dukes of Brabant

Grote Markt 19

www.this-is-belgium.be

Until AUG 30 This is Belgium - A Signature of Excellence, chronological interactive journey through Belgium's history and heritage by way of the country's best brands

Interactive Media Art Laboratory

Koolmijnkaai 30; 02.410.30.93

www.imal.org

Until AUG 19 Danse, Pouacre & Çavachute, installations by Véronika Usova

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63

www.mjb-jmb.org

Until AUG 28 After Images, multidisciplinary show by contemporary American artists

Hasselt

Het Stadsmus

Guido Gezelstraat 2; 011.23.98.90

www.hasselt.be

Until AUG 28 Hasselt aan Zee: Een eeuw marineschilderkunst (Hasselt on the Sea: A Century of Marine Paintings), works by 20th-century artists inspired by the sea

z33

Zuivelmarkt 33; 011.29.59.60

www.z33.be

Until AUG 21 Kris Verdonck: EXHIBITION #1, installations and videos by the Flemish theatre maker and artist

Jabbeke

Provinciaal Museum Constant Permeke

Gistelsteenweg 341; 059.50.81.18

www.muzee.be/nl/permeke

Until NOV 6 Roger Ravel meets Constant Permeke, a selection of works of art by Roger Ravel from the Mu.ZEE collection in a dialogue with Constant Permeke's oeuvre and world

Koksijde

City Hall

Zeelaan 303; 058.51.29.10

www.koksijde.be

Until SEP 4 Jean Brusselmans, paintings from the 1930s and 1940s by the Flemish artist

SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVALS

Until AUG 5 at Recyclart, Ursulinenstraat 25
02.502.57.34, www.recycleart.be

Royal Palace Visits: Annual opening to the public of the Royal Palace, designed by architect Alphonse Balat for King Leopold II
Until SEP 11 at Royal Palace, Brederodestraat 16
www.monarchie.be

Zuid Fun Fair: 130th edition of the annual fun fair with rides and games
Until AUG 21 stretching from Hallepoort to the end of Zuidlaan
02.279.25.31, www.kermis-feest.be

Knokke-Heist

Cartoon Festival: 50th anniversary of the festival featuring more than 300 cartoons from all over the world
Until SEP 18 at the Casino beach pavilion
www.cartoonfestival.be

Leuven

M-idzomer: Festival of concerts, comedy, dance, literature, exhibitions, more
JUL 28-31 at M Museum, Vanderkelenstraat 28
016.27.29.29, www.m-idzomer.be

Zomer van Sint-Pieter: Lunch-time concerts, a sister event to the Midis-Minimes festival in Brussels

Until AUG 26 at Saint Peter's Church, Grote Markt
www.zomer-van-sint-pieter.be

Ostend

Mamma Mia!: Musical (in English with surtitles in Dutch & French)
Until AUG 14 at Kursaal (Casino), Monacoplein 1
070.22.56.00, www.sherpa.be

Theater aan Zee (TAZ#2011): Theatre and music festival at the coast
JUL 28-AUG 6 at more than 30 unique locations across Ostend
www.theateraanzee.be

Watou

Kunstenfestival Watou: Third annual arts festival with artists and curators bring together word and image through a variety of media
Until SEP 11 at venues across Watou
www.watou2011.be

Antwerp

Jazz Middelheim: 30th edition of the open-air jazz festival featuring Toots Thielemans, Brussels Jazz Orchestra with Bert Joris, Lady Linn & Her Magnificent Seven, Allen Toussaint & Marc Ribot Duo and Liberation Music Orchestra
AUG 12-15 at Park Den Brandt
www.jazzmiddelheim.be

Laus Polyphoniae: The Festival of Flanders' Antwerp stint, devoted this year to Portugal, with the Huelgas Ensemble, Jordi Savall and his Capella Reial de Catalunya, fado singers and special concerts for children and babies
AUG 20-22 at Amuz, Kamenstraat 81
www.amuz.be

Sfinks Mixed Festival: Open-air festival of world music, dance, film and circus featuring AfroCubism, Emir Kusturica & The No Smoking Orchestra, Alpha Blondy & Solar System, Hindi Zahra, Bomba Estéreo, Ballet Royal du Cambodge and Khaira Arby
JUL 29-31 at Molenveld, Boechout 03.455.69.44, www.sfinks.be

Bruges

MAfestival: During its stopover in Bruges, the Festival of Flanders explores the theme of 'Testament'. Guests include the Bl!ndman ensemble, harpsichordist Christophe Rousset, singer Lucilla Galeazzi and cellist Roel Dieltiens
AUG 5-13 at venues across Bruges and Lissewege
www.mafestival.be

Brussels

Boterhammen in het Park: Free outdoor lunchtime festival of Flemish and Dutch rock and pop music with line-up including Yevgeni, Berlaen, Axl Peleman, Eva De Roovere, Hannelore Bedert, Lucky Fonz III, Johan Verminnen and Hans Mortelmans
AUG 22-26 12.00 at Warande Park 02.548.24.24, www.abconcerts.be

Bruksellive: Free festival in the shadow of the Atomium featuring The Cinematic Orchestra, Vismets, STIJN & friends, Benji B, SX, Drums are for Parades, Phaeleh, Title & Delvis, Onda Sonora, Head full of Flames and more
JUL 30 at The Green Theatre, Osseghem Park
www.bruksellive.be

Brussels Summer Festival: Tenth edition of the annual festival featuring a diverse music programme by Jamie Cullum, Caravan Creek, The Hong Kong Dong, Xaman-Ek, Baden Baden, Ian Kelly, Tailors of Panama, Harvey Quint, more.

Plus film screenings, open-door museum events, street theatre, sound and light show
AUG 12-21 in venues around the city
www.bsf.be

Brussels Village Festival: 7th edition of the summer jazz & Latino festival with 45 live concerts featuring one band each week
Until AUG 27 Tue-Sat at The Music Village, Steenstraat 50 02.513.13.45, www.themusicvillage.com

City Parade: Massive party with DJs and dancing
AUG 27 at Heizel (under the Atomium)
www.cityparade.be

Feeërieën 2011: Free outdoor festival with an internationally edged musical programme. Many bands are performing for the first time in Belgium and every evening has its own musical theme
AUG 22-26 19.00 at Warande Park
www.abconcerts.be

Klarafestival: 'Utopia' is the central theme of the Festival of Flanders' Brussels stopover - a lavish extravaganza starring cellist Steven Isserlis, pianist Markus Groh, conductors Roger Norrington and Neville Marriner and other classical celebs. The guest of honour this year is Belgian conductor René Jacobs, an indefatigable champion of long-lost Baroque masterpieces and de-duster of Mozart and Haydn operas
SEP 1-16 at venues across the city
www.klarafestival.be

Royal Park Music Festival 2011: Series of free Sunday jazz concerts featuring South London Jazz Orchestra
JUL 31 Sun, 11.00 at Warande Park
www.travers.be

Dranouter

Folk Dranouter: Flanders' purest folk festival featuring Kayam, Band of Gypsies, Zule Max, Ozark Henry, The Leisure Society, Kayam, Grant Lee Buffalo, Rodrigo y Gabriela, The Jayhawks, Sons of Noel and Adrian, An Pierlé & White Velvet, Salvatore Adamo, Ben Harper and more
AUG 4-7 at Festivalterrein Dranouter, Koudekotstraat
www.folkdranouter.be

Eeklo

Helden in het Park: Free outdoor world music festival
JUL 28-AUG 18 at Heldenpark
www.n9.be

Geel

Reggae Geel: Reggae festival featuring Herb A lize it, General Degree, Kingstep,

The Mighty Jah Observer, Blackboard Jungle Sound, Jah Shaka, more
AUG 5-6 at Festivalterrein Geel, Zandstraat
www.reggaegeel.com

Hoogstraten (Antwerp province)

Antilliaanse Feesten: The world's largest Caribbean festival featuring Machel Montano, Fally Ipupa, Manoline, Kuenta y Tambú, Sonambulo, La Pinata and more
AUG 12-13 at Festivalterrein, Blauwbossen
www.antilliaansefeesten.be

Hoeilaart (Flemish Brabant)

Jazz Hoeilaart: 33rd edition of the international contest for young jazz groups, plus concerts by Jef Neve Trio, Dre Pallemaerts Quartet and Eric Melaerts & Jean Blaute
SEP 22-24 at De Bosuil, Witherendreef 1
www.jazzhoeilaart.be

Kiewit (Limburg)

Pukkelpop: One of Belgium's biggest rock festivals featuring Foo Fighters, Thirty Seconds to Mars, Rise Against, Skunk Anansie, Paul Kalkbrenner, Fleet Foxes, Eminem, Deftones, Bloody Beetroots, Death Crew 77, Within Temptation, The Offspring, dEUS, Duck Sauce, Trentemøller, Lykki Li, Das Pop, The View, Stromae and many more
AUG 18-20 at Festivalweide Kiewit, Kempische Steenweg
www.pukkelpop.be

Leuven (Flemish Brabant)

Cha Cha Festival: Open-air African culture festival featuring music by Ballet Langi, Ithran, Dizzy Mandjeku & Odemba Ok Jazz All stars, plus gastronomy, fashion, literature, dance, art, storytelling and more
AUG 20 16.00-23.00 at Zevensprong, Vital Decosterstraat 67
www.banaleuven.be

Marktrock

Free Belgian rock and pop festival featuring Intergalactic Lover, Willow, Gorki, K's Choice, Zornik, The Galacticos and more
AUG 12-14 at Oude Markt, Leuven
www.marktrock.be

Lokeren (East Flanders)

Lokerse Feesten: Rock festival featuring Erykah Badu, Selah Sue, Jamie Lidell, Lady Linn & Her Magnificent Seven, Balthazar, The Heartbreaks, Roger Daltrey performing The Who's Tommy, 2ManyDJs, Arsenal, Daan, The Subs, Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings, North Mississippi Allstars Duo, Goose, Kelis, Primal Scream, Das Pop, Ozark Henry, Joe Cocker, Robert

Plant & The Band of Joy, Paolo Nutini, Gabriel Rios, Triggerfinger and more
JUL 29-AUG 7 at Festivalterrein Lokeren
www.lokersefeesten.be

Mechelen (Antwerp)

Maanrock: 15th edition of the free rock festival with line-up including Fixxes, The Van Jets, Mintzov, Das Pop, Arid, Hermanos Inglesos, Mama's Jasje, Leki & The Sweet Mints, The Magical Flying Thunderbirds, De Kreuners, Clouseau and more
AUG 20 & 21 in the city centre
www.maanrock.be

Oostkamp (West Flanders)

Gipsy's in het park: 9th annual family festival featuring concerts by Nomad Swing, Thierry Robin Trio, Mec Yek and Orchestre International du Vete, plus film screenings and children's activities including storytelling, games and circus acts
AUG 27 17.00-00.00 at Beukenpark, Kapellestraat 19
www.gipsyinhetpark.be

Oudenaarde

Feest in het Park: Outdoor music festival featuring Flip Kowlier, Hermanos Inglesos, Sean Paul, Kruder & Dorfmeister, Pete Doherty, Arno, Triggerfinger, more
AUG 11-14 at Festivalterrein Donkervijvers
www.feestinhetpark.be

Sint-Niklaas (East Flanders)

Flemish Organ Days: Discover the instrument through three days of concerts, demonstrations, workshops for children and grown-ups, plus an exhibition and competition
AUG 18-20 at churches across the city
www.orgelinvlaanderen.be

Tessenderlo (Limburg)

Moulin Rock Festival: 10th edition of the rock festival featuring young bands and musicians
SEP 9-10 at Festivalterrein Moulin Rock, Molenstraat
www.moulinrock.be

Tienen (Flemish Brabant)

Suikerrock: 25th edition of the rock festival featuring De Jeugd Van Tegenwoordig, Zornik, Moby, Basement Jaxx, Heather Nova, Soulsister, Tom Jones, Tom Dice, Natalia, The Baseballs, Triggerfinger, Iggy & The Stooges, Deep Purple, Roxette and more
JUL 28-31 in the centre of Tienen
www.suikerrock.be

FESTIVAL SPOTLIGHT

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

Dranouter

Dranouter, a small hamlet almost disappearing between the sloping hills of Heuvelland in West Flanders, has become synonymous with folk music. It owes this to the festival that has been organised there since 1975. The festival is still an important meeting place for folkies, even though it has changed course halfway the '90s, when it adopted the slogan The New Tradition.

And that's precisely what the festival of Dranouter has to offer: music that is rooted in tradition, but never wallows in nostalgia. That's why the festival is not afraid to program pop acts like Milow, Ozark Henry or An Pierlé & White Velvet. Or Arsenal, which splices up its electronic sounds with rock and a bit of world music. But of course, there's still a lot of roots music to be savoured too, in different forms and shapes. Ben Harper, for instance, the American singer and guitarist who mixes blues, rock, folk and even small doses of soul and funk into a unique blend.

Or Grant Lee Buffalo, the Americana pioneers who in 2011, after a hiatus of more than ten years, make a remarkable and surprising comeback. Or their colleagues from The Jayhawks, also back after years of silence, responsible for some of the best country rock of the past quarter of a century.

Or Flemish singer-songwriter Zjef Vanuystsel. In the '70s he was incredible popular, but then concentrated on his real vocation for



decades, architecture, until he made a surprising comeback, a couple of years ago. Or, well, so many others... The Dranouter festival takes place, literally, in the middle of nowhere. The different stages, all nicely placed in tents that protect the patrons from cloudbursts, are set up in green pastures where cows gawk with some ennui at the music freaks camping there, four days on a spot where they have been grazing until recently. It's the ideal place to surrender unreservedly to the music and forget all your daily worries.

→ www.festivaldranouter.be

bite

ROBYN BOYLE

't Schuitje

I pile into the horse-drawn carriage along with 15-odd Flemish friends dressed as cowboys and girls, complete with handkerchiefs around their necks and toy guns in their holsters. It's a 40th birthday party and we're on our way to have lunch in one of the most scenic parts of the rolling Flemish Ardennes: the area around Maarkedal, East Flanders.

The restaurant is located in a gem of a building in the village of Schorisse, formerly a farmhouse and later the local football team café. Its beautifully renovated state is an homage to tradition, predominantly brick with light blue shutters on the windows. Out back there's terrace seating under leafy plane trees and a playground for kids. Inside is cosy and sober with plenty of wood, antique furniture and old framed photographs hanging from the walls.

't Schuitje – local dialect for the little cooking pot – is a family-run business that's been around for 10 years. Our group is served by the friendly mother-daughter duo, Marleen and Amandine, while father and son, François and Julien, run the kitchen and wood-burning grill made out of an old baker's oven.

This being Roman Brewery country, several Enamel blondes and tripels are delivered to our table. Shortly hereafter, black slate tiles

Contact **Bite** at flandersbite@gmail.com

arrive holding a variety of mini appetisers to tide us over: dabs of different fish and olive tapenades to spread on bread, a deep-fried calamari ring, sun-dried tomato and mozzarella with basil pesto, anchovy-wrapped green olive and thin slice of dry-cured ham. All this flavour and salt teases our taste buds, compelling us to drink more.

Because we are with so many, our menu consists of a set choice of three main dishes: milk-fed pork tenderloin, beef brochette or grilled scampi. The couple seated next to me makes place for their long skewers of jumbo-sized scampi. These have hovered over hot coals for just the right amount of time, resulting in lightly smoked, soft and juicy prawns, seasoned to perfection with garlic, butter and fresh parsley.

I don't have to wait long before my beef brochette shows up next to a bowl of golden fries and homemade mayo. The skewer holds plump pieces of tender beef, expertly grilled with a rosy centre.

But it's the pork tenderloin that gets the most attention. The pork from a suckling pig is incredibly moist and surrounded by a typically Belgian pickle sauce. This creamy yellow sauce is made from a mustard and vinegar base with pickled vegetables, mainly cauliflower, gherkins and onions.



Its tangy robustness perfectly complements the sweetness of the pork.

Amazingly, there are some at our table with still room for dessert. While I contentedly sip from a strong cup of coffee, others dig into royal portions of ice cream and insanely rich scoops of dark chocolate mousse with whipped cream.

We end up paying an average of €35 a head for this feast. It's enough to please even the most discerning cowboy or girl.

→ www.tschuitje.be

→ Hofveldstraat 32, 9688 Schorisse (Maarkedal); 055.30.58.10

🕒 Thurs-Mon, from 12.00 "until the fire's out" and from 18.00 "until the coals glow no more" (closed Tues, Wed and lunchtime on Sat)

€ Mains: €18-27

★ Authentic Belgian-French cuisine in a timeless setting

TALKING SPORTS

Vanendert and Gilbert salvage Flemish Tour honour

It might have seemed like the Flemish Tour de France hopes crashed out with Jurgen Van Den Broeck, the 28-year-old Herentals-born rider, who withdrew after collecting a collapsed lung, three broken ribs and a broken shoulder blade in a massive pile-up halfway through the contest. But there are other riders – from podium finishers Jelle Vanendert (third placed climber) to Philippe Gilbert (third place sprinter) – who have salvaged some honour for Flanders this year, proving that the low country can still spring some surprises.

Vanendert, the 26-year-old from Neerpelt, only emerged as a player the final week, when he claimed the red-and-white checked jersey for the climbers. Clinching the 14th stage at Plateau de Beille – the first of his Tour career – Vanendert reacted with both delight and incredulity. Although he failed to hang on to the top spot, only two others caught him, meaning Vanendert was able to stay on the climbers' podium, in third place, by the Tour's finale in the Champs Elysée on Sunday. He also finished a very respectable 20th in the overall rankings.

A similarly impressive Tour for Gilbert, Vanendert's teammate from the Waregem-based Omega Pharma-Lotto (also the stable for Van Den Broeck, Jurgen Van de Walle and Jürgen Roelandts). Gilbert was always going to struggle to stay as strong as his victory in the first stage of the Tour suggested, but he tried valiantly, eventually coming in 38th overall. Yet as a sprinter, Gilbert was a real contender for the green jersey, claiming it for a number of stages until Britain's Mark Cavendish wrenched it away. Gilbert nonetheless stayed close enough to finish third, and – like Vanendert – was able to climb a podium in Paris on Sunday.

Plaudits too for Kevin De Weert from the Quick Step team, who was the top Flemish finisher in the overall rankings, in 13th place. The 29-year-



Vanendert and Gilbert after crossing the finish line in Paris

old from Duffel finished just 16'29" behind the eventual champion Cadel Evans. His teammate, Dries Devenyns, 27, from Leuven, was 46th overall. And nor should one forget Thomas De Gendt, the 24-year-old Vacansoleil-DCM rider from Sint-Niklaas, who came 13th in the youth standings. All this suggests that while Flemish riders could not claim any absolute glory this year, they were at least respectable. Now, they can enjoy a well-earned summer break, before planning next year's gruelling season.

LEO CENDROWICZ

THE LAST WORD . . .

Enemy of my enemy

"Even if Gaddafi stood here with a bag of money, we wouldn't care. Whoever can take Antwerp into the first division is welcome."

An Antwerp supporter on the arrival of erstwhile arch-rival Jos Verhaegen, ex-chairman of Germinal Beerschot Antwerpen, to head the club

Major cover-up

"I might as well have walked outside in the nude, judging by the effect my appearance had."

De Standaard journalist Lieve Van de Velde wore a burqa in Antwerp for a day, until stopped by the police

Tour cure

"If a man in his forties who was still a chain-smoker in January can do it after just six months' training, then it must be within reach for any healthy person who has the will to do it."

Jeroen De Preter, journalist with De Morgen, cycled the Tour de France one day ahead of the professionals, completing the 3,414km course in just under 139 hours. Winner Cadel Evans made it a day later in 86 hours

Home to roost

"I'll have to warn the chickens in my chicken run of his arrival."

Prime minister Yves Leterme was presented with a rooster, symbolic of Wallonia, at the annual agricultural fair in Libramont

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #191

Feature

De Stripgids, Flanders' free graphic novel magazine, has published its 25th issue. An interview with the editor about the state of the 9th art.

Living

De Stripgids, Flanders' free graphic novel magazine, has published its 25th issue. An interview with the editor about the state of the 9th art.

Living

The reopening of a legendary jazz club in Antwerp. Oh yeah.